



GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

The past few months have been busy here at Magnolia Mound, filled with special events alongside daily tours and Free First Sundays. Our Antiques Forum was a particularly enjoyable and successful event. We had the privilege of attending a captivating lecture on American Folk Art by Laura Pass Barry, curator at Colonial Williamsburg, followed by a delicious lunch. Later, we toured Bonnie Glen, the charming Pointe Coupee home of Jeanne and David James. We are already looking forward to next year's forum.

Magnolia Mound is proud to continue its participation in First Free Sundays, offering a range of engaging activities, workshops, and lectures with free admission. As a former site of enslavement, Magnolia Mound Historic Site is dedicated to sharing the stories of all those who lived here, highlighting their profound influence on the history and culture of our state.

If you haven't visited Magnolia Mound recently, I encourage you to come for a visit. And if you haven't yet renewed your membership, I hope you will do so. Your continued support of the Friends is invaluable. Your generosity helps us preserve and acquire antique furnishings, decorative items, and artifacts that reflect the history of the 1791 historic house museum. This collection, owned by the Friends, brings the interiors of the house and surrounding buildings to life for the community, school groups, and visitors alike.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving this important resource. Please consider encouraging your friends to join as well!

Susan Eaton
President

50 Years of Preserving and Making History



After nine years of restoration work, Magnolia Mound opened to the public in May 1975 as a cooperative endeavor between BREC and the Friends of Magnolia Mound. The site's first director, Wing Sigler, supervised an all-volunteer staff. Five decades, and nine directors later, Magnolia Mound: Museum + Historic Site's mission is education and a dedication to historical accuracy and honesty. We are so grateful for the support of our friends, volunteers, campers, and wonderful staff.

Join us on Sunday, May 4 from 1-4 p.m. to celebrate our 50th year, with free admission and a piece of birthday cake.



(Top left) Rescued through court action in 1966, BREC and the Friends spent nine years restoring the historic house before opening to the public in May 1975.

(Top right) General Lafayette" greets Baton Rouge Mayor Woody Dumas at a gala at the Mound in November 1979.

(Bottom left) To tell a more complete story of the site, the Friends and BREC acquire an early 1830s cabin from Cherie Quarters at Riverlake Plantation in Pointe Coupee Parish in 1993.

All photos on pages 2-3 are from the Magnolia Mound Research Library and Archives.

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The site's first visitor center, the former Berwick Family home, is opened by BREC superintendent Gene Young in 1990



In 2003 Magnolia Mound welcomed more than 500 descendants of Armand and Constance Duplantier who owned the original historic house museum.



Board member Diane Finley gives a tour of the historic house to one of the nearly 3,000 school children who visit the site each year. (Photo by BREC)



Creole Christmas is our annual thank-you to the public for more than 30 years. A special Baton Rouge holiday tradition featuring crafts, music and wagon rides around the grounds. (BRECE)



In 2016, the Turner Family Visitor Center was dedicated, the generous gift of Sue W. Turner and her family. (BRECE)



Each year, Magnolia Mound welcomes an average of 10,000 visitors to the museum and historic site. Since 1975, we estimate that nearly 700,000 visitors have visited Magnolia Mound. (BRECE)



Magnolia Mound was first accredited in 1985 by the American Alliance of Museums. In its assessment, AAM praised the work of the education staff with its award-winning "learning expeditions" and popular holiday camps. (BRECE)



John Sykes, 9th Director of Magnolia Mound, Sue Turner, and Winnie Byrd, on the front porch of the historic house in 2016 on the 50th anniversary of the rescue of the historic house.

Marquis de Lafayette's Visit to Baton Rouge

By Babeth Schlegel

2024 marked the 200th anniversary of the Marquis de Lafayette's triumphal return tour of the United States in 1824-1825.

Lafayette visited the U.S. by Congressional invitation in 1824-25. His 6,000 miles voyage took him across the country where he visited all 24 states. Although Louisiana was outside of the theatre of battle during Lafayette's tenure with the Continental Army, he made a trip south to visit New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Mobile because of the French heritage of the region and especially to visit his old comrade in arms—Armand Duplantier. The U.S. Congress approved a deed of land in Louisiana to Lafayette to help him with his troubled financial situation. Armand Duplantier was his agent in Louisiana and handled Lafayette's affairs. The Marquis de Lafayette was feted in Baton Rouge with Armand and his son at his side, probably retelling war stories to each other as old soldiers do. Lafayette returned to France from Washington in September 1825.

