

# DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2017

## *Congratulations Graduates!*

Contributed by: Paula Seamon

August 10th, 2017, the AC-MGA members met to celebrate the title of Alabama Master Gardener being awarded to our GREAT group of interns.

Also, during the meeting Bea Hill was presented with the Hummingbird Award for the month of August.

Debbie Boutelier, provided an interesting and informative program on "Finding Your Bliss" as a Master Gardener. She shared the history of the AC-MGA and told many stories on how Prattville and the

Demonstration gardens came to be.

Mallory Kelley presented certificates to Rose McCauley and Paula Seamon on completing their Advanced Master Gardener Certificates in Composting and Vermicomposting.

Mallory presented each intern with a certificate and shared their experiences volunteering. Lunch was enjoyed and a special cake with all the names of the new Master Gardeners was provided.

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Send your contributions to :  
Tana Shealey at [tshealey@auburn.edu](mailto:tshealey@auburn.edu).

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter - Entertain, Educate, Elevate

## August Hummingbird Award Winner Beatrice Hill

The Autauga County Master Gardeners Association awarded Beatrice Hill as the August recipient of the *Hummingbird Award*.

Each month, the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Board selects a *Hummingbird Award* recipient whose volunteer work for ACMG is as full of energy as our fine feathered friend, the hummingbird.

The Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Board of Directors selected the name hummingbird Award for this local recognition because hummingbirds are both fast and beautiful, characteristics that reflect the wonderful efforts of our members.



Pictured left: Beatrice Hill; Pictured Right: Ofie McCoy



**Left: Rose McCauley  
Center: REA Mallory Kelley  
Right: Paula Seamon**

Rose McCauley and Paula Seamon received their Advanced Master Gardener Certificates in Composting and Vermicomposting on August 10, 2017.





# Habitat for Humanity Landscaping Project by ACMGA

## Contributed By: Anita Shriberg



Because of heavy rains, delayed sod delivery, changing volunteer schedules, and other issues, our ACMGA "landscaping design" project became more brawn and less brains. Nonetheless, our time, efforts and sweat were greatly appreciated.

Our project started by providing the owner, Carvietta (single mother of three) with a list of questions and a variety of pictures to determine her taste, likes and dislikes for her new yard. Next came measurements for a landscaping design to include a retaining wall; then approval from Carvietta. Then we moved forward with

purchasing the Loropetalums, Azaleas, Crape Myrtles and annuals.

We had several unexpected obstacles because the area, driveway, lawn and sidewalk had not yet been shaped. Fortunately we had extra help with the retaining wall and physical work on the project planting day, thanks to Patrick Cook and Shari McCandless (also, we received some unexpected donated plants for the project). The original group involved in the project included: Cheri Cook, Deb Hill, Ofie and Tim McCoy, Glenn Nichols, and Anita Shriberg.

# Pruning

Contributed by: Don Armstrong

**Based upon a talk given by  
Karen Weber, Horticulturist, Alabama  
Shakespeare Festival  
23 August 2017 – CUT and COLOR for the  
Fall Season**

Pruning is the removal or reduction of certain plant parts. This is done for a variety of reasons including: training a plant, restricting growth, maintaining the plants health, improve the quality of flowers, fruit, foliage, or stem.

**To be successful with your pruning you must:** (1) Know why you are pruning, (2) Prune at the proper time for the plant (3) Understand how pruning affects the plant (4) Follow proper techniques and use proper tools.

When to prune is always the key question. Use your computer and google to learn about your plant and the requirements for its pruning. Here are some guidelines: (1) Prune at any time to remove diseased, broken, or dead parts of the plant; (2) avoid pruning after 15 August until plants become dormant (3) Most pruning should be done during the dormant season, usually January and February.

### **Always remember the May Rule:**

- If it blooms **Before May**, wait to prune until after it flowers, but no later than 4 July. These plants bloom on **Old Wood**.
- If it blooms **After May**, prune it before the new growth begins in the spring, usually January to early March. These plants bloom on **New Wood**.

