

May 2018



Russo Iris in Cloister

The Volunteers continue to have a full load of tasks with warm weather coming on strong. We have almost completed the replacement of plant materials that were destroyed by the ice and snow storm several months ago. The weeds are loving the warm weather and we are struggling to keep up! The huge job of the Azalea and Camellia feeding program is underway and an assessment of the vines tells us they are ahead of us again. This past month, several bad rain/wind storms covered the grounds with moss and other debris. There is never a day we do not have plenty to maintain.

#### **GARDEN UPDATES:**

##### **Store/ St. Clare:**

We are excited to announce that in the Arbor (to the right of the steps to the Store) we have Mepkin Greenhouse plants. This week we are opening the Arbor and our newest feature is the "Brother Joseph Fig Trees." Back at the Breakroom, there is a golden fig tree that Brother Joseph has tended for years. It always has a bumper crop enjoyed greatly by the Brothers. This year, Craig decided to start some of these trees to share with others. We have a limited supply, so hurry out and put your name on one! Visitors can "take a piece of Mepkin home with them". We have various Succulents (individual or several assorted in pots), Brother Joseph Fig Trees, and starter Crepe Myrtles. If you have a chance to visit, follow the signs at the entrance of the Arbor to see the various offerings. There is a suggested donation list and all proceeds will go to help our Garden Program.



Brother Joseph Fig



Succulents



Various assortments in pots



Starter Crepe Myrtles

We hope to be as successful as last year. All monies go to the Garden Program for our "wish" list. We appreciate any support you can give us!

**Cloister:**

The Russian Sage is again coming on with a vengeance and swallowing up the Daylilies, so a move is in store later this year for the Daylilies.



The Hawthorne continue to be quite a show



As well as the Coral Bells down the steps into the Old Dorm.



Stephen's garden is just getting started; it was put in by Brother Joe who came at Easter. I will continue to show its progress during the summer. It is always so beautiful.

### **Orchard:**

Thanks to our recent heavy rain Norm and I were slogging around pulling weeds. The weeds came out somewhat more easily with a great sucking sound.

We were searching for figs and finally convinced ourselves we actually saw some. It will likely be slow but we have great expectations (Fr Joe can't make cobbler with our expectations).

The blackberries look great with lots of flowers and early stage fruit. The raspberries are growing nicely but they have lots of growing to do before we look forward to berries.

The citrus are a mixed bag I think due to varied cold exposure. One of the Satsumas (orange tree) looks great and the other poor to middling. We are thankful that most of the plants survived the big freeze.

We are plotting the electrification of our fence. It's time to replace our fencing or try something new. We hope to try new!

Howard

### **Luce Garden:**



The new sign about the gates being closed has been installed



As well as a sign at the entrance pertaining to dogs,



And finally, the sign about the unsafe steps in Luce.

We hope these signs will make things more pleasant for Visitors and the Abbey.

### **Columbarium:**

The Columbarium continues to be a work in progress. Peter continues his work across the ravine near the new steps. We still await a date for the erosion control and planting by Green Carolina. Unfortunately, our evergreen Clematis vines on the Iron Trellises died during the storm. We have decided to replace them with Clematis in pots which will be easier to maintain.



This gives you an idea of the look.

## **Odds and Ends:**

Blooming Tree:

The Fringe Tree that is on the corner where one turns to go to the Farm has been magnificent this year. We also have Fringe Shrubs in the Columbarium. I have tried twice to plant Fringe Trees which were to be Memorials and they have not survived. I am going to try to develop a Memorial Grove with Fringe Trees, so stay tuned. Read on about Garden Memorial Funds.



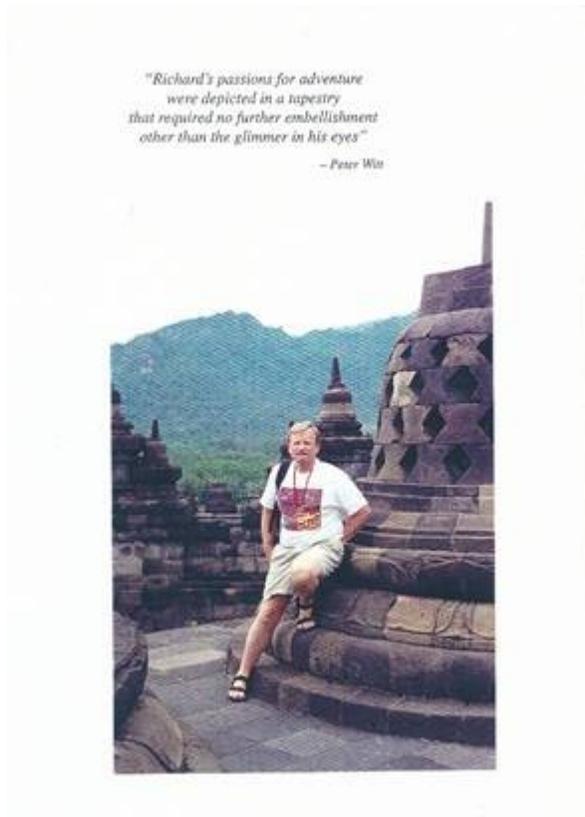
Fringe Tree



Close up of Fringe Tree (Father Jonas)

## **How Mepkin Abbey Supports Itself:**

Last month when I discussed the Forest Operation, I mentioned it was the last in the series on how Mepkin Abbey supports itself. Lo and behold, I had an email from a friend who reminded me that there is also a Memorial Gift Program wherein people can donate to Mepkin for a tree, shrub, etc. to be planted on its grounds in memory or to honor someone. We keep a notebook of such gifts and herein I want to relate how a family honored its son and brother years ago.



In 1999, Richard Hagan died in a kayak accident. His brother, the former Father Aelred, was at Mepkin Abbey and Richard made a yearly pilgrimage to Mepkin to visit his brother. He appreciated the physical and spiritual beauty of Mepkin, being a man of the outdoors and an inveterate traveler. A year or so after Richard's death, his family gathered and planted a tree near the new monastic church.



Tree with Richard's family (Ed Ritz-brother-in-law, Bobby Hagan-father, Helen Ritz-sister, Sue Dobbins-sister, Sam Dobbins-nephew, Frances Dobbins-niece, Father Aelred-brother, Liz Hagan-niece)



Today, that tree still stands, like Richard-aglow with life.

Checks to memorialize or honor someone should be sent to Mepkin Abbey, 1098 Mepkin Abbey Road, Moncks Corner, SC 29461, with the person's name and garden written on the check.

#### **SPOTLIGHT ON A VOLUNTEER:**

There will be no article this month. Craig has been away celebrating 20 years of marriage. Look forward to next month's Volunteer!

Many thanks to Father Jonas for the photographs, to Rob Hagan for the information on his brother, and to Langhorne for editing.

"A garden, by nature, is not static. Rather, it is a living, dynamic entity that is continually growing and changing. Its beauty is dependent upon being nurtured and cared for." It is our hope that the "place" that is Mepkin will provide "an opportunity for nurturing and healing and an understanding that goodness and light will always triumph over the darkness."

Peace and light to each of you, dottie