



Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

April 2021

Monthly Maintenance

Spring is officially here and it's time to feed our flowering shrubs such as the azaleas and camelias, as well as apply aluminum sulfate to the hydrangeas (this is needed to reduce the pH to 5-5.5). We're continuing to clean up the spent blooms from around the camelia trees. It is also time to divide the chrysanthemums and daylilies. The azaleas are starting to show their glorious color and the pink magnolia buds are popping out.

Gift Shop

The Gift Shop is still running their sale of the Willow figurines at 40% off. In addition, the sachets are also still 40% off from last month. There's also a nice selection of porcelain figurines by Foundation which depict angels in various poses with inspirational phrases. The store also has a monthly angel in case you know someone who has a birthday coming up.





Foundation Angels

Don't forget to stop by the Gift Shop to pick up your bags of compost for your spring planting. Single bags are \$3.99 and if you buy 20 bags or more, the price is reduced to \$2.99 a bag.



Luce Gardens



The magnolia is budding in the Luce Garden.



An alligator enjoying the beautiful spring scenery by the pond.



Azaleas reflecting off the pond.

Cloister



A squirrel hanging around looking for food.



Spring flowers at the Cloister.

Orchard

The orchard has been growing fast. I had left the covers on the citrus for fear we would have a cold spell but weather reports gave me confidence. Fingers crossed.

I found two more blueberries at our local grocery store. That makes 5 new plants this year. In the first year I will need to concentrate on plant growth rather than fruit. I hope the deer will leave them alone. I put large tomato rings over the plants. There are some colorful flags to hopefully scare the deer.

We have electric fencing, but it isn't foolproof. My task each week is to walk the fence looking for breaks. We have been lucky lately and let's hope it holds up. Spring is here??
Howard

Agriculture Regenerative Institute

So far, the farmers have learned how to go from seed to sale. We are beginning to plant our summer crops this week. We planted sweet corn last week and it's already sprouting. We've all been busy trying to keep plants organized and healthy. So far, not one synthetic chemical has been used in the growing of these starts. To date, the farmers donated 1,200 plants to 3 different community gardens. The hope is we can supply community gardens with starter plants, compost, as well as technical support. They, in turn, will provide vegetables for their community.

We see great promise for the future, but we just need to refine our process. The evidence of community support has been obvious and we hope to see it grow.

Jimmy

The following pictures are of the vegetable plants for sale.





Abbey News

Brother Matthew Enters the Novitiate

On the Feast of the Annunciation, Thursday, March 25, Brother Matthew completed his year as a postulant and entered the novitiate. He was welcomed by Father Joe and the community after Vespers. Brother Matthew now joins Brother Ambrose as our two novices.



Brother Matthew, center, surrounded by Father Joe and Father Kevin, the Novice Master

Volunteer Spring Plant Sale

Even though March 20th was the first day of spring, you could have fooled Mother Nature. The First Annual Mepkin Abbey Garden Volunteers Spring Plant Sale was a resounding success despite the chilly weather and biting wind. Crowds came out and purchased all the hanging baskets and dish gardens available and there was only a small selection of plants remaining at the end of the sale. Robert Macdonald, a Mepkin Archivist, sat with his bundled-up audience under an oak tree to provide them a history of the Abbey. Vivian Whorley, a landscape consultant on native plants, was also on hand to answer questions from the crowd.

There was also ukulele music provided by Jim and Cheryl Ravoira, otherwise known as “The Charleston Hot Shots”. If you weren’t able to hear them in person at the sale, you can click on the link below to hear some of their soothing sounds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8meidMJcNE>



Shoppers checking out the succulent dish gardens.



A variety of plants and hanging baskets were available.



Attendees listening to Robert Macdonald talk on Mepkin's history.



The Charleston Hot Shots performing.

The Gift Shop also saw a lot of foot traffic the day of the sale and did a great business. There were also 12 individuals who expressed an interest in becoming volunteer gardeners.

Special thanks to all volunteers and friends of volunteers involved with the planning, preparation and participation in the sale. Also, a shout out to the men who helped with parking. Plans are being made for the fall sale to be held in the October timeframe.

Did You Know?

If you're having a problem with deer feeding on your plants, Dottie shared a link from Brownswood Nursery listing which plants they don't like:

[Plants Deer Don't Prefer](#)

Check This Out

Due to staying indoors because of Covid, I've been spending more time in front of the TV than ever before. Fortunately, I've stumbled upon a YouTube channel where I've learned a great deal of gardening information. Linda Vater is an avid gardener and a TV personality who resides in Oklahoma City. Each week she shares her garden with us, as well as tours of other gardens, tips, garden thrift ideas, and how to's as she lives a 'garden inspired life'. She has an affinity for topiaries, especially boxwood, and has several videos on her channel on how to shape one. In addition to YouTube, you can follow Linda on FaceBook, Instagram, and on her blog at www.lindavater.com. Below is the link to her YouTube videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8cHt-SAeWJ5En1TNnryCVA>

NOTE: If you watch her weekly walkthrough of her front yard, make sure to check out her video from late October when a severe ice storm did major damage to her yard. It is absolutely amazing how much survived the weather and is now blooming.

Garden Inspiration

Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world.

- Virgil A. Kraft

Special Thanks

First of all, a big thank you to Dottie Roddy for spending time transitioning the newsletter tasks and providing me with all the information I need to take over for her. I have big shoes to fill! Also, thank you to Dennis, Dottie, Sylvia, and Fr. Gerard Jonas for the photos

in this issue. There were so many beautiful ones of the plants and grounds it was difficult to decide which ones to include! As always, thank you to Howard and Jimmy for their updates.

Feel free to drop me a line with any feedback or suggestions you may have.

Leslie