Keep your pruning tools clean and sharp. Always use the right tool for the job. Use protection (gloves, eye goggles, head protection), particularly when using power tools. Remember, a sharp tool is a safer tool. Clean your tools with alcohol after pruning to prevent transmission of diseases from plant to plant.

Pruning removes the terminal bud on each branch cut off. This results in the plant bushing out to give it a fuller growth/look. On branches with opposite buds cut off just above the two buds. On branches with alternating buds, cut just

above a bud that will have the next shoot of the branch growing in the direction you want the plant to grow. Officially there is a “rule” to cut off these alternating bud branches at a 45-degree angle to keep water from standing on the end of the cut. But, the reality is most of the branches you are cutting are not standing straight up, so cut the branches just above the alternating bud. The real key is to cut close to the bud. You do not want to leave a long stump above the bud. This stump will die off and may be a way for disease to enter into the plant.

### **There are five pruning methods:**

- 1) **Pinching** the tip of the stem – usually done with flowers.
- 2) **Thinning** is the taking out old wood and weak branches to let sun into the interior of the plant and to have more air circulation within the plant.
- 3) **Heading** where the top of the plant is cut back because it has gotten too big.
- 4) **Shearing** is usually done on hedges to have a formal/stylized look.
- 5) **Rejuvenating/renewal** is done to fix ugly or old plants. This method often results in the plant being cut back almost to the ground. Google your plant to see if you can do this. Some plants should be reduced in 1/3 stages, often spread over a period of three years.

**Three factors affect your choice of pruning method:** (1) Your goals for pruning the plant. (2) The type of plant you are pruning. (3) The size of the plant to be pruned.

The growth habit of the plant impacts upon how the plant should be pruned. A mounding plant has soft flexible stems with small leaves. This shape should usually be retained when pruning. With cane growing plants that spread by sending up erect new branches it is best to remove the old growth/canes to let the new shoots have room to grow. On upright plants with woody stems it may be better to treat them like trees.

Continued on page 7



# My Baby Is Not A Worm!: By Sarah Black-Swallowtail

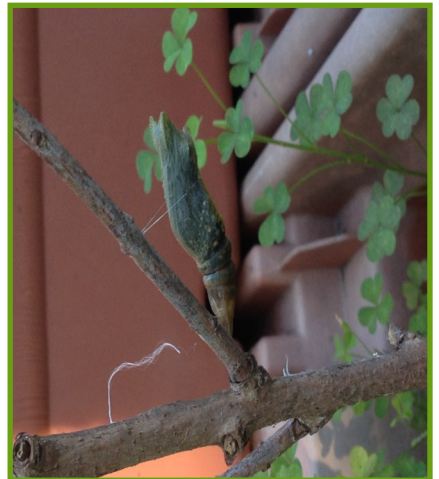
Contributed by: Kelly McCloskey

I've heard the most distressing news recently. One of the monarchs was over for nectar the other afternoon, and she said that gardeners call black swallowtail caterpillars (dare I say it) WORMS. I was aghast.

We're not like worms at all. They are slimy and crawl around in the dirt. We have legs and feet, cute little suction-cup like feet so we can hold on to parsley, fennel, dill, anything in the carrot family is just divine. I must admit that our appetites are a bit voracious at this stage because we're growing so fast. It takes only about five to six weeks to go from a very small, white egg to an almost three-inch, brightly colored caterpillar ready for our transformation. (That would be like putting a kindergartener to bed and waking up with a teenager.) We need to eat a lot to sustain us during our chrysalis stage, which can last from two weeks to several months depending on temperature.

Finally, the time comes for us to emerge and begin the cycle all over again. It's difficult to find the perfect spot to lay an egg. We mama butterflies fly for miles to find the perfect spot to lay our tiny, little pearl-like eggs.

