MEPKIN ABBEY

Mepkin Abbey Garden Newsletter

October 2026

September brought welcomed relief from the extreme temperatures we experienced in August. The cooler temps lifted our Mepkin spirit and gave a boost of energy we hadn't felt in a while. Notably, too, weather-wise, we are now in our fifth month of hurricane season, and we can be very grateful that it has been an extremely quiet season so far this year.

October marks the 13th anniversary of the Garden Newsletter, and it has been a great pleasure of mine to bring it to you for the last three of those thirteen years. The beauty and wonder of Mepkin Abbey can leave one awestruck and I get to experience that every time I see the awesome photos of others who share what they have witnessed and captured each month. There is only so much we can discover on our own. It's nice to be among friends willing to share their discoveries with the rest of us. Thank you!

-- LuAnne

Improvements to Abbey Buildings Carried Out in September

The business office received a new coat of paint and work began outside the Cloister for a new HVAC system.

Mepkin Blooms, Berries, and Toad Stools

There are two pots of bougainvillea planted near the Retreat Center, but this was the only one in bloom. Its vibrant flowers commanded closer examination and admiration.

Blooms (cont'd)

The petals are specialized leaves called bracts. Whatever you want to call them, the color can only be described as intense.

The lovely million bells planted in a pot near the refectory repeated the color of the bougainvillea but couldn't quite pull off the intensity.

Blooms (cont'd)

A podocarpus shrub full of colorful berries was a surprising find. The red and blue-green berries are edible and birds and small animals love them. But the small green "berry" is a seed, and it is toxic.

Blooms (cont'd)

Sylvia spotted these clusters of tiny mushrooms clinging to a stump near the secular cemetery.

From this angle, they resemble little huts stacked on the side of a mountain. Nature's version of condo living??

Bees, Butterflies, and More Blooms

We can thank Fr. Jonas for these amazing closeup photos of beautiful blossoms and busy bees.

Bees (cont'd)

What appears to be a monarch butterfly can be seen in the middle of the tall flowers growing outside the refectory. This is a popular spot for other varieties of these beautiful insects.

Bees (cont'd)

The blooms of mallow growing in the ravine is another great spot for butterfly watching. Thanks, Paul, for these wonderful photos.

Bees (cont'd)

Capturing a sharp image of the camera-shy cloudless sulphur butterfly can be challenging, but Craig also managed to snap a great photo of one of these delightful creatures whose presence we can enjoy for only a brief time.

Tree Meets Wall – A Lesson in Adaptability?

What's that old saying? "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em." There has obviously been some friction between this wall and this tree in St. Clare for some time, but the tree seems to have found the work around.

By Special Arrangement

Special thanks to Ursula for providing the following photos of the arrangements for the Church from the past few weeks.

The flowers and shiny green and yellow leaves of shell ginger became a strikingly beautiful arrangement for August 30th.

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

An attractive arrangement of white mums and green ferns greeted worshippers on September 13th.

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

A gorgeous combination of beautiful blooms in pale pink and white graced the Church on September 20th.

Arrangement (cont'd)

A simple arrangement of the leaves and the creamy white, bell-shaped flowers of a yucca plant were brought together in this impressive display for September 27th.

Seeking Variety? Think Variegated.

If your garden has reached the point that there isn't much in bloom and the scene has become a little monotonous, maybe consider the large variety of variegated plants available to add color and pattern to your outdoor spaces. As Fr. Guerric's arrangement for the church on page 12 shows, you may be inspired to brighten your indoor spaces with them as well.

Fr. Guerric's use of this variegated perennial in an arrangement for the church inspired a walk around the garden spots of Mepkin in search of more examples of two toned plants.

Variegated (cont'd)

Flax lily was a great choice to brighten up this shady area,

and the shiny green and yellow leaves of a variegated holly reflect the morning sun outside the visitors' center.

Variegated (cont'd)

Barb recently replaced the blue junipers growing in pots outside the visitors' center with variegated podocarpus.

Variegated (cont'd)

Several varieties of variegated shrubbery are planted around the Cloister and provide a nice complement to the other plants..

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

The green and white stripes of these yucca plants were the perfect touch to a spot where not much of anything grew for long.

Variegated (cont'd)

And variegated elaeagnus was selected to become a part of the new Our Lady of Mepkin Rosary Garden.

Mepkin Garden Volunteer Moments

Craig shared this photo of "Denny and Lee coordinating their game plan for a morning of mowing."

Chris provided this photo of a tree frog that he dubbed our "Hand Wash Compliance Monitor." Very cute title, Chris!

Contemplating the Month Ahead

Garden volunteers can look forward to gathering "under the oak" for another fall luncheon on Tuesday, October 20th. This is another great opportunity to see folks you haven't seen in a while and to make new acquaintances. The sign-up sheet is in the breakroom, and it is requested that you bring a dish. It starts around noon. Hope to see you all there.

It's hard to believe that another Crèche Festival is just around the corner. No doubt there are those who are already hard at work on that. Garden volunteers will be shifting into gear soon to assume their roles in preparation for this much-loved event.

Lastly, the photo below reminds us that change is on the way. What a better way to embrace that change than sitting around a fire with family and friends on a chilly autumn evening.