



April 2026

Whew! At last Spring is here and not a moment too soon. And, boy is it bursting out in a big way at the Abbey! In every garden there are delights to behold. It was an unusually cold winter for our neck of the woods, and it is heartwarming to see so many of the shrubs, bulbs, and other bloomers that call the Lowcountry home coming to life and showing us just how resilient they can be in challenging times.

A turn of the season is not the only change that has taken place recently at the Abbey. Father Jonas was elected and installed as Abbot of Mepkin Abbey on January 15th. The Abbatial Blessing took place on March 14th. No photography was allowed, but you can watch a video of the Blessing on the Mepkin Abbey Website or view it on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdqUdZ9gGSk>.

Thanks so much to all the folks who shared their photos for this edition. Your contributions have resulted in a newsletter full of scenes taken around the Abbey as the month of March unfolded. Anyone who has photos or news they would like to share in our garden newsletter, feel free to email me directly or send your photos to: mepkingardenvolunteers@gmail.com.

-- LuAnne

Please Welcome Our New Volunteers!



Angie Reynolds-Prochazka has joined the Tuesday crew of garden volunteers. Originally from Charleston, West Virginia, she and her husband now reside in Mt. Pleasant. Welcome aboard, Angie!



A warm welcome to Georgiann Weiss, too! Her first day as a garden volunteer was Tuesday, March 10th. She and her husband are both from Pennsylvania, but have called Summerville home for quite a while now.

There's Always Something That Needs Doing!

As the following photos show, there is never a shortage of work for the garden volunteers, and we are truly grateful for that!! For instance, the tree in the photo below is one of the 20 dogwood trees planted back in January by a crew of Mepkin volunteers. The leaves appearing on the heretofore bare branches must bring a sigh of relief to all the folks involved with that laborious job and to those responsible for keeping them alive since they were planted.



The new leaves are promising, but the Lowcountry is currently experiencing a drought which adds to the challenge of keeping the young trees alive while they adapt to their new environment.

Always (cont'd)



Craig manned a backhoe on March 3rd to clear an area between Oak Allée and The Charleston 9 Memorial. Thanks, Sylvia, for this photo and the one that follows.

Always (cont'd)



The clearing of this section allows a better view of the Memorial as you approach it from the entrance to Mepkin.

Always (cont'd)



And, as Angie's photo shows, there is never a shortage of moss, branches, or leaves to be picked up and hauled away from the gardens.

Greenhouse Crew Nearly Ready for Annual Plant Sale

Mepkin's Annual Plant Sale is an event that is looked forward to with great anticipation each year by those who shop it and those who volunteer to work it. ***This year's sale takes place Saturday, April 11th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m***

Barb Misner and her greenhouse helpers have once again produced hundreds of plants that will be available for sale. The work for the annual event begins several months ahead of the actual sale and keeping the cuttings, divisions, and seedlings adequately watered, fertilized, weeded, and up-potted is no small feat.

There are a variety of ways you can be of service during the event. Volunteers are needed during the hours of 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., but you don't have to sign on for the entire time. Any time you can give is fine.



As in past years there is a large variety of the beautiful multi-colored, multi-purpose coleus to mix and match.

Greenhouse (cont'd)



The white sticks say Habanero, so you know these pepper plants are going home with folks who love to add some intense heat to their culinary creations.

Greenhouse (cont'd)



It's inspiring to know that some of the season's tastiest vegetables and herbs to come out of your home garden in a few weeks started as tiny seeds planted in 4-inch pots in the Abbey's greenhouse.

Greenhouse (cont'd)



And, it looks like an even larger selection of dish gardens full of interesting succulents will be available at this year's sale.

By Special Arrangement

Thanks so much to Ursula Wells for her photos of the arrangements on display in the church for The Abbatial Blessing on March 14th and during Palm Sunday, March 29th.



This pretty mixture of colorful flowers and greenery brightened the Church for The Abbatial Blessing.

Arrangement (cont'd)



Arrangements of burgundy and white flowers helped to convey meaning to the event taking place and the ongoing season of Lent.

Arrangement (cont'd)



On March 29th, Palm Sunday, a display of palm fronds marked the occasion inside the church...

Arrangement (cont'd)



...as did this arrangement of brightly colored flowers.

Arrangement (cont'd)



Worshippers were also treated to palm roses beautifully crafted by Brothers of the Abbey.

Azaleas Put on a Beautiful Display in Luce Garden

Luce garden is beautiful anytime of the year, but when the azaleas are in bloom it is truly a sight to behold. The shrubs were putting on a stunning show on St. Patrick's Day and visitors are still being treated to a dazzling display. Thanks so much to Angie for contributing her gorgeous photos to this month's newsletter. The shots she took of the garden that morning are included with others I shot later that same day.



Azaleas (cont'd)



Photo by Angie

Azaleas (cont'd)



Photo by Angie

Azaleas (cont'd)



Photo by Angie

Azaleas (cont'd)



Photo by Angie

Azaleas (cont'd)



Photo Above by Angie



Azaleas (cont'd)



Azaleas (cont'd)



In Other Spots Around Luce Garden...



Thanks to Phil Pasci for the photos on this page and the next that captured Luce Garden displaying its late winter offerings. Just beyond the hedge is a small tree covered in pink blossoms.



And, Clare Boothe Luce's favorite shrub, the white camellia, blooms behind our Lady of Mepkin.

Luce (cont'd)



During the first week of March, when Phil took these photos, the daffodils were bursting out on both sides of the garden near the river.

Luce (cont'd)



Bridal wreath (Spirea) is one of those shrubs, like azaleas, that we hardly notice until they bloom. Luce Garden is home to many of the shrubs.



Luce (cont'd)



Planted all along the terraced "rooms" of Luce Gardens, Spirea puts on its display for only a short time each year.

And Elsewhere at the Abbey...



The Cherokee Roses are in bloom again near the Meditation Garden of Truth and Reconciliation.

Elsewhere (cont'd)



The dogwood blooming at the crossroads is a great compliment for the azaleas in bloom there ...

Elsewhere (cont'd)



...and for the wisteria that blooms in the same spot.

Elsewhere (cont'd)



This brightly colored azalea is located behind the visitors center. There is another like it planted near the Library. This variety produces its flowers first and then puts on its leaves.

Elsewhere (cont'd)



The raised beds in the Cloister are full of flowers. Tall and elegant irises are keeping company with glads, snapdragons, and pansies .

Elsewhere (cont'd)



Photo by Ursula

Ready for Their Close-up



Photo above by Paul Meyer.



From snow white ...

Close-up (cont'd)



... to hot pink! Spring blooms brightly at Mepkin Abbey!

Contemplating the Month Ahead

Spring is not only the season of hope, it also comes with some promises as well. Important upcoming dates for the Abbey and Christians around the world is April 3, Good Friday, and April 5th, Easter. No matter how you observe these dates, may that time bring you peace and joy.

Don't forget to mark your calendars and to spread the word of the upcoming Plant Sale. Shop early; stay late! Volunteers are still needed, so come out and lend a hand if only for a little while.

MEPKIN ABBEY

PLANT SALE

APRIL 11th

9:00 am-2:00 pm



Coleus, figs, vegetables, herbs, perennials, ferns,
palms, dish gardens