So if we've chosen your garden this summer, it's because we think it's a beautiful, safe place for our little bundles of joy to eat, grow, and thrive.



Kelly nurtured this beautiful Sarah Black-Swallowtail (**pictured left**) through its many stages until it emerged as a butterfly.

**Top:** Swallowtail caterpillars eating and growing.

**Above:** A Chrysalis (a butterfly is ready to make its appearance soon).



## Favorite Autumn Native Plants

Contributed by: By Debbie Boutelier

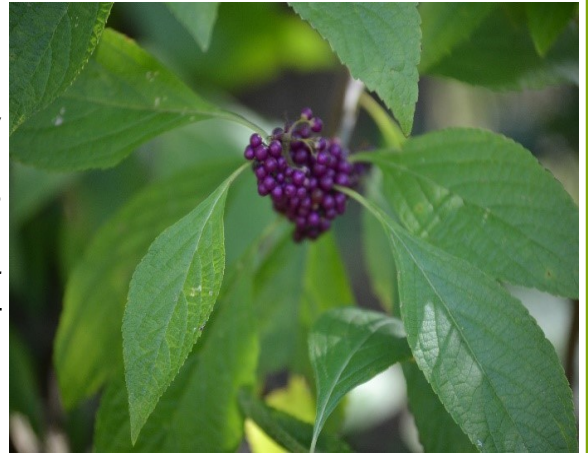
Late summer and early fall typically bring a bit of a respite to the hot, humid south. I am thoroughly enjoying the lower temperatures, even though it's only the lower 90s now instead of the high 90s. The humidity has also lessened just a smidge and the combination of the two make it tolerable outside. One of my favorite natives that puts on a show in the early fall is the American Beautyberry Bush (*Callicarpa americana*). It's always a challenge to see who will get there first—me or the birds!

This shrub is a true southern favorite growing from Florida north to Maryland and west to northern Arkansas and Oklahoma. This deciduous shrub grows 3-6 feet and its leaves are ovate and toothed. The undersides of the leaves are wooly. Tiny whitish-blue flowers appear in June through August with the purplish-magenta berries following in late September through October.

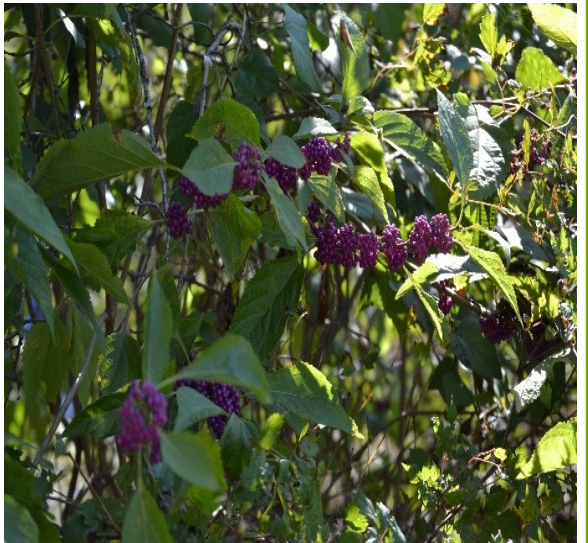
As the berries ripen, they are an important food source for a number of bird species including cardinals, mockingbirds, finches, sparrows and others. In addition, deer also eat the berries and help to distribute the seeds over a wide territory.

Historically, the American Indians used the root and leaf tea in steam baths for treating rheumatism, malaria, and fevers. Root tea was also used for treating dysentery and other digestive issues. Root and berry tea was used to treat colic. Recent research has shown that the leaves and berries make a very effective insect repellent.

Another native that puts on a show in the fall is goldenrod *Solidago spp.* It often gets a bad reputation as the cause for fall allergies, but that is not the case. Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) is the typical cause of fall allergies but because the bloom times are similar and goldenrod is showier it often gets the blame!



