MEPKIN ABBEY

Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

June 2026

The weather in May was a mixed bag of temperatures but remained quite comfortable most days for those who were out in it. Rain was in the forecast more often and when it came at last every living thing benefited from the break in the long drought. Every new month brings changes with it, and we know that the pleasant temperatures we have experienced this spring will yield soon to the hot, sticky days of summer.

Every day at Mepkin is an occasion to delight in the renewed and sometimes the brand new as well. In this month's newsletter, you will find photos that have captured some of both. Thanks to everyone who contributed photos and inspired the contents of this edition. Anyone who has photos or news they would like to share in the Garden Newsletter, feel free to email me directly or send your photos to: *mepkingardenvolunteers@gmail.com.*

-- LuAnne

Program Gifted with Two More Pieces of Equipment

Nothing quickens the beat of a garden volunteer's heart more than the sight of a new ride! Craig says the new lawn mower and Gator seen here "should set us up into the foreseeable future with dependable and safe equipment to traverse the wide expanses of Mepkin." Both are gifts from Craig's mom, Karen Clark (and his dad). We are all so very thankful for these latest gifts and remain forever grateful for the other Gators that Karen and her husband, Hill, have so generously donated to Mepkin's garden volunteer program in the past year.

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest Volunteers

Meet Maryann Zambrzycki! Maryann recently moved to the Lowcountry from New York. She currently resides in Summerville and has joined the Wednesday crew.

Volunteers (cont'd)

Welcome Kirk Richter, too! Originally from California, Kirk now calls Mt. Pleasant home. On a recent Tuesday, he was tasked with pruning the pears on the wall at the orchard.

Former Volunteer Stops By for a Visit

Former longtime garden volunteer and docent, Kathy Mitchell, (2nd from the right) stopped by for a visit on May 20th. Kathy moved back to Tennessee a few years ago but still has ties to the Lowcountry. We hope that means we will see her again before too long.

Feeling "Glad" All Over

Not that there is a contest going on in the gardens of Mepkin, but if there was, the clear winners are the gladiolus growing at the Cloister. Craig shared this gorgeous shot of these knock-your-socks-off beauties.

Glad (cont'd)

Ursula provided this close-up showing the mix of colors in a single bed. The lonely little zinnia up front pales in comparison to these show-offs.

<u>Glad (cont'd)</u>

In this photo also shared by Ursula, the bell tower in the background adds another level of reverence for their exquisite beauty.

Glad (cont'd)

Among all the gladiolus planted in the beds, the one that stands far above the rest is this over-achiever. What this pure white beauty lacks in sensational color, it makes up in sheer exuberance.

Glad (cont'd)

And we can thank Ursula again for contributing this wide-angle view of the raised beds filled with such great "glad-ness."

More Happy Places, More Happy Plants!

The hydrangeas are beautiful in front of the store, but the attention grabber is the Spigelia -- those bright red and yellow flowers that quickly filled every empty space and more in this large bed.

Happy (cont'd)

This little perennial gem is native to North America. It's great for attracting hummingbirds, if you don't mind it spreading to other spaces in your garden.

Happy (cont'd)

Ah, lovely lace cap. Craig snapped this photo outside St. Clare.

A single calla lily blooms beside bright yellow lillies in the Cloister.

Happy (cont'd)

Thanks to Georgeann for providing this photo of Easter lilies blooming in a bed outside the Cloister. A true trumpeter of spring, notice how nearly every blossom appears to point in the same direction.

Happy (cont'd)

More than gladiolus are competing for space in the raised beds at the Cloister. Ursula shared this photo of tall pink phlox.

Happy (cont'd)

Gaura blossoms dance in the wind in a bed outside the Cloister in this photo from Ursula.

Happy (cont'd)

In a scene reminiscent of Monet's Water Lily Series, these aquatic blooms (Nymphaea) were spotted in the pond that lies just beyond the mushroom house.

Happy (cont'd)

But unlike those in Monet's paintings, these water lilies are located in a wilder place and you will need binoculars or zoom lens to see them upclose.

By Special Arrangement

Thank you, Ursula, for providing photos of the beautiful arrangements that Fr. Guerric created for the Church during the month of May.

