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**Clark, Carson two native highlights for 2018 Arkansas Flower and Garden Show speaker line-up at new location**

**Fast Facts:**

* 2018 speakers include fruit breeder John Clark and Master Gardener Janet Carson
* Show will debut its new location: the Arkansas State Fairgrounds
* Show funds Greening of Arkansas beautification projects and horticulture scholarships

(447 words)

LITTLE ROCK – Two of the best-known names in Arkansas gardening will be featured speakers at the 2018 Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, taking place at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds, March 2-4.

Dr. John Clark, distinguished professor and fruit breeder for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, known for developing breeds of blackberries now grown on six of the world’s seven continents, will speak about the fruit’s well-suited temperament for home gardening. Clark’s presentation will highlight blackberries’ strongest attributes, and how to choose the best varieties for each garden, said Krista Quinn, executive director for the show.

Clark is scheduled to speak at 11:15 a.m. on Friday. March 2.

Janet Carson, extension horticulture specialist for the Division of Agriculture, will speak the following day at 1:45 p.m. Carson, who is also the State Master Gardener Coordinator for Arkansas, will speak about how to make care for both annual and perennial plants easier.

Other seminar speakers include Patrick Byers, a regional horticulture specialist with the Webster County Cooperative Extension Service in Missouri; Jill Forrester, a farmer and floral designer who co-owns Whitton Farms and the Trolley Stop Market restaurant in Memphis; Carol Mendel, a lifetime Master Gardener with a background in interior design; and Allen D. Owings, professor emeritus of horticulture at Louisiana State University.

“We're really excited about this year's seminar schedule,” Quinn said. “We've got a lot of local experts who will be sharing their expertise. Whether you're a beginning gardener or have plenty of gardening experience, you're sure to learn something new that will help you be successful.”

2018 will mark the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show’s debut at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds. The three-day show will feature gardens, vendors, speakers and more spread out through several buildings on the grounds. The new location offers several improvements over the show’s previous location at the Statehouse Convention Center in downtown Little Rock, perhaps the most impactful among them being parking, which is plentiful and included in the ticket price.

“Moving the show to the fairgrounds has a lot of advantages,” Quinn said. “We'll have plenty of secure and convenient parking and more space for our vendors and other gardening exhibits.”

The Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, now in its 27th year, is a non-profit organization that uses the vast majority of money raised through ticket sales and vendor fees to fund Greening of Arkansas grants, which help subsidize community beautification projects in public spaces throughout the state, and scholarships for students studying horticulture at universities in Arkansas.

To learn more about the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, visit [www.argardenshow.org](http://www.argardenshow.org).

To learn about gardening in Arkansas, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service agent or visit [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu).

**About the Division of Agriculture**

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s mission is to strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices. Through the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service, the Division of Agriculture conducts research and extension work within the nation’s historic land grant education system.

The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs to all eligible persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

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