*Callicarpa americana*



*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

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## Favorite Autumn Native Plants

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There are seventy-seven species of goldenrod across North America, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Goldenrod puts on a beautiful late summer and early autumn show filling vacant fields and roadsides with brilliant color. It was originally designated as the state flower of Alabama in 1927 after schoolchildren lobbied for its choice because of its ability to grow anywhere and for the brilliant color it provides in autumn. Ladies of the Butler County garden Club challenged the designation saying that it was weedy and technically a wildflower. Goldenrod was replaced in 1999 by the camellia (*Camellia japonica*) as the state flower.

The *Solidago* species are easy to cultivate. Often, you don't need to cultivate them at all as they are a great volunteer! They like a location with full to partial sun and only need average moisture levels. They will tolerate a variety of soils even preferring a heavier, clay soil. Goldenrod is an important pollinator plant as it offers food sources to a variety of species after other



plants have finished for the season. If you look closely, you will often find small bees, wasps, flies, small butterflies, moths, skippers and beetles among the blooms.

In addition to being an important nectar source for insects, goldenrod has many other uses including as an ornamental garden plant. It is used in fresh and dry floral arrangements and as a dye plant. It also has culinary, cosmetic and medicinal uses.



## Pruning

Continued from page 4

### Why prune trees:

- Train young trees into the desired shape.
- Limb up the tree for safety.
- Restore the vigor of the tree.
- Stimulate flowering and fruiting.

When pruning trees, it is best to start with a young tree when it is easiest to get the desired shape of the tree started. Topping of a tree (think Crape Murder) should be avoided as it gives the tree an unnatural shape and look. Other than dead wood, pruning of the tree should be done during January and February. When cutting a limb off, remember the three-

cut rule so that the trunk of the tree is not damaged. The tree will heal itself from the wounds of limb removal, when the limb is properly removed. For the removal of large limbs, it is better to use professionals who are members of the Society of Arborists.



## *Hmmm, Hmmm Good Recipes from Autauga County Master Gardeners!*

### **Baked Figs in Strawberry Sauce** Contributed by: Glenda Armstrong



#### **Ingredients:**

- 9 fresh ripe figs
- 6 whole cloves
- 10 – 12 fresh strawberries, halved
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 whole cinnamon stick
- 2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice (the sauce should be slightly tart)
- ¼ cup Grand Marnier liqueur
- ¼ cup Cognac

#### **Directions:**

Place figs, stems up, in 3 individual soufflé dishes – 3 figs per dish. Place a clove or two in the bottom of each dish. Set aside. Cook the strawberries, sugar, butter, cinnamon, juice, and the remaining cloves in a small saucepan. Cook until the strawberries are soft and cooked through, about 12 minutes. Add the Grand Marnier and Cognac and mix well. Pour the sauce over the figs. Spread evenly over the figs. Bake in a preheated 350F oven for 20 or 25 minutes. Serve with whipped cream.

### **Sans Mayo Cole Slaw** Contributed By: Cheri Cook

#### **Cole Slaw (no mayo)**

- 1 Package of Angel Hair Slaw
- 4 Green Onions (optional)
- ¼ to ½ Cup of Almond Slivers
- ¼ to ½ Cup of Sunflower Seeds
- Package Ramen Noodles, crushed

#### **Dressing:**

- ½ Cup Oil
- 2 Tablespoons of Sugar
- 3 Tablespoons of Rice Vinegar
- 1 Teaspoon Accent Seasoning
- 1 Teaspoon Salt
- ½ Teaspoon Pepper



Mix dressing ingredients together and refrigerate overnight. Toast almonds at 350 degrees (about 8 minutes, don't want them brown) Mix slaw, onions, nuts and ramen noodles. (do not use seasoning pack from Ramen noodles, can save for another recipe) Pour dressing over slaw mix when ready to serve.



