

DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Newsletter

May, 2018



Kudos to all Autauga County Master Gardeners! You ask why? There are so many reasons. The evidence is clear that our members are committed to

our values, involved and active in our projects and focused on the needs of the community. Some members may not be able to be more physically involved than others, but just their membership strengthens our association. Members focus on looking outward at the needs of our community rather than inward to the comforts in our lives. Our involvement was evident at the AMGA Conference where Autauga County Master Gardeners were singled out for our work. Over and over we heard ACMGA, ACMGA, and I became more and more grateful for where God has me at this time. I am incredibly proud of our Association, of you. Volunteers come to the Demo Garden and clean, plant, weed, harvest and build relationships with their fellow MGs. At Prattvillage Garden, although people do not necessarily come on a scheduled work day, nevertheless, the evidence is clear that many, many are working throughout the week to keep the garden looking beautiful. We have a list of members on our Speakers Bureau who are willing to make presentations whenever we are requested. Another group has developed a teaching plan for the 6th and 8th grade

students at Marbury Middle School. What a tremendous responsibility to interact with these energetic, positive, absorbing young minds and give them positive and encouraging motivation during the few minutes we are with them. Bea Hill, Glenn Huovinen, Rose McCauly, Tim McCoy, Debbie Boutelier and I have already attended these classes as presenters or back-ups. There is always room for more teachers to take part in this ever-so-rewarding endeavor.

On May 10, 2018, the membership of ACMGA voted to file for non-profit status! What does that mean to the individual member? You can now set your mind free and dream of ways that, together, we can beautify our community, educate various segments of our society and encourage environmental awareness and stewardship. If non-profit status is awarded to us, we will be able to seek donations from State, County and other agency to fund our dreams. So, what have you always wanted to do to help those in our community? As for me, I look toward the possibilities and they are boundless. Perhaps we can join forces with the City and plant more trees so that we can truly become a "Tree City." Personally, the first item on my list is to feed even more of the hungry in our community, to provide for more of their needs through the donation of personal care items. Personal hygiene and dignity is so important when folks are down and out. So, let's do all we can to lift people up when and where we can. And one area we can grow is our gardening. We know how to garden! Oh, boy, do we!

Spring plant SALE

This year's plant sale was a great success. The weather could not have been better. No rain, and the perfect temperature to browse plants and garden trinkets. There were plenty of people to help make for a great sale.

This year's plant supply was as varied as any I had seen in past years. Of course, I have only been to three plant sales. There were plenty of plants of all kinds to offer to the people. From trees to grasses and everything in between.

The people were there at 6 AM, lining up and getting ready for the 8 AM opening. ("Open, Open, Open") The master gardeners started showing up and getting everything in order.

I personally could not believe the enthusiasm of the volunteers. There were lots of people there ready to help anyone with their selections.

As committee co-chair, I know that the success of the plant sale would never have happened without Linda Blackwell's help and work. Linda was the second co-chair. Her attention to the details of the committees was outstanding.

The people who volunteered their hours at the plant sale must be commended. There were plenty of people to help with anything. Some times there seemed to be more master gardeners than customers. But that turns into a great fellowship time for everyone.

The volunteers who worked behind the scenes setting up the garden, potting plants, pricing plants, and so many other things that got done before the sale have my deepest gratitude. Without y'all there would never have been a plant sale.

And of course the customers, we the ACMGA want to thank all of y'all for supporting our association. We always want to make your experience at the plant sale a positive experience.

This also the first year that we accepted credit cards for the purchase of plants. I believe that it helped our bottom line. It was a lot simpler and easier than I thought it would be.

There are so many people who worked hard to make this endeavor a success and I cannot do any-

thing other than bow before y'all and say "thank you so very much for all the work you did to make the plant sale a big success". Tim McCoy



April Meeting Tim McCoy

The April meeting was held at Prattvillage Garden. Paula Seamon was awarded the hummingbird award for all the work she has done on the advisory council.

Jo Felio and Gene Stapleton were presented certificates of appreciation for their 20 years of continuous membership in ACMGA. Along with the certificates, each received a garden hat.

