Ginger blooming in St. Clare

July was miserable for us. The torrential rains did not let up. The result is a need to repair erosion in the Columbarium, erosion in some of the new beds, and Volunteers unable to work with the driving rain, thunder and lightning. We continue to groom the Azaleas and prune other shrubs which have already bloomed. Just keeping up with the debris is a full time job.
Erosion from rain in Columbarium

Washout Old Dorm Hill

GARDEN UPDATES:

Store/ St. Clare:
The Store Roses and Lantana continue to say “welcome” to visiting guests.

Lantana

On these hot, muggy days, the cool green of the various shrubs is the perfect setting as you enter the Store.

St. Clare:

Kathy continues to keep St. Clare Walk one of the prettiest areas at the Abbey.
Entrance to St. Clare

Ferns
Sylvia continues to groom the Cloister and Walk to the Church to perfection. Another of her tasks is pruning all the blooming perennials of spent blooms so they will continue to bloom.
This is only one area of many of which she takes care.

**Cloister:**

The raised Herb Beds in the Cloister have really come on with all the rain. We are happy to report that the new Chef has been using these herbs in his dishes. He has also planted one of the raised Vegetable Beds. I cannot wait to see what comes up. Hopefully I can gather some of the Basil next week and start making Pesto. Many thanks to Sylvia for keeping it pinched back so it has not gone to seed this year.
Raised Herb Beds

The Plumbago at the 10 Man Cottage has come out with a vengeance. The white Vinca have almost been crowded out by the vigorous Plumbago.
Blue Plumbago at 10 man Cottage

Orchard:

The orchard is awash. We have been pulling weeds but with each weed we get a couple of pounds of soil. The roots leave a crater full of water and when you try to recycle some of the soil by shaking or hitting the root ball against a fork you get splattered with the little bit you are able to remove.

This week we were able to pick some tomatoes and a few figs. Thankfully Brother Joseph’s fig near the barn was loaded. We were able to take a bucket full to the kitchen. Enzo has been waiting for enough to try some special recipes. There should be more coming!
Glad we pulled the plug on our irrigation system we certainly don’t need more water. Howard
Brother Joseph Figs

**Luce Garden:**

In July, we had Green Carolina for the day pruning and cleaning up various areas of Luce.

Main Steps at Luce
Secondary Steps at Luce

Bluff above Luce. The Shrubs and Bluff get overgrown quickly and we appreciate the good work these men do for us.

Columbarium:
Erosion from rain in Columbarium

As you can see, we have some major repair to be done in the Columbarium. We continue to have drainage problems and need to flesh this out with the Landscape Architect and Construction company. The rains have been unusually long and heavy, but we had problems before this.

**Odds and Ends:**

As I mentioned last month, the Mormon Elders are back. We are so thrilled to have them.
Elder Michael and Elder Paul

Welcome to both of you!

**Spotlight on a Volunteer**

Our choice for Volunteer of the Month is Chuck Dolesy. Chuck has been volunteering at the monastery for almost a year. He has been instrumental in the rehab of the African American Cemetery (Clermont Cemetery). Chuck has worked tirelessly to remove years of undergrowth and invasive species to open up the area around the cemetery and make it more hospitable. The work continues!
My daughter and grandchildren are what keep me going; we moved to Mount Pleasant from Elmhurst, IL (Chicago area) to be close to them and I enjoy spending time with them. I have worked in the food industry for most of my career in Quality Assurance; I was a Keebler elf for many years but have also worked in the bagel and candy fields. I enjoy being outdoors, working on my yard, playing tennis, and I am a diehard Green Bay Packer fan.

1-Who would you want with you if you were stranded on a desert island?
Depending how desolated the island is I would choose Bear Grylls as he is a survivalist. Now if it was an exotic location I would have the Mrs. join me.

2-If you could do anything you wanted right now, what would it be? Winning and Spending the lottery jackpot that has eluded me for 50 plus years. Not that it solves all problems but it would enable me to help others.

3-If money were no object, what would you do all day? It is a tossup between hunting or playing doubles tennis.

4-Where do you most want to travel, but have never been?
Germany. To search family history.

5-What is your favorite memory? Being present for the birth of my daughter.

6-What is your favorite movie?
Princess Bride - an excellent movie, that never gets old.

7-What is the one thing that should be taught in school that isn't already?
Moral values and respect for your classmates, elders, and people in authority.

8-What one thing would you change if you had to do it over?
Study more during my college days.

9-If you could share a meal with three people from the past, who would they be? My grandfather Fred Dolesy, my dad Charles Dolesy, and Herb Bachaus - my neighbor for over 25 years.

10-What actor/actress would play you in your life movie?
Clint Eastwood as I always enjoy his straight forward presentation.
11-Why do you Volunteer at Mepkin? I grew up on a small dairy farm in Wisconsin and I always enjoy the outdoors and hard work. This is an opportunity for me to contribute in a way that I enjoy.

Many thanks to Craig, Sylvia, and Kathy for supplying photos that I thought I might not get. Also thanks to Craig for the Spotlight on Volunteers, to Howard for supplying the Orchard report each month, and to Langhorne for editing. I am finally able to at least drive to the Abbey. I so appreciate the many cards, texts, emails and prayers from many of you. We believe I am on the mend now, although it will be a long process to gain back my strength.

Remember to RSVP to Abbot Stan about whether you are able to come to the Volunteer Picnic on Saturday, August 11th.

Peace. Dottie