# Congratulations Graduates!

Continued from page 1



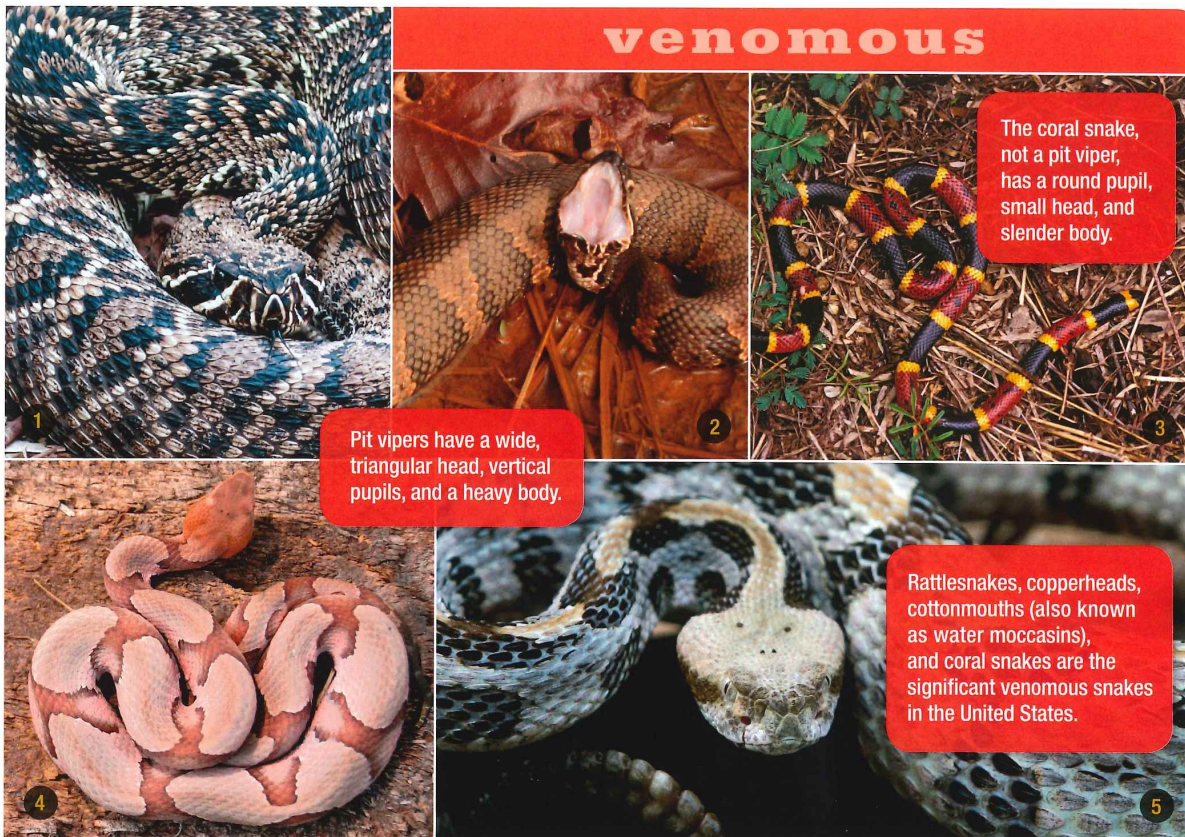
**Left:** Graduates celebrated with a pretty desert!

