

Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

November 2020



Masked Garden Volunteers at Annual Lunch Meeting

I want to take this opportunity to feature almost all of our incredible Garden Volunteers. These people come in freezing weather and in above 100-degree weather, always taking health precautions. They support each other in work and in friendship. They ask nothing but to be here to make “the place” say welcome to each Visitor and support the Brothers. Thank you one and all for all that you do.

In October, we continued to fine tune the systems for maintaining the various areas of the grounds and renewed the practice of staying after work, eating lunch or a snack and sharing fellowship.

In November our schedule calls for the final feeding and cutting back the roses, mulching the leaves on the lawns with the Zerturn as well as raking leaves for compost. We will wait pruning shrubs until they go dormant for winter. This is the time we plant trees and shrubs to give them time to get their roots established before a hard freeze. I noticed that the Nandina and Holly had set green berries-and lots of them-which supposedly means a really cold winter. We will be mulching up plants that need protection.

Updates on the Gardens:

Store:

Do not forget to shop in the Store. There is a wonderful display of Christmas Ornaments and gifts.

St. Clare:

St. Clare Walk is our highlight this month. Normally we would be getting ship shape everywhere in preparation for the Creche Festival. Kathy sent me these photos to show that St. Clare is already preening for Visitors.



Ginger Blooming



Agapanthus and Leopard Plants



Encore Azalea bed



Sago Palm



Statue Cleaned

The photo brings me to report that Kathy has been struggling without readily available water for many months. You can imagine what it

takes to carry the hoses from the Store or in buckets. Thanks to Brother John and Joel, they have made the miracle of straightening out the water problem here and also readying the source for piping water to the new Memorial Arbor. Thank you Brother John and Joel for this gift.

The Cloister:

It took me several tries to get a butterfly on the Russian Salvia this year. They kept jumping around. Like the bees, they only stay still for Father Jonas when he is taking photos!



Butterflies on Russian Salvia



See how they hold still for Father Jonas?

Even more exciting in the Cloister are the new plantings in the raised beds:



Replanted flower beds for Father Guerric



Raised beds with edibles



Replanted herb beds

The Sweet Grass on the steps is also showing its beauty:



Orchard:

I have been picking a few figs each week. They have been small and not very juicy. The ripe figs get some color, sag and feel soft. There haven't been enough to take to the kitchen so my fellow volunteers have a few to share.

The electric fence surrounding the orchard has been malfunctioning almost weekly. The transformer has a pulsing light that indicates current is traveling through the wires. If the wire is grounded it's not effective and the light doesn't flash. Each week I check the transformer, if the light is off, I walk the perimeter looking for sagging wires. The wires indicate a broken insulator or wire. I have spare parts but it does get to be a drag. We need to determine whether animals or humans cause the malfunction.

The only fruit we have left are oranges and thankfully the critters don't seem to care for them.

What will I find next week?

Howard

Institute for Regenerative Agriculture:

First, I want to report that Jimmy's son, Gray, is out of the hospital and "doing very well." He spends his day stretching, exercising and wound massage. It takes all day. He's on the mend and hopes to be fully independent in a few months." Amazing what prayer can do. You Prayer Warriors-keep praying. It's working!

Jimmy's report:

The farm is moving forward, we planted 2,000 strawberry plants this week. We also have onions, kale, lettuce, artichoke, broccoli, and collards planted and growing. Next week we'll mulch the entire garden, install irrigation and set up an electric fence to keep the deer out.

Columbarium:

The sweet grass is out and as beautiful as ever.



At entry to Columbarium

Odds and Ends:

Just so you don't think all is easy at Mepkin, here is the latest mishap to report. A water break between St. Gerard (Business Office) and the Walk to the Church.



Garden Volunteer Annual Lunch Meeting:

All work and no play....the Annual Lunch Meeting was a huge success. Everyone was willing to distance and mask up, just to have our Annual Lunch. It is a time we talk about all we have accomplished this past year and set the Goals for 2021. Thanks to Ursula, Sylvia and Dennis, it happened!



Ursula, the Queen of the parties! This might not have happened if she had not kept saying we needed this. Unfortunately, Sylvia took all these photos, so I don't have a photo of her. Thank you, ladies. As usual, you outdid yourselves.



Here is Dennis, new head of grounds and gardens, holding the meeting and passing out the new Goals suggested.



**Here are two Volunteers that have been here longer than I have!
Howard (Orchard) and Gail (weeder par excellence)**



Here are our two Mormon guys, who are amazing in their work. There might be a chance we get the girls back in the area also. They all have been such a gift to our garden program.



Here is Karen (Jane, as we dubbed her, for her affinity to vines), Kathy in green (St. Clare) and with her back to us, Jill (who with her husband Greg) does it all-from Garden Volunteer, to Docent, to giving programs about Mepkin to Garden Clubs, etc.

Goals for MA Garden Program 2021:

1 Maintain grounds with a sense of Ownership

Examples	Gail/Jill- Luce Gardens	Kathy – St. Clare
	Sylvia – Cloister Area	Ann – Greenhouse
	Howard/ Norm – Orchard	Mary -St. Bernard

With a crew to help each area as needed.

2 Grow the volunteer program and make the experience enjoyable.

A) Notice in church bulletins

B) Ask friends and neighbors to come out with you

C) Contact Garden Clubs – Jill and Greg have a power point Presentation if the clubs are interested

3 Develop Memorial Arbor per plan

- 4 Clean up Magnolia Alley between The Friends of Mepkin Cemetery and Columbarium**
- 5 Continue clean up of Farm**
- 6 Return to lunch under the Oak**
- 7 Have rain day cleanups of gators, breakroom and toolroom**
- 8 We have some vendors and gardens that want to donate plants to Mepkin, but first we need to install a mist and drip irrigation system in the greenhouse to cut down on required manual watering. With this in place we could grow some annuals and perennials. Again, we would need another volunteer or two to make this work**

As you can see, Volunteering can be rewarding. We would love to have anyone join us who wants a day of living in God's special place and feeling their work is worthwhile. We get so much more than we give.

Contact Dennis Nelson at MepkinAbbeyVolunteers@gmail.com



You can reach Dennis at 843-830-9349

Thanks to Howard and Jimmy for their reports. My thanks to Sylvia, Dennis, and Father Jonas for the photos.

We plan to start the Memorial Arbor the first two weeks of November. Plans are in place, contract obtained and needed work on drainage,

etc. will commence at the time the Arbor is planted. As I mentioned before, Brother John and Joel have seen to the water source being available. When the work is done, I will have the information on how to purchase a bench or memorialize the grove of trees. You can purchase a brick now. Go to www.mepkinabbey.org and you will find the information. Here is a teaser:



Dennis has restored the old Mepkin sign

I have spoken about the world is filled with Rhythms. This month's *Magnolia Journal* has as its theme "Rhythms." "There is a peace in rhythm. There is a security and predictability...not stagnant, just enough to make us feel like everything is going to be okay....We'll lean into the rhythms of our lives because they give us a sense of place in our (personal) story...We embrace the rhythm of the season and we find peace in the way it moves." *Magnolia Journal issue no.16*. Come to Mepkin and find that rhythm in the grounds and gardens, in the never-ending praying of the Monks, time to find room in the day to simply be.

Blessings to each of you,

dottie