There was discussion about the upcoming Friends of the Forest event. A request for volunteers to work the event was put out. It was asked that each volunteer pick a specific day so there would not be a big bunch on the first day and not enough the second day.

Linda Parrish is in the process of getting two spaces at the City Fest event. One for the regular business and one for Glenn Huovinen's "Got 30" program. This will be the first time for Glenn's idea.

The Flora and Fauna Pollinator Festival event will be at Lanark. Carolyn Gray will be heading up this event.

Tim McCoy held a discussion about the plant sale and how it was coming together. He named the committee chairs and asked that volunteers get in touch with the chair of the committee they wanted to work.

Shari McCandless told the meeting what she would like to see accomplished to get the garden ready for the sale.

It was decided that the work shirts for the volunteers who signed up to work the 2019 Spring Conference would be paid by the association. The volunteers have to pay the registration fee for the conference, and having to pay for the shirts also seemed a bit much.

Lunch and Learn is going to be on May 10th because the State Spring Conference will be taking place at the same time as the usual Lunch and Learn.

There was a short work session after the meeting readying it for the plant sale. Signs were brought out. The chapel was cleaned up and organized. A bunch of weeds were pulled. The walk way border was straightened. A general sprucing up and cleaning was the order of the day.



Hummingbird Award

Paula Seamon is the hummingbird award winner for April. She has worked tirelessly on the AMGA advisory council. Her volunteer work at the Autauga Prattvillage Demonstration Garden with the composting and planting has been a big help. The volunteering that Paula has done with the Floral and Fauna Pollinator Festivals for several years has brought joy to people from all over. She heads the plant sale country store each year. And recently Paula has been voted a director of the AMGA board of directors.



Healing Garden Partnership

Tim McCoy

On Thursday, April 19 the Chick-Fil-A Leader Academy revealed a redesigned healing garden at the Prattville Medical Park. The garden is named *Garden of Hope*. It was the work of the Autauga County Technology Center Chick-Fil-A Leader Academy. The group contacted Ofie McCoy about our association meeting with them and advising them on the selection of plants and design ideas for the garden. The reveal was a nice new garden with color and interesting plants that needed low maintenance. The group added a trellis between beds and a mosaic

on a wall that was a blank space before. These kids did a remarkable job in a very short time. If any of you have a chance drop by and see what they accomplished. You will be surprised.





SUMMER SQUASH

Mallory Kelley, Home Horticulturist, ACES

In Alabama, a summer garden would not be complete without your favorite summer squash plants and its finally time to sow some seeds so you will have this wonderful produce in the coming months. These vegetables are a member of the cucurbit family and have many cousins in the vegetable garden. Now, you may be asking, "what plants are in the cucurbit family anyway?" These include all the different types of squash like, crook neck, straight neck, scalloped, zucchini, and butternut. The cucurbit family also includes the melons, such as watermelon, honeydew melon, cantaloupe, and cucumber.

Cucurbits in general have many different pests that affect them. In all my years as a horticulturist helping the public grow their vegetable garden, the growers first year growing cucurbits is a huge success. The grower gets a prolific amount of produce from healthy vigorous plants and not a pesky insect in sight. The grower is now fired up and geared up for year two and decides to double, if not triple, the size of their garden. Within the first few months of this second season is when my phone rings. Suddenly their plants are drooping as though they have never been watered. The squash blooms look like gray mold. The squash fruits have pin size holes all over them, and to make matters worse, the foliage appears to have a white cast to it.

That being said, I want to give you a few pointers as well as management techniques called Integrated Pest Management strategies to help lessen the threat of pests and increase your success, not only in the squash patch, but the vegetable garden as a whole.

Once the threat of frost is gone is when you should plant your cucurbits, whether you are transplanting or direct seeding. In south Alabama, this is no earlier than March 10 to 30; April 1 to 15 in central Alabama; and April 15 to May 10 in north Alabama. Make successive plantings of summer squash every 10 to 14 days throughout the summer and fall to ensure a steady supply of fruit. For plantings in the late fall, sow no later than 60 to 70 days before your first frost date.