**Middle:** Debbie Boutelier delivered an inspiring presentation on being a Master Gardener!

**Bottom:** Great food and fellowship!





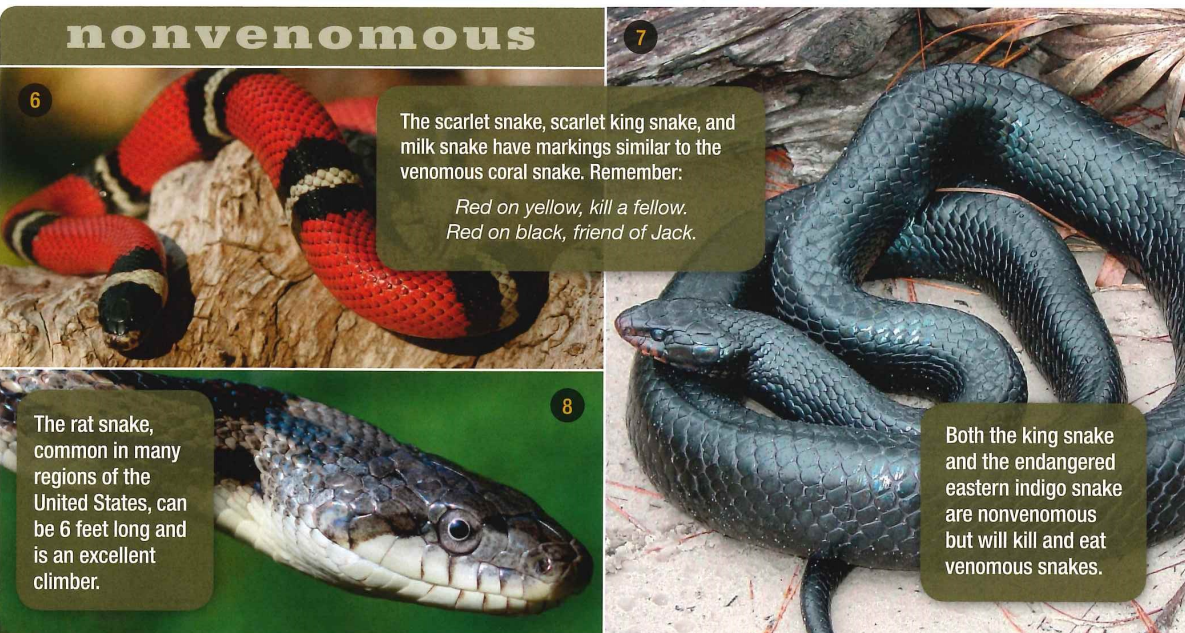


## venomous

The coral snake, not a pit viper, has a round pupil, small head, and slender body.

Pit vipers have a wide, triangular head, vertical pupils, and a heavy body.

Rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths (also known as water moccasins), and coral snakes are the significant venomous snakes in the United States.



## nonvenomous

The scarlet snake, scarlet king snake, and milk snake have markings similar to the venomous coral snake. Remember:

*Red on yellow, kill a fellow.  
Red on black, friend of Jack.*

The rat snake, common in many regions of the United States, can be 6 feet long and is an excellent climber.

Both the king snake and the endangered eastern indigo snake are nonvenomous but will kill and eat venomous snakes.

## What's Your Snake IQ?

1. Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake 2. Cottonmouth (also known as Water Moccasin) 3. Coral Snake  
4. Copperhead 5. Timber Rattlesnake 6. Milk Snake 7. Eastern Indigo Snake 8. Rat Snake (Photo credit: Jessica Nelson)

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## Did you know?

- Most snakes are nonvenomous.
- The most common snake in the Southeast is the nonvenomous rat snake. It is an excellent climber and is often found in trees or barn lofts.
- Six venomous snakes are native to the Southeast: five pit vipers (copperhead, cottonmouth, pygmy rattlesnake, Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, timber rattlesnake) and the coral snake.

- Rattlesnakes do not always rattle before striking.
- All snakes (even venomous ones) are important to the ecosystem and help control rodents.
- How often a snake sheds its skin depends on how much it eats and, thus, how rapidly it grows.
- Some snakes give live birth; others lay eggs.
- Snakes can open their mouths so wide that they can swallow something many times larger than they are.
- All snakes have small teeth that curve backwards to help swallow prey.
- Pit vipers have specialized teeth (fangs) for injecting venom. Broken fangs are soon replaced by new ones.

