



## **Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter**

**June 2021**

My sincere apologies to anyone who needed to turn their head sideways to view some of the photos in May's newsletter. The problem occurred when viewing the newsletter on a cell phone and it was only on some of the pictures. I am now emailing the newsletter to myself and checking it out on my phone before distributing!

### **Monthly Maintenance**

We started off the month of May with some heavy rain, as evidenced below with the appearance of the blooming ferns on the oak trees. Unfortunately, the rest of the month was very dry.



*Looking up at the ferns on the oak tree*

The volunteers have been busy this past month pruning azalea bushes. Maybe pruning is not the right word – major downsizing is more like it. The picture below from Luce Gardens shows the original height of the azaleas and what it looks like after being cut. They will fill out and look beautiful next spring. This will be a several month project to get through the vast number of bushes in Luce Garden, as well as the other plants spread throughout the Abbey.



*The front of the azaleas after the pruning. There are a few feet difference between the front and the back of the bushes. There were a lot of trips made to the pile to empty the gator.*

In June the volunteers will be busy weeding and cutting the perennials. Those perennials which are finished blooming will have their spent blooms cut, and any which will bloom later will be trimmed and fertilized. It is also time to divide and transplant perennials. Roses and gardenias can be fed in June.



*White gardenia in bloom in Monastic area*



*The magnolias in Magnolia Alley are beginning to bloom.*

## **Gift Shop**

New gift and food merchandise has arrived at the gift shop. If you are looking for a gift for Father's Day, they have jarred items such as flavored mustards (the honey mustard is great on sourdough pretzels), pasta sauce, and an amazing shrimp cocktail sauce (Angel's favorite!). The gift shop also still has sales on sachets, figurines, and Easter items. And Angel is planning on having pop up sales each weekend on different merchandise, so stop by to see what this weekend's specials are!

The gift shop is also selling planters and hanging baskets from the volunteer greenhouse.



*The front of the gift shop is in bloom with color. The potted plants from the greenhouse are filling out nicely.*





*A succulent in a cute cat container.*



*Another succulent available in a pretty container.*

**St. Clare**



*African Lily (Agapanthus)*





*Morning dew on these pretty white flowers*



*Pomegranate tree with red blooms*

## **Luce Gardens**



*Blue hydrangeas by the steps*



*Mother Nature's flowers offset a morning fisherman.*



*The Mepkin Gator going for his morning swim in the blue pond.*



## Cloister



*Pineapple guava bushes by the old dorm*



*Close up of a pineapple guava bloom*





*A busy bee on the peach snapdragons in the Cloister*

## **Orchard**

The orchard has been looking shabby since the high wheel mower was giving out. The mower used ether to get it started and lately the belt that turns the blade was slipping several times a cutting. Dennis is coming to the rescue and will get a new motor and belt so we should be in good shape. He also mowed the orchard with the zero-turn mower to make it look more respectable.

The blueberries are looking healthy. It is recommended to remove the first season berries to allow the strength to go to the plant and not just the berries.

The figs and persimmons are looking good. We need to design a watering system for them. I had to stretch a couple of hoses to reach all the plants in the orchard. Some rain would help too. The courtyard has 3 fig bushes that were protected by the big oak.

Howard



*One of two orange trees in the orchard.*



*A close up of the small oranges growing on the trees.*



## Columbarium

Mother's Day was in May and there were many beautiful arrangements and tokens of love left at the Columbarium in remembrance of Mom.



*A beautiful mixed arrangement of flowers.*

## Memorial Arbor

Many of the newly planted items are now in bloom. The tractor seats have arrived and are planted.



*The newly planted lantana and plumbago highlight the old Mepkin Abbey sign.*



*One of two new Memorial Benches for the Arbor*



*Dwarf gardenias*

If you or someone you know is looking for a way to honor and remember a loved one, please consider purchasing a brick. The proceeds of the bricks are used for the volunteer gardener program. To find out more about this program and order a Memorial Brick, click [here](#).



## Agriculture Regenerative Institute

Jimmy and his team are still conducting plant sales on Saturdays from 9 AM to 1 PM. Spread the word to others of their offerings.



*Entrance sign to Farmer's Market.*



*Herbs and plants for sale at Farmer's Market.*

## Beauty In Unexpected Places

I was in NC a few weeks ago to get my second COVID shot and stumbled upon the Brunswick County Botanical Gardens. The 13 individual gardens are in an unorthodox place – a campus of government buildings, including the county jail. They are maintained by the Extension Master Gardeners and it is amazing to see how they transformed the small space around the buildings. If you are ever in Bolivia, NC, I recommend stopping by and checking it out. More information on their gardens is found on their webpage [here](#).



*Covered arbor and fountain in the Welcome Garden*



*Herbs and plants in the Edible Garden*





*Colorful birdhouses – an idea for around the Gift Shop?*

## **Moore Farms Botanical Gardens Update**

A few days after our volunteer gardeners toured Moore Farms in Lake City, a fire struck the main farmhouse. There was extensive damage to the home of the owner, Darla Moore, and it was even more tragic given she recently lost her mother. Please keep Darla and her family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. They are suspending garden tours until July 1.

Click [here](#) to watch a video from their horticulturist, Lilly Turner, on watering your plants during dry heat.

Moore Farms held a photo contest during ArtFields. I do not know if any of our volunteers on the tour submitted any entries, but if you would like to see a video of the winning entries, click [here](#).

During our tour, many of you were interested in their bog gardens. They are offering a course on how to build one on Thursday, June 3, from 10 to Noon. The cost is \$35 per person and class size is limited. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## **Did You Know?**

Here is a great tip to ensure evenly spaced plants or bulbs. Use a large muffin tin to press into the soil to create an indentation for planting.



*Muffin tins used for evenly spaced holes*

Clemson Cooperative Extension is offering two online Zoom programs in June. Each course is \$10. Click [here](#) for home vegetable garden pest management and click [here](#) for nuisance wildlife pest management. And speaking of pest management, we typically show you all the beautiful pictures from the Abbey, but here is a realistic one we can all relate to.



*Something did not like our coleus... 😊*



## Check This Out

I love wisteria. There is nothing more beautiful or romantic to see it gracefully entwined and hanging from a pergola. Plus, I am a big fan of purple flowers. I keep checking the Mepkin plants behind the gift shop to see when they will be flowering, but alas, no blooms yet. Last year I bought one for my house and made the mistake of planting it along my fence. After realizing that a few years down the road my fence would be in pieces, we replanted it in front of a pine tree in the back of the house. It had a few blooms this year and is slowly starting to wind its way around the tree. This house in the Chelsea area of London was on the Instagram account, *bestcitiesofeuropa*. The purple wisteria against the backdrop of the white house is breathtaking and the shape is amazing!



## Garden Inspiration

The best place to find God is in a garden.

*~George Bernard Shaw*

## Special Thanks To

Some of the photos in the month's issue are courtesy of Kathy, Sylvia, Father Gerard, and Dottie. Thank you to Howard and Jimmy for their input.

I have been working by the Gift Shop lately and have had the opportunity to chat with some visitors while working. I want to relay to the Volunteer team their thanks on the work that we do to keep Mepkin beautiful. It is always nice to hear the appreciation from our visitors.

Leslie