

Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

September 2020



Figs ripening up in the Orchard (Howard Bridgman)

Yum! My favorite time at Mepkin: when the Figs are ripening all over and we need to pick them. (Of course, we have to sample to be sure they are the best!)

I understand that Mepkin has had rain and that the hurricane was a non-event. Praise the Lord! This month we will be setting out winter annuals where needed, dividing crowded perennials, continuing to remove spent blooms and trying to get the weeds under control before the cooler weather. Blooming are the Lantana and Native Hibiscus.

Updates on the Gardens:

Store:

I want to entice you to order on line from the Store. I ordered some fruitcakes (I have friends that would be sooo disappointed if they did not receive their fruitcake) and it is so easy to do. They are beautifully packaged. My note to friends: “No Creche Festival-Merry Christmas in August!”.



Wonderful Fruitcake for Sale

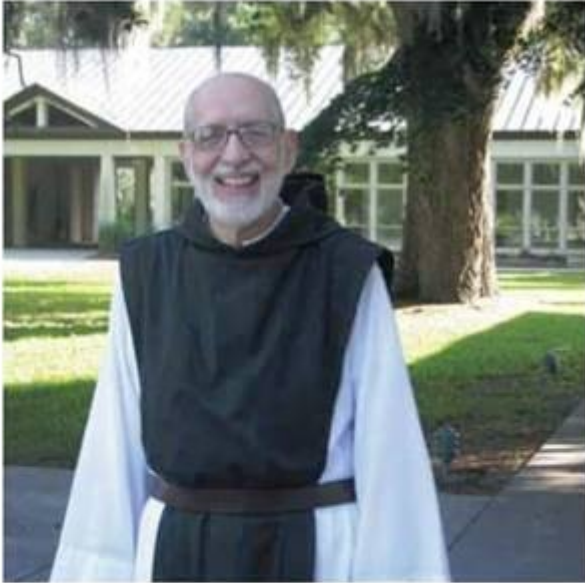


Dried Mushrooms

Food for Thought



Mepkin Abbey Fare



Joseph Tedesco OCSO

Cookbook by Father Joe with lots of Mushroom Recipes

Comment: The cookbook along with a package or two of the dried Mushrooms would make a lovely Christmas gift or stocking stuffer!

St. Clare:

Here are the pots at the Store and Entry into St. Clare



Cloister:

The Senior Wing is part of the Cloister and on the backside of the Senior Wing, where each Monk has a screen porch and looks out at a planted area. Father Gueric had some large terra cotta pots he was not using and asked that we fill them and place in this area. Here is the result:



Various succulent pots (we used succulents because they need so little watering and are most interesting)

The Church:

You are aware that the interior of the Church is being refurbished. Fr. Jonas sent me these wonderful photos of the progress.



Ceiling inside the Church



Refurbished Choir Stalls



Cornell Zimmer (the original commissioned maker of the Pipe Organ) cleaning the pipes and box casing



The new HVAC for the Church

Orchard:

The orchard has turned into a one man operation. Norm has family problems that keep him at home or on the road to procedures for his wife Ginger.

We had expected figs before now but there are lots of green figs but not much ripening. My figs at home have ripened, and between us, friends, birds and other critters the fruit is gone. I picked one ripe fig in the orchard last week. I hope there will be a bigger surprise this week.

I have been mowing around the persimmon trees in the field. Keeping the ground clear under the drip line will make mowing easier for the heavy equipment. Dennis told me that low branches are a hazard for the big mowers. I can make that safer and if I can mow often enough.

The deer have been pruning the low persimmons. I find the fruit under the trees and there isn't much to prevent it. Here's hoping they will reach a point where they can no longer reach. Here's hoping for shorter deer.

Howard



Astringent Persimmons (Howard Bridgman)



Satsuma Mandarin Orange (Howard Bridgman)

Looks like there will be a feast for the Monks and maybe at the Farmer's Market.

Institute for Regenerative Agriculture:



Father Joe commissioning Jordan and Walid plus Jimmy and Joanna (who run the program)



Farm Program Greenhouse (Walid on left and Jordan on the right)

The new program is up and running and Jimmy has agreed to keep us updated about what is going on. Here is his report:

The farm program is running nicely, we have 3 men here learning different farming techniques. We have 11,000 plants started in the greenhouse. We're preparing a field to plant winter crops now. It really looks beautiful. We expect challenges but feel now is the time to share farm knowledge.

We are planning a plant sale the first week of September. We'll have kale, broccoli, lettuce, mustard, collards and Napa cabbage. We also have lemon

grass to grow indoors. There may be more but that's a good start. The dates aren't nailed down yet but it will be the first week of September.

Jimmy

Please go to the Mepkin Website to read about this exciting program, headed by Jimmy Livingston (who also manages the Mushroom Operation).
www.mepkinabbey.org

Comment: As you remember, there is a Farmer's Market next to the Store where they will hold their sale. We, in the Garden Program, plan to have some succulent arrangements and Brother Joseph Fig Plants. We are really excited about this happening at the Abbey. It will provide an income for the Brothers, at a time when everything had to shut down. Thanks to those of you who sent donations to help the Brothers at this time. It is greatly appreciated.

Luce Garden:

While we were unable to come into the Mepkin Grounds, the ponds did not get the dark blue dye that we use to keep the algae under control. It was so happy, it bloomed! We are working currently to get rid of it. You know Mother Nature—she will expand anytime she can!



Lower Pond blooming algae (Sylvia Bras)

Odds and Ends:

Congratulations to Brother Juan, who made his Solemn Vows on August 15th.



Brother Juan during his Solemn Vow Rite

We are thrilled to present a new Volunteer, Paul Meyer



Paul Meyer

Welcome, Paul. We are so glad you have joined us.

Despite not being able to host the Annual Volunteer Picnic, Father Joe awarded the 1000 hour plaques to Linda Perkis, Richard Demonte, Jill Ewell and Greg Ewell



Linda, Richard, Fr Joe, Jill and Greg

With preparing for Fall, we could use Volunteers to help us put things in order as the season changes. Come join us at Mepkin Gardens! Contact Dennis



Nelson at MepkinAbbeyVolunteers@gmail.com

You can reach Dennis at 843-709-8362 or

My thanks to Howard, Sylvia, and Father Jonas for the photos. This Newsletter would have been pictureless without them!

“Working in a Garden makes us keep fit, to connect with others, to enjoy and be part of nature and to revel in color, wildlife and beauty. Simply contemplating nature helps to rest and recharge our brains.” The Well-Being Garden



Bird of Paradise from Greenhouse

I can never refused to put Father Guerric's wonderful arrangements in the Newsletter. What he does with materials from the Greenhouse and the Grounds brings God's beauty to our settings. Thank you, Guerric for this gift.

See you next month. Keep safe. Thank God for your blessings, dottie