- Always look before putting your hands under shrubbery or other outdoor items or before stepping over fallen logs.
- If bitten by a nonvenomous snake, wash the bite area with soap and water.
- If bitten by a venomous snake, seek medical attention immediately. Do not cut open the wound or apply a tourniquet.
- Approximately 7,500 people are bitten by venomous snakes each year in the United States, resulting in about five deaths. While these numbers are low, victims should seek medical care immediately.
- Most snakes, even venomous ones, are nonaggressive and do not chase people. If you encounter a snake outdoors, leave it alone and stay out of its way.
- Many snakebites occur while people are trying to handle snakes.
- Reducing cover for prey, such as mice, is one of the best ways to control snakes around your house



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# Growing Hops & Home Brew Workshop

Hosted by  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Wednesday  
September 20<sup>th</sup> 2017  
3:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Lee County Extension Office  
600 S. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 4, Opelika AL



## Topics to be discussed:

Hops Varieties in the South • How to Grow & Harvest Hops • Major Pest & Disease Issues • How to Process Hops for Brewing  
How to Home Brew from Start to Finish • Liquor Laws in Alabama

\*Tour and Dinner Included Following the Workshop at the  
Red Clay Brewing Company



To sign-up or for more information, contact the Lee County Extension office at (334) 749-3354. Cost is \$15 per person and includes dinner.

Pre-Registration and Payment is required by Friday, September 15th.

## PRE-REGISTRATION FORM- Hops & Home Brew Workshop

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Participants X \$15 = Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Return Pre-Registration Form and Payment by Friday, September 15th to:  
(Make check payable to: Alabama Cooperative Extension System)



Lee County Extension Office  
Lee County Agricultural Center  
600 S 7th St, Suite 4  
Opelika, AL 36801



## Event Registration

**\$25 per Person**

(Includes Lunch)

Register by calling Tallapoosa County  
Extension at (256) 825-1050.

(Online Registration Not Available)

DO NOT MAIL REGISTRATION FORM  
WITHOUT CALLING FIRST  
SEATS ARE NOT RESERVED UNTIL  
PAYMENT IS RECEIVED  
SPACE IS LIMITED TO FIRST 350  
PARTICIPANTS

Registration Deadline: September 22, 2017

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

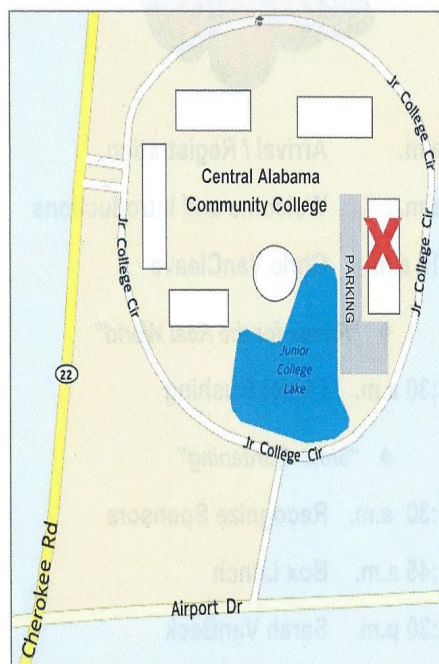
Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Tallapoosa County Extension Office  
125 N. Broadnax Street, Room 23  
Dadeville, AL 36853

Make check payable to:  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

## The 2017 Fall Gardening Extravaganza

will be held at the  
Betty Carol Graham Technology Center  
located on the campus of  
Central Alabama Community College  
1675 Cherokee Road  
in  
Alexander City, Alabama



The Betty Carol Graham Technology Center (X)  
is on the east side of campus. Parking for the  
building will be on the left just past the pond.