It is important to note that cucurbits do not have perfect flowers. A perfect flower is when the flower

has both male and female parts in the same bloom. Cucurbits have male flowers and female flowers individually, but on the same plant. This means pollination by insects has to play a role or no fruit will be produced. It's easy to tell if a bloom is a male or female, just look for the pollen, see photos 1 and 2. If there is pollen present then it is a male, if no pollen is present it is a female. The blooms will only be open in the morning and then drop from the plant. Male blooms usually come on the squash plant first, so don't get disappointed when no fruits set on your vine right away. The male blooms are just early and you will often have more male blooms than female blooms.

Always be careful when you apply insecticides to control those problem insects like the squash vine borer, squash bug, and pickle worm. Never apply insecticides on a windy day. Avoid applying insecticides in the morning hours as this is when pollinator insects are working the blooms. You do not want to kill the pollinators. It is always best to identify the pest before you buy a product to kill it. First of all, you never want to kill the beneficial insects in the garden that are helping control the problem insects or moving pollen. Some insecticide products are very specific and only kill worms. Some products only kill by direct contact to the insect like oils and soaps that will suffocate soft bodied insects. Other insecticide products are very broad in their effectiveness and will kill any insect that comes in contact with it whether it is beneficial or not

No matter what you are growing in your garden it is always best to remove all plant debris as soon as the plant finishes production. It is just as important to rotate your crops. Crop rotation means not planting anything in the cucurbit family back in that spot for at least a year. Waiting two to three years to plant cucurbits back in that spot is even better. Keep a chart so you can remember from year to year what you planted where in your garden. Always mulch around your vegetable plants to moderate moisture levels. This will reduce stress on the plant, and also suppress weeds. The mulch also adds organic matter to your soil as it breaks down. In

Continued on pg. 6

addition, try to keep the foliage of the plants as dry as possible. Drip irrigation is best. If you have to water with a hose, direct the water straight to the soil, and avoid water splashing onto your plants. Scout for insects daily and remember a garden that is out of sight is also out of mind.

Byline: Mallory Kelley is a Regional Extension Agent II for Alabama Extension serving central Alabama in the area of horticulture since 2009.



Photo 1
Photo 1: This is a female bloom of a squash plant. It is open and waiting for pollen.



Photo 2
Photo 2: This is a male bloom on a squash plant. It will never make a fruit, its only purpose is to produce pollen to fertilize the female blooms.

In the April issue of Dirty Digs the article by Rose McCauley and Paula Seamon was titled wrong, Instead of Daniel Pratt Elementary the title should have been Prattville Elementary.



Broccoli Cranberry Salad

Velma Borden

INGREDIENTS

- 3 bunches broccoli, chopped
- 1/2 cup sweetened, dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1/3 cup chopped celery
- 1/3 cup green bell pepper
- 1/4 cup red bell pepper
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- Buttermilk to taste

PREPARATION

Combine broccoli, cranberries raisins, walnuts, red onion, celery, green and red bell peppers. Set aside. Mix together remaining ingredients in blender, adding buttermilk until well-combined. Pour over broccoli mixture. Toss gently and refrigerate.



You don't
want to miss
any of these
seminars.

2018 Classes

Presented by Autauga County Master Gardeners Association & City of Prattville

classes!

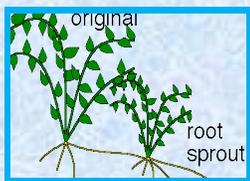
All classes are held at the Doster Center at 9:00 am

March 24— “Introduction to Hummingbirds in Alabama” presented by Fred Bassett. Don't miss this exciting presentation from a man who devotes his life to hummingbirds and travels around the United States banding them.



May 11— Karen Weber will present “Growing A Beautiful Garden” and share ideas about plants, pruning, ergonomics and bulbs.

July 14—”All About Bonsai” presented by Mark Waldo. Learn how to choose plants for bonsai, pruning techniques and examples using the instructor's many plants. Another class you will not want to miss.



September 15— “Tips and Demonstration on Plant Propagation” presented by Rona Watson. Double your plants through propagation.

November 7—”Holiday Decorating” presented by Charlotte Hall who will discuss how to decorate for the holidays through natural materials.



