Luce Garden - a place of peace and beauty

March was a month of activity, activity, activity. We had, as you will see below, Father Ryan’s students repairing and painting, etc., as they do each year (all over everywhere); Richmond Cathedral Group clearing the area slated to be the Memorial Arbor in the future; Habitat for Humanity doing general maintenance work; Mepkin hosting a Food and Wine event; “Mushrooms at the Abbey”; and many, many visitors seeing the glorious Azalea/Camellia show throughout the property. Luce Garden was as spectacular as I have ever seen it. My photos do not do it justice.

The Volunteers were kept busy. They fed and groomed the various bulbs and planted the summer bulbs we had dug and cold stored, now located on the Walk to the Church, at the Breakroom, and at the Laundry. The spent blooms on the Camellia were removed (a weekly chore) to avoid blight setting in. We finished cutting back the Oleander and Nandina, and shaping other shrubs that had outgrown the scale of where they were.

The Pittosporum, Lenten Rose, Camellia and Azalea were blooming. To add to all
of this, we held a recertification and certification for CPR and AED. The AED are located in the Flower Sacristy of the Church (door on right after entering the Church), in the Store or the Clinic, and at the Breakroom for the Garden Volunteers. We had 26 people attending the Lunch Workshop, attended also by the Docents and Creche Festival Volunteers. A list was compiled and distributed stating which Garden Volunteers are at Mepkin on which days.

**GARDEN UPDATES:**

**St. Clare Walk:**

The Lenten Roses are still in full bloom in St. Clare as are a few of the Camellias and Encore Azaleas. Kathy continues to keep the area perfect!

**Orchard:**

We have put the yurt citrus protectors away for spring. They are tucked away for future use. I hope we can come up with a better cover for next year. Norm contributed a few ☀️ beach umbrellas that worked well but were cumbersome. We wanted to give the plants sun when possible but there were lots of temperature swings. George gave us some row cover. The kind farmers use to protect tender crops.

We will have to get some larger pieces that can left on. The benefit to row covers is that it allows light to pass through but protects from frost.

The orange trees looked generally good but the low light moist environment promoted sooty mildew. There will be oil spray in the future.

We put up a few warning signs on the electrified wire. So far so good no additional casualties (in addition to Craig). We have remembered to pull the plug when we are working near by.

Howard

**Luce Garden:**

How could I not feature this garden for the April Newsletter? I am going to let my photos do the commenting:
Odds and Ends:

New Volunteer:

Sheri Smith

THE GREENHOUSE SHOW (April 12)

Craig has announced that the Greenhouse Show will begin Friday, April 12th. It will be located in the Arbor by the Store as before. It will run approximately two weeks. Thank you for your participation in this endeavor of the Garden Program. Here are a few samples of what will be available:
Close-up

There will also be the famous Brother Joseph fig bushes, herb dishes, other shrubs, and new exciting pots one of our Volunteers has made. The directions for the show will be the same also. Many thanks to Steve, Ursula, Ann and several others for their tireless work in putting these together.

Volunteer Helpers:

Richmond Cathedral Group:

The Richmond Cathedral group (Mary Rebecca and her group of young adults) worked Ash Wednesday with Craig and Sylvia for several hours and toured the Abbey grounds. Father Kevin spoke to the group and also gave them a special tour. Everyone involved was richer for the experience. Thank you for your help and come back soon!
Father Ryan High School:

In addition, we had the annual visit of the Father Ryan High School Group from Nashville, TN. They are amazing with the repairs, repainting, etc. they do.

The adult leaders are fantastic in teaching these students various skills. They are experts in organizing and having everything on hand for them.
These young people use their Spring Break to come to Mepkin and do major work. We applaud their willingness to help the Abbey in this special way and we thank them.

**Habitat for Humanity:**

Habitat for Humanity also spent a day with us helping in various areas. Thank you, thank you.

**Event:**

During the Food and Wine Festival in Charleston, there was an event at Mepkin
Abbey. There was a tour of the mushroom operation and grounds led by Jill and Greg. The lunch was catered by the chef of Husk. It was a sold out event.

Wood burning oven for special bread.
Prep area for serving lunch

Table awaiting guests
Guess who also attended the event? Abbey!

Special applause should go to Craig and the Garden Volunteers who did a last minute clean up for the event. We had had rain and wind the day before. Greg tells me that the guests were very good about not giving Abbey meat scraps, as she was not used to the smell of meat cooking and her diet is vegetarian of course. Greg had her treats in his pocket!

My thanks Craig, Sylvia and Greg for photos, to Howard for the Orchard Report and to Langhorne for editing.

“Father in Heaven: Thank you for the magnificence of the universe and the tender beauties of nature. I cherish the inheritance You have given me.”

Happy Easter to each of you and may the joy of the Resurrection be yours, dottie