Colored French engraving (circa 1780) of General Lafayette. The General, in military dress, stands with one arm resting on a pillar and the other at his side holding his unsheathed sword. The background shows the tents of an encampment at the top of a mountain. Accession: 76.1, Donor Kappa Delta Alumnae Assoc.



The pair of Vieux Paris porcelain urns, circa 1815-1820, features the Marquis de Lafayette in two guises. They were made in France for the American market. One shows him in military uniform and on the reverse appears a list of battles in



which he participated in France and America. The second shows him in civilian dress with Lafayette embracing a Native American on the reverse. Accession: 82.11.1-2. Donor: Mrs. Leonard J. Elmer

Auguste Levasseur was the private secretary of the Marquis de Lafayette. He accompanied him on his farewell trip to America and kept a detail account of their journey. To highlight the account of the journey, we've included artifacts in the Friends' Collection related to the Marquis de Lafayette.

Excerpt from Lafayette In America in 1824 and 1825 or Journal of Travels in the United States

by A. Levasseur, Secretary of General Lafayette, during his travels

Translated from the French. New York, White, Gallaher & White; Collins & Hannay; E. Bliss; W. E. Gilley; Collins & Co.; J. Leavitt; and W. Burgess, Jr.; Sleight & Robinson, Printers, 1829

Twenty-four hours after leaving New Orleans, we arrived at Duncan's Point, where the citizens of Baton-Rouge, a town situated eight miles above, had previously sent a deputation to General Lafayette, to request him to stop a short time amongst them. The general accepted the invitation with

gratitude, and two hours afterwards we landed below the amphitheatre upon which the town of Baton-Rouge stands. The beach was crowded with citizens, at the head of whom marched the municipal authorities, and the first regiment of the Union came to form it-self in line under the same star-spangled banner, which, in defiance of the greatest dangers, had but lately been planted upon the ruins of Spanish despotism, by the inhabitants of these parishes. Accompanied by the people and magistrates, the general proceeded to the room prepared for his reception, in which he found the busts of Washington and Jackson crowned with flowers and laurel. There he received the expressions of kindness from all the citizens with whom he went to the fort, the garrison of which received him with a salute of twenty-four guns, and afterwards defiled before him.



Three-part watercolor showing Baton Rouge at time of Lafayette's visit. It shows the riverbank, the powder magazine and buildings. One is showing the Pentagon Barracks with a row of soldiers. They were done in 1821 by a United States Army Captain Kummer who was stationed at the U.S. garrison in Baton Rouge. Accession: 77.1.1.2a-c. Donor: American Revolution Bicentennial Administration

We then entered the main building to examine the interior of the barracks, but what was our surprise, on entering into the first apartment, to find in the place of bed, arms, and warlike equipments, a numerous assemblage of elegantly dressed and beautiful ladies, who surrounded the general and offered him refreshments and flowers. The general was sensibly touched by this agreeable surprise, and passed some delightful moments in the midst of this seducing garrison. On our return to town, we found a great number of citizens met to offer the general a public dinner, among whom the frank cordiality of the American, and the amenity of the French characters prevailed.



These portraits of Leon Bonnacaze (1791-1872) and his wife, Caroline Mahier (1803-1888) were painted in 1824, at the time of their marriage and just before General Lafayette's visit to Baton Rouge. The Bonnacazes lived in a large townhouse (on what was then Second Street) in downtown Baton Rouge which has traditionally been credited as a site visited by Lafayette. Their former home site is now occupied by the Hilton Capitol Center. The portraits were inherited by Miss Blanche Duncan, their descendant, and were donated to the Friends of Magnolia Mound by Mrs. Shirley J. Dunbar.

Continued on page four

It was almost night when we returned on board the Natchez to continue our voyage. On leaving Baton-Rouge, we had the mortification to part again with some of those who had accompanied us from New Orleans, and among others, with Mr. Duplantier, senior, whose active and tender friendship, as well as that of his son, had been of great service to the general.

