

Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

May 2019



Father Francis Kline Azaleas

The highlight of April was Holy Week, culminating in Easter Sunday. The Church was a beautiful scene as you can see below.







April kept us busy cleaning up with terrific wind storms and rain. Our maintenance schedule had Volunteers removing spent blooms, applying sulfate aluminum to the Hydrangeas (to lower PH), and starting the feeding program of the Camellias and Azaleas after they had bloomed out. This feeding program will continue through May. It is a major job, as is our removing any vines, and pruning when necessary.

In May we will be pinching back the Mums, continuing to remove spent blossoms, fertilizing the Hydrangeas, and pruning Spring flowering shrubs after they bloom. Roses and Magnolias will be blooming.

GARDEN UPDATES:

Store:



The Store continues to be a welcoming place for our visitors. The Yarrow is in flower now and the Hydrangeas are budding up.

A new feature at the Store is a display for sale of the Mushroom Compost.



Don't forget to pick a bag up at these prices!

St. Clare Walk:

The ferns are the featured plants in St. Clare. The Siberian Iris are just starting

and the Papyrus are just up!





Kathy has been out with surgery, and boy! do we miss her! Please get back to us soon, Kathy. St. Clare is calling your name!

Cloister:

One of the biggest changes in the Cloister is giving up the raised vegetable beds and turning them into flowering beds for Father Guericc to use for the altar flowers. We have planted one bed in Basil so that Enzo (Chef) will have a source for his pesto!





Another annual highlight in the Cloister is when Brother Joe comes for Easter and plants Brother Stephen's garden. Here is the first stage (other photos to follow as usual as it fills out).





The Rose bed in the Cloister is doing well, thanks to the magic of pruning and feeding by Sylvia.



A surprise to me was when I saw blooms on the Pineapple Guava we planted on the upper hillside of the steps down into the Old Dorm. That bed is filling in nicely but we have never seen blooms on it before.



Orchard:

The orchard is coming along. There is a great deal of new growth on the citrus. I turned on the irrigation system and hope our weeding didn't put too many holes in the tubing.

Found that our caution signs were shorting out the electric fence when the signs slid along the wire until they touched the fence posts. The signs showed burn marks where they had touched. I fixed the signs to the center of the fence to avoid future migration.

They should be plenty of figs with the best from the courtyard adjacent to the orchard. I think the brick walls protect them from the weather. Enzo is ready for them on the kitchen.

Happy gardening!

Howard

Columbarium:

At the entry to the Columbarium we planted Black Eyed Susans last fall to fill in where the grasses had not worked out. This area brought a smile to my face when I saw all of them coming up! Cannot wait to see them in full bloom later

this summer.



Featured this month (across the bridge to Laurens Cemetery) were Peter Wallace's Father Francis Kline Azaleas in full bloom. Unfortunately my photo does not do them justice.



The next time you are at the Abbey, go down the steps, across the bridge, and up the steps to Laurens Cemetery to see the beautiful job of filling in various natural flora along the steps up. Thank you, Peter, for all your hard work on this.

Odds and Ends:

New Volunteer:



Lauren Pearson

Welcome to Lauren, who has been working for several weeks. Lauren has just graduated from law school and is interviewing for jobs. How thoughtful of her to give us this time in between. Some young blood invigorates all of us!

THE GREENHOUSE SHOW

The Greenhouse show was once again a success, thanks to our loyal patrons. We held it only for two weeks this year as we lacked the labor to make more succulent dishes. We need Greenhouse help badly for the watering, weeding and watching out for unwanted invaders! Consider a job in the Greenhouse if you feel you are unable to do the heavier work. You will be trained in what to do. Call Sylvia at 814-720-4174 or email her at bellamaw1@gmail.com.



Volunteer Helpers:

Again we were blessed last month with a group from The Home School National Honor Society. Here they are working raking in St. Clare. Our thanks to each of you and come back again soon!





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

I hope you are enjoying the joy of the Resurrection of our Lord in this time after Easter. With the busyness of summer, please take time to come out and enjoy the peace and serenity of Mepkin. You will be so glad you did.

Until next month, many blessings,

dottie

“Nature and faith are intertwined. Ultimately, Volunteers are giving back to God. Tending to plants and pulling weeds are ministries.....” Father Joe, article on Mepkin Volunteers in the Post and Courier.