

## Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

February 2020



### **White Camellia in Luce Garden**

January was taken up with some pruning and shaping, and the continued garden cleanup work on the Memorial Arbor (more to come on this). We had an unusual week of 70-80 degree weather, in which it was a joy to work, although we worry about flora budding up too early and being caught by a late freeze.

February brings more of the same, plus pruning out 1/3 of the old canes (branches) on the Nandina and Abelia. Most major pruning of trees and shrubs should occur this month, except for those which bloom in the Spring. Ornamental grasses should all be cut back before the new growth appears. Blooming, we have Camellias and Bulbs, promising warmer weather may be on the way.

### **Update on Gardens:**

With everything in Winter mode, I thought we would stroll through the gardens in order to experience the quiet serenity that is Mepkin in winter grounds. There is so much beauty here, it takes my breath away as I am taking lots of photos to share with you.

Starting at the fields of the Labyrinth and Firemen's Memorial, we come out (from our office and tool shed) to the fields of grass which are golden.



**Labyrinth area**



**Firemen's Memorial field**

**Continuing down to the Visitor's Reception and Store:**



**Entry to The Visitor's Reception and Store  
Continuing past the Store to St. Clare Walk:**



**All is quiet and resting.**



**Now we leave St. Clare Walk, and cross the crosswalk to the Church:**



**Can you hear the silence?**

**Entering the Cloister from the Old Dorm area:**



**This is the bed on the hill next to the steps of the Old Dorm**



**Stephen's Garden all wrapped up for winter... Around the corner, we come to the raised beds which are awaiting the various perennial bulbs to arise. A surprise awaits as the first harbinger of Spring, the daffodils, are up and bringing a smile to my face.**



**Daffodils in raised bed**

**Rounding the raised beds, we encounter the inner Cloister:**



**The mixed bed (all perennials are asleep!)**



**The raised herb beds are quiet but still above ground**

**Looking towards the Church:**



**Can you feel the peace of these grounds?**

**Returning to the road to the Retreat Center, I am surprised to see the Cherry Trees are starting to blossom:**



**Cherry Blossoms**

**Let's continue on the road to Luce Garden and the Columbarium.**



**Here the lawns and beautiful Live Oaks dominate. The quiet is deafening.**



**Luce: Room One to the Cooper River**



**Luce Garden on the Right; Ponds on the Left**



**Our Lady surrounded by white Camellias**



**Cooper River view from inside Luce Garden**



**Looking down into the Upper Pond at Luce  
Moving over to the Columbarium:**



**Everything is neat and resting in winter**



**Upper side of new addition to the Columbarium**



**Bridge over to Laurens Cemetery**



**Steps back up to Columbarium from bridge to Laurens Cemetery**

**This ends out walk through the grounds of Mepkin Abbey, where silence is spoken in a loud voice. This is a special, holy place.**

**Orchard:**



**Yurts in Orchard**

**Norm and I have been busy getting ready for the cold weather in the orchard and for spring for the bluebirds. We brought the corrugated asphalt roofing panels to the orchard and scrounged the other miscellaneous components. We have been calling our construction a yurt. A yurt is a portable living place that's used in Mongolia. It's been catching on in cold parts of other**

**countries and even in the US in ski country. The real thing is a lightweight expanding framework covered with blankets made of yak hair. Here we use a bulb for heat and shade cloth to hold in some heat and allow light to pass.**

**We have 3 yurts and depend on them to protect the oranges that already started putting out new leaves.**

**We also cleaned out the bluebird houses that George Neil built over several years. We removed the previous nesting materials, swept out the houses and added some water soluble sulfur to prevent mites and other insects.**

**The ground around the blueberries was frozen so that will wait until it's easier to work.**

**Howard**



**Norm with Yurt (Howard)**

### **Odds and Ends:**

**This month we are excited to announce what has been happening as you turn into the road to Mepkin and then turn left to register at the Visitor's Center/Store. I asked Craig to write what has been going on.**

**"Mepkin Memorial Arbor: 2020 kicked off with the construction phase of our memorial arbor. This project has been in the works for over a year and will be ready for the planting of trees this Spring we hope. We plan to fill the arbor with plenty of color, including maples, dogwoods, and camellias. A huge**

**thanks to Chuck Dolesy (our faithful garden volunteer) who "uncovered" the huge live oak at the center of the arbor and to Hans Alvarado, contracted by us to remove stumps and install the walk. Stay tuned for further information on adding a memorial brick to this beautiful space!"**



**The "before" after the area had been cleared!**



## **Memorial Arbor (Craig)**

**My thanks to Howard for the Orchard Report and photo, Craig for the various photos and article on the Memorial Arbor, and to Langhorne for editing and sending the ending quote.**

**Happy Valentines Day! Do not forget to love your neighbor as yourself. Until next month, Dottie**

**From Langhorne:**

**William Wordsworth "I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."**