Baton-Rouge stands upon the left bank of the river, one hundred and thirty-seven miles above New Orleans. In this passage, the navigation of the river is very interesting. For several miles after leaving New Orleans, the eye reposes agreeably upon the shores, enriched with fine cotton and sugar plantations, and embellished with clusters of orange trees, from the midst of which rise the white and showy dwellings of the planters. By degrees the gardens and houses become more rare ; but all the way to Baton-Rouge one continues to see fine and well cultivated lands. These plantations spread along the river, sometimes extending nearly a mile back to the thick forests, which serve as their limits. The soil is entirely formed of the fertile sediments deposited by the ancient inundations of the Mississippi, now confined to its channel by artificial banks. A special law enjoins it upon each river proprietor to keep up with care that portion of dike opposite his property, so that one every where sees the slaves continually engaged in driving down stakes, interlacing the branches of trees, and heaping earth here and there where there is danger that the river will force a passage. But notwithstanding all precautions, the water often rushes furiously over these obstacles, and spreads devastation and death. Not a year passes without some proprietor having the misfortune to see snatched from him in a few minutes the fruits of long and laborious exertions. All the lands which border the Mississippi, from its outlet to six hundred miles above, are subject to inundations. Nevertheless, on leaving Baton-Rouge, the left shore appears sufficiently elevated above the surface of the water to be free from these accidents.



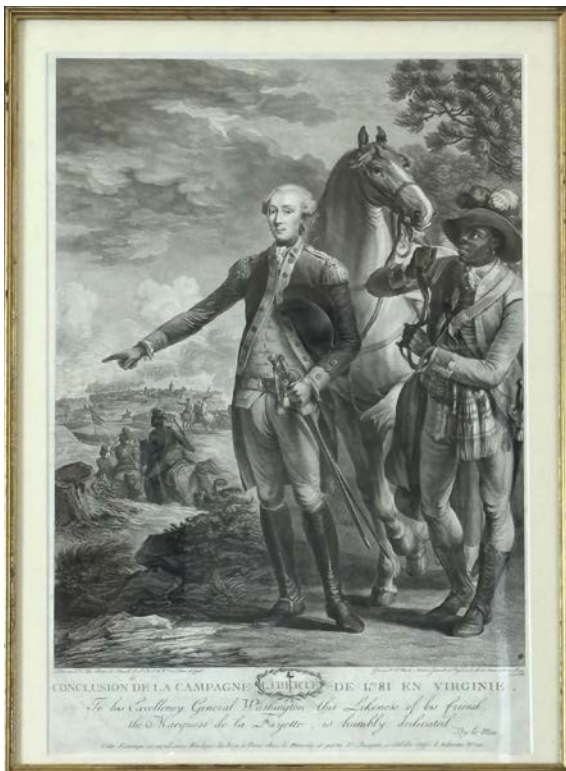
SUPPORT THE FRIENDS: JOIN, RENEW, OR DONATE.

Use the form on page 7 or go online
to our secure website at
friendsof magnoliamound.org.



You can also use your smart phone's camera to scan this QR code to support the Friends and to learn more about the Friends of Magnolia Mound, the House and the Collection.

Members receive 20% off Friends of Magnolia Mound publications at the Turner Family Visitors Center



This French stud box has embossed the name of Leon Bonnezeze who was the Honorary French consul general in Baton Rouge from the 1820 to 1855. Made in Paris this piece is engine-turned and is divided in two so you can put your studs on one side and cuff links on the other side. The box is hallmarked Paris with the maker's mark of Francois Hubert (circa 1838-1862). Accession: 79.20.1. Donor: Anna Belle Hart Anderson

Engraving on paper of the Marquis de Lafayette entitled "Conclusion de la campagne liberte de 1781 en Virginie." Lafayette is depicted standing in center foreground, in full uniform, pointing with his right hand to the Battle of Yorktown which occurs in the background. He holds his sword and cane in his left hand, and his hat under his arm. In the middle ground is his servant who tends his horse. Accession: 76.2.2. Donor: National Society of Colonial Dames Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge Committee

Sources:

https://books.google.com/books?id=g3A9AAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q=baton%20rouge&f=false

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/the-marquis-de-lafayette-s-1824-1825-united-states-tour>

MEMORIALS



Long-time BREC employee, **Jesse L. Townsend**, 82, of Prairieville, died Jan. 24, 2025. In 1968, BREC Superintendent Gene Young asked

Jesse to move to the newly acquired Magnolia Mound property. Jesse and his young family occupied a trailer near the historic house. Jesse and his wife, Rhonda, were the first caretakers of the property, preventing theft and vandalism during the long restoration process. One of his favorite stories was interrupting a group of LSU fraternity boys starting a fire in the middle of the salon. Without Jesse Townsend's vigilance, there would be no historic house museum.



