

## Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

June 2019



### Magnolia Blossoms

May was a month of no rain. With so many pots and plants newly put in the ground, we spent most of the month watering, watering and watering some more. When you realize that it takes three of us in three gators to completely cover the property, refilling barrels and other large containers, you can see it is back breaking work, but necessary.

Once again this month, we fed the roses and bulbs that had bloomed, and continued to prune spent flowers so the plant would continue to bloom and not go to seed. We had cut back the Wisteria in the Arbor that had been taking over the Store on a regular basis, and it decided to show us who was boss and came out in profusion. What a job to try to retrain it or find a solution to kill it!

With the Azaleas and Camellias fed, the job was a full time job in itself of pruning them back in scale and killing the vines that find their way up into them.

The Green House was another out of control place. We had started or divided

more succulents than we had man-power to make the plant dishes to sell. The Native Hibiscus were also started and it looked like everyone of them came up. We had wanted a few to fill in places, but my! that Green House must have elves working at night to multiply whatever is in there! Our cup runneth over!

## **GARDEN UPDATES:**

### **Store:**

We want to thank Angel for being so kind as to take in monies, when needed, both from the Green House Show and from the extra Native Hibiscus we had on the front table. Each donation helps fund extras for our Garden Program and thus, ensures less of a financial burden for the Abbey.

### **St. Clare Walk:**

We are happy to report that Kathy, the master Volunteer in St. Clare's Walk is back from her surgery and working part time. The ferns continue to be absolutely beautiful! The new feature is that the Pomegranate Tree is in bloom. See below:





Closeup for Pomegranate Bloom turning into fruit

### **Cloister:**

On route to the Cloister, we find the Dwarf Gardenia in full array.



Gardenia

The Church and Cloister Azaleas are changing dramatically. The Azaleas in that area had become completely overgrown, full of ivy and vines, and out of scale. With repairs coming to the church in the near future, we decided this was the time to do what needed to be done.



As you approach the Church, you now can see the serpentine wall and 12 Man Cottage.



Close up of wall with the steps up to the 12 man cottage (restricted area)



What a huge job this was. It was a shock to walk up upon it, but after clean up, we knew we had done the correct thing. Next Spring, hopefully you can thank both the crew who have worked at Mepkin with us since 2008, and the volunteers.

Last month I mentioned we had converted the raised Vegetable Beds into flower beds for Father Guericc to use in the arrangements for the Church. Here the photos show the present blossoms in the raised beds, followed by the magnificent arrangements Guericc has made for the Church. A happy project for all of us!



Glads in bloom

Father Guericc is also using the Easter Lily bed that we continue to expand to the right as you enter the Breezeway. This is a recycle program for us, as over the years, the Easter Lilies bought for Easter Sunday we take and plant. This is the time the Easter Lily blooms naturally. The ones you purchase have been forced to bloom at the correct time.



First arrangement using Siberian Iris and Easter Lily closed blooms



Second arrangement using Oleander Blooms and Easter Lilies

What a gift we have in Father Guericc urging us to do this with him. Many thanks for the many gorgeous arrangements he does to praise God.

### **Orchard:**

Things in the orchard are ( HOT ). We have the irrigation on and the electric fence has a few more caution signs. These fences are often known as weed cutters since the pulses of current will burn leaves that touch them. We have some evidence in the hibiscus in the perimeter. It's not fatal to the plants, you really have to look. But DON'T get too close!

We need to develop a plan for over winter plantings to keep down the weeds. Norm and I are getting worn down weeding.

The figs are looking a bit unusual. We have a thin first crop that's almost mature and a heavy second crop still quiet small. I had heard of a second crop but this is the first time I have seen it so plentiful. Let's hope it keeps up so we have some for Dottie's return to Mepkin.

We may hit 100 this week. WOW!

Howard

**Odds and Ends:**

**New Volunteers:**

This month we feature two new Mormon Volunteers. They are such great help in the “heavy lifting” and we appreciate that they take their free time to be with us.



Welcome and many thanks to Chris and Jaxon!

**Volunteer Helpers:**

Habitat for Humanity group arrived again to help with the clearing of the future Memorial Arbor. Thank you for your presence with us, and also for helping us to develop what will be a beautiful addition both for us, and for our Visitors.



### **Habitat for Humanity Group**

Remember Mepkin when you wish to memorialize a loved friend or family member. This will be another quiet place you can come to remember them in the future.

### **Other kudos:**

I am sure you have noticed how beautifully kept the lawns and Columbarium beds are. We owe this to “Capps and Steve” and wish to take this time to thank them for all their hard work. Capps was able to start his own company through the help of Mepkin, and has lived up to what he told us he would do. Steve, his assistant, also has the wonderful work ethic. Both are always friendly and ready to help out. They take a great deal of pride in their work. We thank them.



Capps



The Live Oaks on the road to Luce Garden



Lawn by the Upper Pond at Luce Garden



Bloom on the path to the Niches and Lawn at the Columbarium

My thanks to Craig for some of the photos, to Howard for the Orchard Report and to Langhorne for editing.

This past month I have been reading The Time is Now by Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun, who is an internationally known writer and lecturer. In this book, she calls each of us to explore the traits of prophets, many traits of which we can find in ourselves.... offering motivation as well as ways to accomplish change in our lives. As I was reading, I thought about the garden Volunteers who

have been actively trying to grow their ranks with little success. It led me to think- "if not me, who?", and "if not now, when?". As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Light just one candle." We cannot do it all, but maybe, just a day at Mepkin, where serenity and peace is everywhere: you can help others find that serenity and peace as they visit. Please consider helping us or just visiting us. To Volunteer, call Sylvia Bras (Volunteer Director), 814-720-4174 or Craig Clark (Director of Gardens and Grounds), 843-709-8362.

Many blessings to each of you, dottie