

Gardening, in times such as these...also, send pics

My little garden is helping me cope with being cooped up away from work and social interactions during these contagious times.

It's hard to not dwell on the seriousness of COVID-19, and I certainly don't want to downplay its impacts on...well, everything. Including garden lecturers like me who are usually very busy this time of year lecturing several times a week and nearly every spring weekend, but are now out of that kind of work for the foreseeable future.

I'm getting advice from busybody paragons of virtue who think that now that my pub is shut down, I'll actually wrap up old to-do lists like sharpen tools, put up a bird feeder, and the like. Shaping up a boxwood here, thinning cluttered branches in a holly tree there, cleaning out the water garden, painting an arbor, replacing a weak board in a deck, starting a few heirloom seeds in egg cartons of potting soil... these and a few other short-term chores don't take much time.

Nah. I'm more likely to stay indoors out of pollen's reach and watch more re-

runs of Gunsmoke, Twilight Zone, and Andy Griffith.

Sure, there's good weather for catching up on little chores around the garden. Trouble is, after decades of developing a basically self-regulating garden of low-maintenance plants, I can only knock around the yard with a cup of coffee in hand for so long without wishing I had more to do.

In spite of how the likelihood of a touch of "blackberry winter" frost later this month, it's mighty tempting to swap out my winter flowers and herbs for summer stuff. I only have four small flower and herb beds and three groups of big pots, located strategically so they play off one another to create the illusion of way more color.

At least I can fill some pots with soil to plant in a couple of weeks.

Maybe I'll get rid of leftover plastic pots by filling them with hardy perennials and bulbs and stack them on the curb with my email address in case neighbors want to find out how to grow them.

Luckily, my Friday and Saturday MPB radio broadcast doesn't require elbow-



FELDER RUSHING



Garden gnome for yard art blog.

bump encounters, so at least our cheery virtual garden party can continue both live and via podcasts.

Then again, maybe I'll just gird myself with antihistamines, and get out and make another colorful bottle tree or hang some cheery garden lights.

Or hey - let's have a little fun, entertain ourselves. Shoot me a clear photo of

some of your yard art (garden@mpbonline.org) and I'll post a blog on our funkiest!

Whatever it takes to get us through, eh?

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them most: senior citizens, those with chronic illnesses, health-care workers, those with symptoms, and those who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus.

MYTH: Facemasks will protect us from the virus.

FACT: Masks can make us feel safe, but they do not necessarily offer better protection. Some people have taken to wearing surgical masks, but these do not block the airborne particles that spread disease. The best mask to wear is the N95, which blocks those particles with 95 percent efficiency. However, these masks are in short supply and need to be reserved for health-care workers. Others should avoid buying them.

MYTH: The coronavirus was created in a lab.

FACT: There is no evidence to support this claim. Scientists do not have the ability to create a virus like COVID-19 in a lab. The coronavirus comes from the same family of virus as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Scientists believe both viruses originated in bats before spreading to other animals, and that COVID-19 then spread to humans at an open-air market in Wuhan, China. The Chinese government has since shut down that market.

MYTH: Pets are spreading COVID-19 to their owners.

FACT: There are no report-

ed cases in the United States of pets getting sick with the coronavirus, and there is no evidence that dogs or cats can spread the disease to humans. CDC still recommends washing your hands after petting animals, as they can carry germs from their surroundings - just like humans.

Stay Informed with Accurate Information

With so much information being shared about the coronavirus, it can be hard to tell fact from fiction. I encourage all Mississippians to stay up to date and follow the latest guidelines about COVID-19 at the CDC website: <http://cdc.gov>.

MDES offers answers for unemployment filings

Press Release

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) announces that Mississippi workers who are not able to work due to COVID-19 will be eligible to file for unemployment benefits. These temporary measures will help relieve the financial hardship of temporary layoffs by making unemployment benefits available to individuals whose employment has been impacted by COVID-19. This helps not only individuals but also employers by helping them retain their workforce and stabilizing local economies.