MaryLouise "Weezie" Schuyler Mullenix, 82, of Baton Rouge, died on February 20. Weezie moved with her husband, Col. (US Army, Ret.) Ron

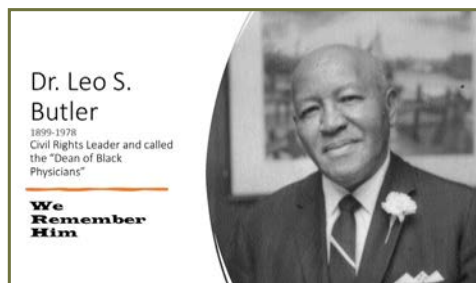
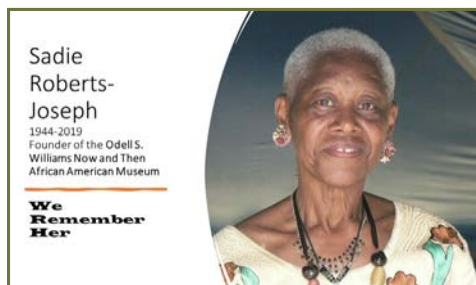
Mullenix to Baton Rouge to be near their son, Matt and his family. A lover of history, Weezie frequently attended programs at Magnolia Mound. Weezie (and Ron) were faithful members of the Friends of Magnolia Mound.

Celebrating Black History Month 2025

For our 20th year celebrating Black History Month, Magnolia Mound featured a walking trail of early pioneers from East Baton Rouge Parish. Those recognized included leaders in medicine, education, religion, business and Civil Rights. Using a map, visitors were able to explore more about the lives of Louisiana author Ernest Gaines, prominent physician Dr. Leo S. Butler, and more recent notable figures like Magnolia Mound's own Eunice Pavageau, Creole Storyteller and beloved tour guide, and our late colleague, Sadie Roberts-Joseph, who encouraged the first local commemorations of Juneteenth. For the First Free Sunday in February, the site welcomed 67 visitors, and during the month of February, 602 persons visited during Black History Month.

Black History Month has its origins in the 1920s from prominent historian Carter G. Woodson who proposed a "Black History Week" in February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. During the Nation's Bicentennial in 1976, President Gerald Ford established each February to be designated Black History Month. Magnolia Mound began celebrating Black History Month in February 2005 with educational programs, musical performances, and special dramatic performances by Oneal Isaac.

Many of these early programs were supported by a grant from the Arts Council through its Community Fund for the Arts. In recent years, the Friends have collaborated with BREC for Black History Month programming.



Register Now for 2025 Summer History Camp

Do you know a child age 7-11 who loves history and hands-on fun? There are still openings for this year's Summer History Camp at Magnolia Mound. Started in June 1980, and now, in our 45th year, Magnolia Mound's Summer History Camp is a week-long adventure to explore history and our region's culture. This year's theme will investigate explorers, including Hernando de Soto, and Lewis and Clark, modern space exploration and more! Through arts and crafts activities, from open-hearth cooking to weaving, campers will love experiencing history and exploring the past.

- Session 1: June 2-6
- Session 2: June 9-13
- Session 3: June 16-20
- Session 4: June 23-27
- Session 5: July 7-11
- Session 6: July 14-18
- Session 7: July 21-25
- Session 8: July 28-Aug 1

Activities are the same for each session in June. A different set of activities will be used for each session in July. We strongly encourage that parents register campers for only one session per month.

Camp hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Early drop off 7:30 a.m./Late pick-up 5:30 p.m.

\$125 per session for EBR Parish residents
\$150 per session for out-of-parish residents

To register: webtrac.brec.org or call 225-343-4955



Summer History Campers explore Magnolia Mound's grounds to learn more about Louisiana History and culture. (Photo by BREC)



Open hearth cooking has been a camp tradition for 45 years. No session of Summer History Camp is complete without fire in the kitchen! (Photo by BREC)



Summer History Camp combines fun and history to create life-long lovers of history. (Photo by BREC)

Remembering Jon Emerson

By John Sykes

Retired LSU Professor and award-winning landscape architect Jon Stidger Emerson died in Baton Rouge on March 2, 2025. Emerson would have been 90 at his next September 2 birthday. For more than 40 years, Jon Emerson guided BREC and the Friends of Magnolia Mound in creating an accurate and functional landscape plan for Magnolia Mound.