## Fall Gardening Extravaganza

**September 29, 2017**

Alexander City, Alabama



Hosted by  
Tallapoosa County Extension Office and  
Tallapoosa County Master Gardeners Association

**extension**  
ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

# **AUTAUGA COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION** **MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Autauga County membership dues for 2018 are \$10. State dues are \$10 and optional. State dues entitle you to State membership and **Garden Pathways** newsletter. You can also receive state awards such as Reach for the Stars. Please complete this form and return it to our Treasurer, **NO LATER THAN OCT. 15, 2017.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_  
(Only give email address if you wish to receive info via email) mm/dd

COUNTY OF TRAINING \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR OF GRAD \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:	LOCAL DUES	STATE DUES
---------------------	------------	------------

_____ Active Member Local & State (includes graduating interns)	\$10	\$10
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_____ Active Member Local Only (includes graduating interns)	\$10	\$0
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_____ Active Member w/ current State lifetime	\$10	\$0
---	------	-----

_____ Active member w/ new State Lifetime	\$10	\$100 (One-time fee)
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\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I am a dual member, County of primary membership \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to ACMGA. Mail or give to:

Deb Hill  
241 County Road 101  
Autaugaville, AL 36003

Check \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_



Habitat for Humanity seeks to put God's work into action by giving applicants a co-worker instead of a case-worker...capital instead of charity.

A list of requirements for applicants includes passing strict criteria for need, contributing many hours of "sweat equity" in the construction of the home, and making regular savings and paying a monthly mortgage for this new home (it is a hand up, not hand out). The mortgage is subsidized and very affordable, but still a requirement and responsibility of ownership. Carvietta was living with her brother after a broken water pipe destroyed her home. Habitat for Humanity uses many volunteers and

donations of time, money and items which they either use or resale at flea market booths. Those that are chosen and willing to work for the opportunity to own a house are blessed with a home they could not afford without help. And we all need a little help sometimes.



## The WOW Effect! A Container Created by Shari Mc Candles



This is a container I made up for a new home owner through Habitat for Humanity.

I used **Black Magic Elephant Ears** and some shorter **Cana Lilies** that are coral in color for the thriller, and then I filled the pot first with **Mexican Heather**, a few **marigolds** from my home, a couple of **Coleus**

I had rooted in water, and **Polka Dot** plants. I also took a couple of cuttings from my **Autumn Joy Sedums**, **Purple Hearts**, and **Persian shield** plants. As long as the pot is watered, they will all take root.

For the spillers, I used **Sweet Potato** vines that I rooted in water, and they give the beautiful chartreuse green and burgundy color. They make a nice contrast. I pulled a little **Creeping Jenny** from one of my pots, about half from each side of my pot.

You can see that I used a lot of perennials, with a mild winter, they will come back in the spring!

# Things to do...

- **ACMGA Lunch & Learn**, 1st Thursday of each month, Christ Lutheran Church, Prattville, AL., 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM, bring your lunch.
- **Making the Most of Your Small Spaces**, Bonsai & Alternative Gardening Methods. Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017, 9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m., The Doster Center, 424 S. Northington Street, Prattville. Register at 334-595-0800.
- **Fall Gardening Extravaganza**, TCMGA, September 29, 2017, Betty Carol Graham Technology Center, Alexander City, AL \$25.00 registration fee includes lunch. Call Tallapoosa County Extension at (256)825-1050 to register.
- **Estate Planning Basics**, Hosted by Autauga County Extension and AARP Alabama. October 24, 2017, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 178 E. 4th Street, Prattville, AL. 8:30 a.m.—Noon. Register online at: <http://offices.aces.edu/autauga/estate-planning-basics-workshop/>

## Entertain, Educate, Elevate

### Monthly Meetings

Second Thursday of each month at First Baptist Church, Prattville (unless otherwise notified)

- ⇒ All odd-numbered months: January, March, May, July, September, November will have 6:00 p.m. meetings.
- ⇒ Most even-numbered months: February, April, June, August, October will have 9:00 a.m. meetings.
- ⇒ The December Meeting/ Christmas Luncheon will be announced during the November meeting. It will be held at 11:30 a.m. in the Ag Center Building in Autaugaville.

Autauga County Master Gardeners  
c/o Autauga County Extension Office  
2226 Highway 14 West  
Autaugaville, AL 36003

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE