



Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

December 2021

Monthly Maintenance

In addition to keeping the grounds looking tidy for the Creche Festival, the gardeners are also doing general garden cleanup, such as raking, picking up tree limbs and Spanish Moss, and cutting back volunteers on trees. There are also bulbs to be planted this time of year for the spring flowers.



A perfect late blooming rose with a backdrop of fall color (taken outside volunteer break room)

Gift Shop

The Gift Shop has been a flurry of activity during the Creche Festival. The special Creche Store will remain open until Saturday, December 4th, the last day of the Festival. You still have a few days left to check out their nativity scenes and holiday items from around the world, but hurry, as inventory is going fast. Below are some pictures of the stunning creches the store has for sale.

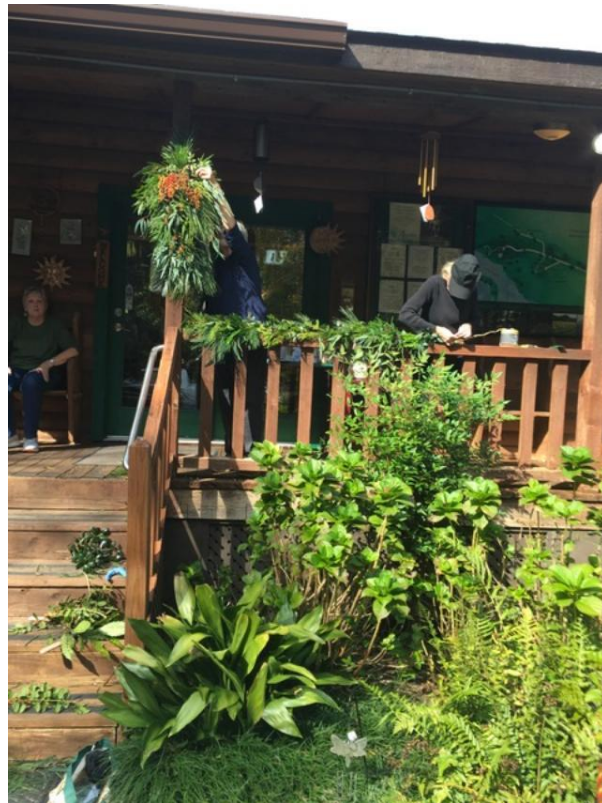




The Pinopolis Garden Club came to the Abbey to decorate the Gift Shop for the Creche Festival.



Using greens and berries from the Abbey gardens



Creating the swags and garland



The finished Gift Shop entrance



Decorating the new back steps

St. Clare's Walk



Pink Camellia



The Nandina berries lining the pathway are starting to turn red



The tractor seat in bloom

Cloister



A second round of blooms beside the church



The fiery red maple ablaze on top of the Administration Building

Luce Gardens

On Friday, November 19th, a group of 25 men and women from the Charleston Naval Weapons Station participated in a Day of Caring program at the Abbey. They helped clean up the bank of the pond that has been neglected for years next to Luce Gardens. Hopefully, we will be able to restore it back to its former beauty by Spring.





Blooming White Camellia

Also this month, Mepkin had five local students from the National Homeschool Honor Society work at the Abbey. Here are some photos from Lauren Smoak, one of the participants.



National Homeschool Honor Society Students



Cutting back the bamboo at the four corners



Cleaning up the dead Black-eyed Susan's at the wooden statues

Orchard

The fruit season at Mepkin is over. It has been a great season for oranges and persimmons. Dennis helped me tuck in the oranges. The wrap is "Frost Cloth". It was much easier than the various things we tried in past years. Each tree has a spotlight to generate heat. There are extension cords running from the building through a window. Dennis is building a cover to keep the lights dry. In the past, rain would blow out the bulbs and our rigged umbrella wasn't enough. We will add a thermostat plug that will put the lights on when needed. 🙏

I have been making the rounds carrying fruit to the retreat center and the kitchen. Enzo has a backlog of oranges and persimmons for the moment. The novelty of persimmons has worn off, but the oranges live on.

Brother Juan is bringing me coffee grounds from the kitchen to feed the blueberries. He had a pear tree that he is nurturing outside the fence.

Time to plan improvements for next year.