Jon Emerson in the garden of his Beauregard Town studio. (Photo by the Advocate)

Emerson, a native of Berkeley California, attended the University of California, Berkeley, and received a Master of Landscape Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1962. Emerson moved to Baton Rouge in 1967 and became a full professor and coordinated the landscape architecture program at the LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture. Emerson retired from LSU in 1998. In 2000, Emerson was named a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects. In that nomination, Emerson listed his most notable projects as (1) Magnolia Mound, (2) Oak Alley in Vacherie, and (3) Loyola University Campus.

From his Unicorn Studio in Beauregard Town, Emerson created Magnolia Mound's first (and only) master plan. Commissioned by BREC and the Friends, the master plan was much more than a plan for the historic site's landscape. The comprehensive document gathered all the historical landscape information, historical maps, recording early trees and current landscape features. Using this information, Emerson through his Unicorn Studios with contributions from landscape scholar, Suzanne Turner, created a comprehensive plan to allow the landscape around the historic structures to tell the site's story. Emerson's work respected the surviving historic trees, and the natural topography of the site. His work was ambitious, anticipating the future needs of education and visitor services. This master plan, designed in phases from 1981-1985 still informs the work of BREC and the site committee of the Friends. In 2015, Jon returned to design the landscape around the new Turner Family Visitor Center. Just last year, Emerson consulted on the removal of some water oaks on the property. Magnolia Mound's landscape remains as a lasting memorial to Emerson's life and career.



(At left) Magnolia Mound's master site development plan, created by Jon Emerson



LSU landscape architecture students listening as Jon Emerson presents the 1981 Magnolia Mound master site plan. (Magnolia Mound Research Library and Archives.)



In 1986, the American Society of Landscape Architects recognized the Magnolia Mound Site plan with an award of honor. (Magnolia Mound Research Library and Archives.)

Another Wonderful Petite Antiques Forum

By Catherine White



(L to R): Allison Wisstanley, Chet Coles, Janie Coles, and Mary Manheim in Bonnie Glen parlor

The Friends of Magnolia Mound celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Petite Antiques Forum with another successful event on January 30, 2025. Attendees enjoyed an informative and entertaining lecture by Colonial Williamsburg Curator Laura Pass Barry. She enlightened the audience about the rich subject of "American Folk Art at Colonial Williamsburg."

Afterward, participants were able to visit with Mrs. Barry at a delightful luncheon at the Baton Rouge Country Club. The afternoon was spent touring historic Bonnie Glen in Pointe Coupee Parish. We thank our hosts David and Jeanne Curet James, as well as our attendees and sponsors for their generous financial support. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Magnolia Mound's efforts to continue to preserve Magnolia Mound.

Corporate donors were BREC, Neal Auction Company, and Thomasgraphics. Individual sponsors were Pat Alford, the Eaton Family, Adelaide Russo, Donna Wright, and the Zobrist Family. Donors to the H.P. Bacot Fund were Sanford Arst, Barbara Bacot, Robert and Linda Bowsher, Jessica Kemm, and Catherine White.



John Turner and Moo Svendsen at Bonnie Glen

Become a member, renew or donate today!

SUPPORTER - \$50

Name on donor page
One free tour
20% discount in gift shop
Invited to Le Salon Duplantier
E-newsletter
Advance notice of events

CONTRIBUTOR - \$100

Name on donor page
Two free tours
20% discount in gift shop
Invited to Le Salon Duplantier
E-newsletter
Advance notice of events

PATRON - \$250

Name on donor page
Four free tours
20% discount in gift shop
Invited to Le Salon Duplantier
E-newsletter
Advance notice of events

MAGNOLIA CIRCLE - \$500

Name on donor page
Six free tours
20% discount in gift shop
Inside Magnolia Mound book
Invited to Le Salon Duplantier
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DUPLANTIER SOCIETY

- \$1,000
Honored at Le Salon Duplantier
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Free private tour for you plus ten guests
20% discount in gift shop
Inside Magnolia Mound book
Printed newsletter mailed to you
Advance notice of events