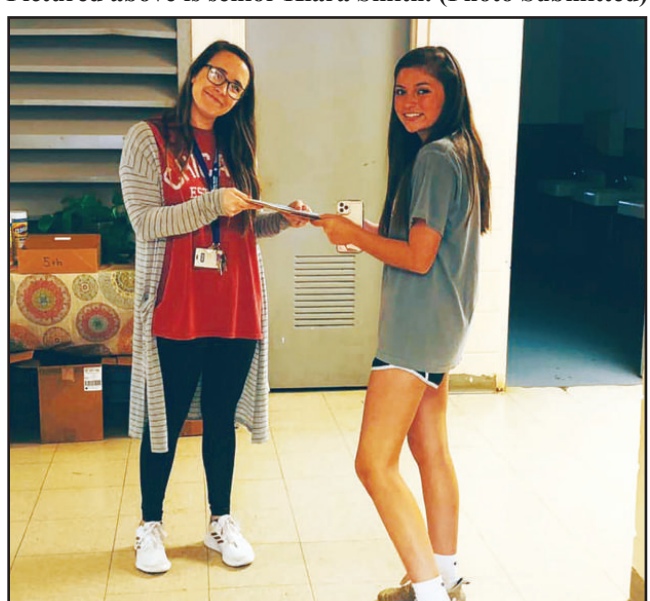
Central Holmes students stay on homework duty



Students at Central Holmes Christian School are performing classroom work from home while social distancing an enforced nation-wide effort to combat the spread of the viral respiratory infection COVID-19. Students began the week of March 18, picking up work packets from the school. Students are expected to complete the enclosed work and return weekly to submit their work to their teachers and pick up new packets. Pictured above is third grader Kaylee Bethany. (Photo Submitted)



Pictured above is senior Kiara Smith. (Photo Submitted)



Pictured above (from left), music teacher Caroline Duncan gives classwork to sixth grader Emma Steen. (Photo Submitted)

MDES has created a resource page of Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Filing Unemployment in Mississippi due to COVID-19. This information will be updated as new details are provided. <https://mdes.ms.gov/unemployment-claims/covid19/>.

To file an Unemployment Claim, visit the MDES website at mdes.ms.gov or call the MDES Contact Center at 1-888-844-3577. Online filing is encouraged! A claim may be filed online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at <https://mdes.ms.gov>.

THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



Wicker Debunks Coronavirus Myths

Americans Need Accurate Information to Make Good Decisions

As the coronavirus takes a greater toll on our economy and daily lives, it has become the centerpiece of news coverage, social media posts, and conversations nationwide. Unfortunately, public interest has often exceeded what is known about the relatively new disease, allowing misinformation, myths, and confusion to fill the void.

Americans need accurate information during this pandemic to make informed decisions about their health and safety. In order to set the record straight, I am working to dispel several common myths about the virus below.

MYTH: Young people are immune to the coronavirus.

FACT: Although older people are more likely to experience severe complications, anyone can get the virus. Those with underlying health conditions can also have more severe reactions, regardless of their age. In fact, a new analysis from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that one in five

Americans who have been hospitalized with the virus are between ages 20 and 44. Young people should set aside any illusions that they are immune to this virus.

MYTH: Only people with symptoms can spread the virus.

FACT: Many people may have the virus for days without showing any symptoms. Some infected individuals may never show symptoms at all. Individuals may appear and feel healthy while unknowingly spreading the virus to others. It is therefore vital that we all follow the White House's latest guidance, even if we feel well: avoid gatherings of more than 10 people, refrain from unnecessary travel, keep your children home, and avoid visiting crowded public spaces.

MYTH: Everyone should get tested, just to be safe.

FACT: Although the government and private businesses are working to expand access rapidly, there currently are not enough tests to go around. Tests should be prioritized for those who need