

Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

August 2019



New Hydrangeas on Walk to Church

The unbelievably hot weather continued to plague the Volunteers throughout July with the heat index being over 100 degrees some days. We shortened our workdays and kept after everyone about drinking water. August promises more of the same - and even though we have sporadic rain showers, we still have stretches we have to water.

We continued maintaining the grounds - grooming, pruning, and fertilizing the Roses, Hydrangeas, Daylilies and Daisies.

This month will find the Volunteers doing much of the same things. Trying to keep up with the weeds is a full time job as it is, and the deadheading of the Daylilies, Daisies and now the Blackeyed Susans to keep all blooming could be one person's job alone!

Update on Gardens:

Store:

The front of the Store has been graced with a variety of Fatsia, Roses, Lantana and Yarrow. The drought took down the beautiful Fern Circle, but I am pleased to tell you it is coming back! Our native Hibiscus array at the Store was a success, with donations in the hundreds. Thank you all who took them home. The remaining ones make up new beds at the Columbarium, the Upper Pond, and are expanding the Native Hibiscus bed at Luce Garden.

St. Clare:

St. Clare Walk is its usual cool oasis of Ferns and Papyrus. The French Hydrangeas have started blooming also.



French Hydrangeas

Cloister:

The Crepe Myrtles continue to be outstanding in the Cloister. To add to that, Brother Stephen's garden is full of color!



Brother Stephen's Garden

The raised beds continue to produce materials for Father Guericc's arrangements in the Church.



Agapanthus and Grasses

Orchard:

The figs are finally here and boy are they HERE. The winner for output is Brother Joseph's tree/bush next to the gator shed. We have more figs scattered around and thankfully, they will not produce simultaneously. I understand Enzo will try some new recipes. Norm and I are hoping he will experiment on us!

Craig gave me training on the Zero Turn mower. We are mowing in the orchard to minimize weeding. We didn't plan the orchard with mowing in mind since it's kind of a maze. It should get easier with practice. I also mowed around the persimmons, and was amazed at how well the mower cut heavy grass more than knee high. I will have to remove a couple of low branches while I still have my head.

Keep cool!

Howard



Fig Trees loaded with fruit

Columbarium:

The entrance to the Columbarium is breath-taking with the very successful bed of Black eyed Susans. Photos do not do it justice, but here goes:



Black eyed Susan

On the other side of the entrance, we have Grasses blooming. It really is spectacular!



Grasses

At the other end of the path through the Columbarium, we have African Lilies in bloom.



African Lilies

African-American Cemetery (Claremont):

We have been following the work one of our Volunteers has done in the overgrown African-American cemetery. He has prevailed and I wanted to share some of the photos of what it looks like now in its infancy. Many, many thanks to Chuck for his work here.



Entry with Philip Simmons wrought iron gate





Planted beds with Holly, Azaleas, etc.

Odds and Ends:

New Volunteers:

The Monastic Institute has been going on for several weeks. We are lucky enough to have three Volunteers---who are terrific. They have been a huge help to us! Thank you, thank you!



Vincent, Ethan and Larry

Although I promised to have photos of Alysee and Phil Turner, we were never at Mepkin on the same days while I was there. They are real and are working! Maybe next month!

My thanks to Howard for the Orchard Report and to Langhorne for editing. Here is the Pineapple Lily bed near the Breezeway at the Abbey of which I have spoken. Aren't they funny plants?



Pineapple Lily

Recently, I received the quarterly newsletter from New Clairvaux. I felt this could describe Mepkin as well as New Clairvaux.

“I personally think God is impossible to describe...the closest we can get is awe, reverence and beauty. You can find them in this place.” Abbot Emeritus Thomas Davis (former Abbot at New Clairvaux in Vina, CA.)

Let’s hope the weather will be more temperate. We will probably be complaining about the cold too this winter! Hope you are enjoying your summer. Peace to one and all, dottie