CONSTANCE JOYCE DUPLANTIER CIRCLE

\$2,500
Honored at Le Salon Duplantier
Name on donor page
Two tickets to the Petite Antiques Forum
Free private tour for you plus ten guests
20% discount in gift shop
Inside Magnolia Mound book
Printed newsletter mailed to you
Advance notice of events

ARMAND ALLARD DUPLANTIER CIRCLE

\$5,000+ Honored at Le Salon Duplantier
Name on donor page
Four tickets to the Petite Antiques Forum
Free private tour for you plus ten guests
20% discount in gift shop
Inside Magnolia Mound book
Printed newsletter mailed to you
Advance notice of events

Friends of Magnolia Mound

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist in the preservation and interpretation of the historic house and site as a demonstration of early plantation life in south Louisiana for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations and to procure and manage the Collection

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Friends, working with BREC, the Museum Director and staff, assist in implementing the master plan for the structures, landscaping, future additions and changes to Magnolia Mound. BREC owns and operates Magnolia Mound. All of the furniture, decorative items and artifacts are owned and cared for by the Friends. This collection brings to life the interiors of the house and other buildings for the community, school groups, and tourists.

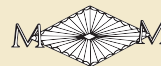
The Friends provide advisory and financial assistance for the kitchen garden, which is part of the educational tour at the Mound. Produce from the garden is used in the cooking demonstrations in the kitchen building.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS THIS MISSION

Friends of Magnolia Mound

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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John Sykes, Museum Director, Magnolia Mound
Babeth Schlegel, Executive Director/Collections Manager, Friends of Magnolia Mound



The Friends & BREC - partners in preservation for over 50 years.

Questions? Please send an email to friendsofmagnoliamount@gmail.com or call Babeth Schlegel at (225) 421-3162

Friends of Magnolia Mound is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

1-Year Membership (For a renewal, the year's membership will begin when the current membership expires.)

Name _____ (as you would like it to appear in acknowledgments)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____ Phone _____

Check Membership Level: [] Supporter \$50 [] Contributor \$100 [] Patron \$250 [] Magnolia Circle \$500
[] Duplantier Society \$1,000 [] Constance Joyce Duplantier Circle \$2,500 [] Armand Allard Duplantier Circle \$5,000

I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of \$ _____

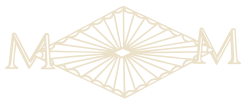
Enclosed is a check for \$ _____. I prefer to charge \$ _____ to type of card _____

Card # _____ Expiration Date ____ / ____ CVV number _____

Signature: _____

Make check payable to: Friends of Magnolia Mound
Mail to: Friends of Magnolia Mound,
P.O. Box 1254, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-1254

You can also charge your membership securely online, all major cards are accepted.
friendsofmagnoliamount.org



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Spring Is Finally Here at Magnolia Mound

By Camm Morton

2024 was an excellent year for us in the kitchen garden, and we are looking forward to an even better 2025. We ended the year with Creole Christmas, where we had a demonstration beehive, and juiced sugar cane for our guests to taste. We also sold out of our Magnolia Mound raw honey. It was a big hit, along with our homemade spices.

We are planning our summer garden, much like we did last year. It will contain, corn, tomatoes, lots of different peppers, green beans, okra and many spices. Last year, we tried a few turmeric plants and ginger. It grew well, and we are expanding on that idea for this year. Last year's fig trees are coming along, and we expect a big crop.



I want to focus on how we grow tomatoes for a big crop at Magnolia Mound. First, we start the seed really early, just after Thanksgiving. That gives us plants about 18 inches tall with flower buds. After the last frost chance has passed, we plant them next to the stakes we will train them on. We do this by laying them on their side for a day or two so that they start to turn toward the sky – something called *geotropism* – basically, plant tops grow up, and roots grow down. After the tops turn up, we plant them, covering the stem and putting the roots



deep in the ground. The stem will develop roots and strengthen the plant in a very short time. It makes even leggy plants look good. As the plant grows, we tie them to the stake and cut out the suckers. Why all this trouble? We want big, healthy plants to take advantage of the nights between 60 and 70 degrees. The nighttime temperatures when the flowers will set fruit. On hot nights – above 70 degrees – no fruit will set on most varieties of full-sized tomatoes.

Come and view the garden. The Master Gardeners who volunteer are there from 9 to 11 on Thursdays, weather permitting. We are happy to give you a guided tour.

Happy Gardening.