This lovely arrangement of flowers greeted worshippers attending the service on Sunday, May 10th.

Arrangement (cont'd)

The splashes of color inside the blossom and the purplish tint of some of the petals make these lilies especially interesting.

Arrangement (cont'd)

Deep purple gladiolus, a color associated with introspection, and Easter Lilies, symbolic of hope and rebirth, come together in this beautiful arrangement for Sunday, May 17th.

<u>Arrangement (cont'd)</u>

An arrangement of red, white, and blue to honor those who died in military service graced the church on the Sunday before Memorial Day.

Encounters with Mepkin's Wild Side

Sylvia spotted a broadhead skink hanging out at the Columbarium and snapped his picture. Broadheads are the largest of the skinks that inhabit the southeastern U.S.

Encounters (cont'd)

Barb provided this photo of what she believes are lizard eggs. They were discovered in the soil mix used in the greenhouse. She says, "the mix is stored outside under a tarp but an industrious reptile could easily burrow in." She added that "there are eleven native lizards in the Lowcountry [and] the eggs were placed in a moist spot in the woods to hatch."

<u>Encounters (cont'd)</u>

Killdeers were spotted recently at the farm. They are, interestingly, shore birds who are often found far from water in cultivated fields and open pastures. Their name derives from their call.

Encounters (cont'd)

A threat to their territory or their young will prompt their broken wing behavior which serves as a distraction. A zoom lens and fast shutter speed was required to capture these moments in a photo.

Familiar Plants in a Far Away Place

Greg shared some photos of plants he and Jill encountered during their visit to Baunei, Sardinia, which he explained is "a village perched high up on a limestone mountain, built around 1015 by goat herders to protect from Arab invaders."

Greg commented, "Norfolk Island Pines never look this good when I see them in the USA." He added "the red bougainvillea add a nice touch."

<u>Familiar (cont'd)</u>

A familiar sight in the Lowcountry, Crimson Bottle Brush doesn't look quite as lovely here at home as it does on this Mediterranean island.

Greg identified these blossoms as "lesser bougainvillea." This attractive vine of small purple flowers also goes by the more flattering name of Paperflower here in the States.

Spanish Moss. So Much A Part of the Landscape

Moss finds its way into so many photos taken at Mepkin. In this shot shared by Ursula, a Cardinal rests upon a low wall under the canopy of a moss-draped oak outside the Church.

Moss (cont'd)

The serpentine wall and the building behind it blend in nicely with the surrounding landscape in this shot filled with moss covered branches.

Moss (cont'd)

And moss frames the upper half of this view of the Cooper River.

Moss (cont'd)

Georgeann's photo above reminds us that one way to experience the beauty and timelessness of Mepkin is to gaze at the sky through the limbs of its many moss-covered oaks.

And Lastly – A Couple of Odds and Ends

Pond in the woods with water lilies.

Lastly (cont'd)

Hay baler and dragon fly.

Contemplating the Month Ahead

Producing the newsletter always feels a bit like weaving together moments frozen in time that can be recalled and shared with you at the beginning of each month. Whether these frozen moments come home with me (by way of my phone and SLR camera) or someone sends them to me via text or email, I can't wait to get them loaded onto my large computer screen to better see what has been captured. Whether I am viewing photos taken by others or my own, I am, through the magic of pixels, instantly transported to some part of Mepkin from the comfort of my home. It is my hope that is exactly what others experience when they view those same digital images here. So, again, thanks to everyone who contributes photos to the newsletter. We welcome the opportunity to see each of your Mepkin moments frozen in time.

Speaking of time, what goes around comes back around. It's Hurricane Season once again. Time to review your hurricane preparedness situations so that you can be ready for whatever threats may come our way this year.

June 14th is Flag Day. We will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence next month, but it was only 249 years ago, June 14, 1777, that the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution to create our nation's flag.

***Juneteenth*, which commemorates the end of slavery in America, will be celebrated on June 19th. You might wish to commemorate this important event with a stroll through The Meditation Garden of Truth and Reconciliation.**

And, last but not least, to all the dads out there, we wish you a wonderful Father's Day! Your special day happens to fall this year on the first day of summer, June 21st.

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