Howard



The season is over



The orange trees are being tucked in for the winter

Creche Festival – Part 1

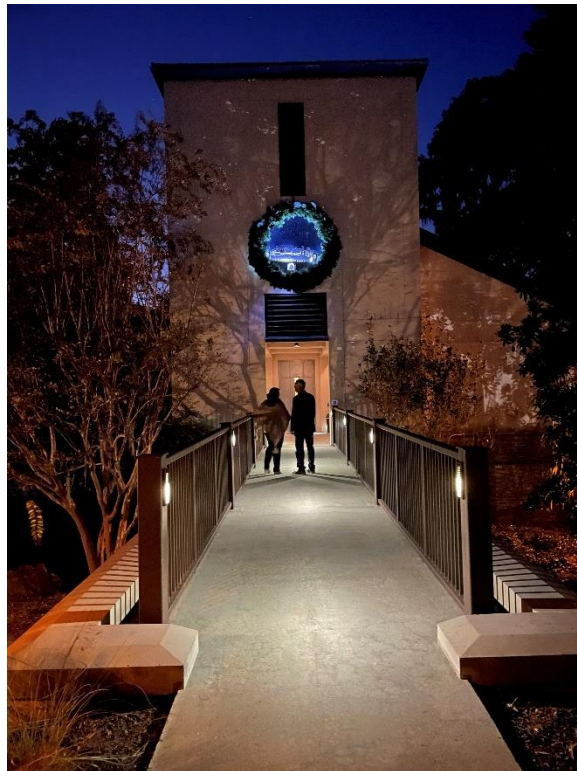
Here's a little tease of the Creche Festival with more to come in the next newsletter. The Festival continues until Saturday, December 4th. If you couldn't get tickets and would like to attend, please call the Abbey at 843-761-8509 to see if there are spots available.

Luke 2:1-12

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register. 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."



"Birth and Renewal" by Anna Koloseike of Asheville, NC



*Dennis and Jamie Nelson walking in front of the Library towards their wreath,
"Bethlehem Within"*



Mother of pearl inlays spotlight the central figures on this creche from Vietnam



Woven of banana leaf fibers, this creche from the Congo resembles a beehive



A traditional creche from Italy



A glass creche from Guatemala



This simplistic wooden creche from Ecuador is shaped like a bird house



Here's another simple, but stunning creche from Dan Howachyn, from Black Mountain, NC, entitled "Steel Nativity"

There will be more updates and photos from the Creche Festival in the January newsletter. The two chairs in charge of the Creche volunteers, Jackie Perevosnik and Amy Williams, would like to thank to all the volunteers and visitors for helping make this year's Mepkin Abbey Creche Festival a success. We look forward to having you join us in 2022 and information on next year's event will be published in a future newsletter.

Abbey News

Monks and guests from Holy Spirit Abbey in Conyers, GA, visited Mepkin's Creche Festival. While there, they shared in the community meal and toured the Farm and Gardens. It was a great moment for the Mepkin community to host their brothers and their guests.



Did You Know?

In last month's newsletter, we learned about the dwindling bird population and what you can do to help save them. If you are interested in saving the birds, subscribe to the Nature Centered from Wild Birds Unlimited podcast. This series focuses on feeding the birds and enjoying nature right in your own backyard. Podcasts are great to listen to when going on walks and they have over 40 in their library!

Garden Inspiration

When the world wearies, and society ceases to satisfy, there is always the garden.
~ Minnie Aumonier

Check This Out

I've mentioned Claus Dalby, a gardener from Denmark, in a past newsletter as he creates stunning potted arrangements with bulbs. He also does a spectacular job creating nature inspired Christmas decorations, such as centerpieces, Advent wreaths, and pots using objects from your garden. The beauty and simplicity of the arrangement below are a welcome respite from the commercialized holiday plastic. Claus also has a You Tube channel with various tutorials.



clausdalby 
Risskov, Aarhus, Denmark



Special Thanks To

Thank you to Howard, Jamie, Dennis, Sylvia, Fr. Joe, The Pinopolis Garden Club, Jackie Perevosnik, and Lauren Smoak for pictures and content for this newsletter.

Wishing you and your family kindness, goodness, joy, and love through this and every season.

Merry Christmas,
Leslie