TICKET - ADMIT ONE FREE

Pratt Park Kids' Fishing Rodeo



**Saturday, June 2, 8am to 11am
Pratt Park, Prattville**

Participation in Kids' Fishing Rodeo is open to:

1. Youth 15 years old or younger,
2. Fills out a ticket,
3. Is accompanied by a parent or guardian and uses only one rod and reel or pole.

Due to the enormous success of this event, it has been broken up into 2 phases. **The first phase** will begin at 7:45 am for 1-8 year olds with a short talk by biologist, Jay Haffner, titled "How to Catch a Catfish!" These kids will fish from 8am to 9am or until they reach their **3 fish limit**. **The second phase** begins at 9am, the biology class will commence for 9-15 year olds who will then fish until they reach their limit of 3 fish. Once the angler has caught three (3) fish limit, the angler must move away from the pond to make room for other fishermen who have not caught their limit. At 11am the pond will be open fishing with no limit. Fishing license requirements will then apply.

Each angler should bring a hat, sunglasses, a rod and reel, bait and a stringer. Some loaner rods will be available. Prizes in two age categories for shortest and longest fish caught will be awarded. Parents may wish to bring an ice chest for fish. **The limit is three (3) catfish per child.**

To provide better service to future anglers, the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division would like to know more about the anglers who participate in this event. Before arriving at the event, please take a few moments of your time and answer the questions listed below. Thanks for your cooperation!

NAME: _____ ADDRESS _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE/CELL _____

1. Age _____ Sex _____
 2. Ethnicity _____
 3. Is this the first time you have fished? _____
 4. Number of times you fished last year? _____
 5. How did you hear about this event?
Relatives _____ Leisure Services _____ TV _____
School _____ Poster _____ Radio _____ Friends _____
Newspapers _____ Church _____ Coach _____ Other _____
 6. Did you fish in a state-owned fishing lake? _____
 7. Do you own your own fishing tackle? _____
 8. Did you attend this event last year? _____
- If you do not want us to contact you, check here _____
Comments: _____

The Pratt Park Kids' Fishing Rodeo is sponsored by the Prattville Lions' Club, Autauga Creek Improvement Committee, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, International Paper, Inc. and Prattville Parks and Recreation. The event is partially funded by the Federal Sport Fish Restoration Program. For further information, call (662) 345-0933.



INTERNATIONAL  PAPER



Lunch and Learn 2018

1st THURSDAY of EVERY Month

12:00-1:00 PM

Trinity United Methodist Church
610 Fairview Avenue, Prattville 36066

- 4 January** Gardening 101
Amanda Borden, Advanced MG
- 1 February** Roses
Gloria Purnell, Master Rosarian
- 1 March** Butterflies, Bees, and Other Pollinators
Dr. David Held, Entomologist AU
- 5 April** Blueberries
Dr. Chip East, Horticulturist ACES
- 10 May** Figs
Dr. Arlie Powell, Petals from the Past
- 7 June** Herbs
Tia Gonzales, Medicinal Plant Garden AU
- 12 July** Cooking with Herbs & Spices
Janice Hall, Food Safety & Quality, ACES
- 2 August** Plant Propagation
Don Armstrong, Master Gardener
- 6 September** Drought Tolerant Plants for the South
Dr. Sue Webb, Petals from the Past
- 4 October** Shade Loving Plants
Jane McCarthy, Master Gardener
- 1 November** Growing Citrus Trees in Containers
Tom McLemore, Master Gardener
- 6 December** Insects-Good Guys or Bad Guys
Dr. Fudd Graham, Entomologist, AU

For more information, contact
Autauga County Extension Office 334.361.7273

BRING A SACK LUNCH

DRINKS PROVIDED



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. meeting.



Things to do.....

- ◆ Feed shrubs and lawns
- ◆ Spray camellias
- ◆ Pull spring annuals, plant summer annuals
- ◆ Continue to plant heat tolerant tomatoes.
- ◆ Plant caladiums in shady spots.
- ◆ Check drip irrigation system. You'll be needing it soon



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

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

To: