

# DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Newsletter

April, 2020



## *President's Message*

We are now on day whatever of the quarantine. I'm struggling to remember what day it is. Every day is pretty much like the last – work in the garden all day and computer work in the evening to keep our group informed. I've talked and communicated with a lot of you recently. I'm so pleased that everyone is staying healthy. That's the reason we are doing this.

I have to say that Master Gardeners are a resourceful and resilient bunch. Even though we've been on lockdown a lot of work is getting done. We still have crews working the gardens. They both look fabulous. With the financial help from the Mid-South RC&D grant, many improvements have been accomplished in both gardens. And, we are still able to make our weekly donation to AICC from the Demo Garden. The produce grown is even more of a blessing to others during these troubling times.

Faced with the postponement of our major fundraiser, we came up with the idea of having a virtual plant sale for our members. This is proving to be a lot of fun and will definitely help with our operating expenses. I get to collect some of my treasures tomorrow and it will be a little like a scavenger hunt as I move around town, getting out of the house for a little while yet maintaining social distance. It's not too late to participate – if you have plants you were planning to donate to the plant sale, get online and list them so others may purchase. See my email dated Monday, April 13th for all the details.

Extension did not miss a beat through this lockdown. They are offering daily educational programs, daily email briefings with pertinent information for



navigating the pandemic and a weekly garden chat. I hope you're taking advantage of these learning opportunities.

A number of Master Gardeners around the state have been making face masks for others as a way to give to their communities. Kerry Smith is collecting that data for an article highlighting the fact that Master Gardeners do more for their communities than just gardening.



Let us know if you've made face masks for others. With my stash of quilting fabric, I was able to make a number of personalized masks for family, church and my neighbors. It was a fun project and allowed me to get reacquainted with my sewing machine!

Keep in touch! Always remember, time began in a garden!

*Debbie*



This looks like it could be a really great way to have some live socialization with fellow gardeners. This could be the beginning of some people becoming more than just chat partners thrown together because of a pandemic.



# *Alabama Garden Chat*

EVERY WEDNESDAY IN  
APRIL | 3 PM

<https://auburn.zoom.us/j/531241108>



## Hummingbird Award

April does not have a hummingbird award.



## AUTAUGA PRATTVILLE DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

By Glenn Huovinen

ACMGA finished 2019 with a record number of pounds donated to AICC, 1500 pounds! The fall and winter garden harvest was thoroughly enjoyed by least one hungry squirrel. Planted were cabbage, broccoli, collard greens, onions, celery, mustard greens, turnips and garlic. The squirrels wiped out most of it out. The beds were replanted once more with the same results. A live trap was set and the squirrels have moved on.

After receiving soil test results, the beds were amended and the spring garden is in. There is a good crop of potatoes, celery and greens growing. The YTD donations are 108 pounds.



# Letting Everyone Get Help in the Garden

Here is the link to join ZOOM to get started as you will need to download the program and then just click the link!

Mallory Kelley is inviting you to a scheduled Auburn University Zoom e-meeting. If you're a new participant, we have a quick start guide here: <https://aub.ie/zoomquickstart>

You can also download the app on your phone and join in, just type in the numbers at the end of the url to join the meeting room!

This is the zoom link for our meeting: <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/834500888>



## Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards!

Free Webinar Series (45 minutes)

Weekdays @ 11:00 a.m. (CDT)

Connect: <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/834500888>



M, April 13: Pruning Tool Maintenance and Tips, David Koon T,

April 14: Hobby Greenhouses, Dr. Jeremy Pickens

W, April 15: Fascinating World of Ferns, Lisa Ennis

Th, April 16: What's Buggin' You?, Dr. Jim Jacobi

F, April 17: Landscaping 101, Jack Lecroy

M, April 20: Vermicomposting, Dani Carroll

T, April 21: Grilling Safety, Janet Johnson

W, April 22: Ornamental Ponds, Dr. David Cline

H, April 23: Flower Power - an Anatomy Lesson, Kerry Smith

F, April 24

**Master Gardener Helpline (877) 252-4769**

[www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)

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# And the Beat Goes On...

By Olie McCoy

As the world comes to a screeching halt, Autauga County Master Gardeners know that in their gardens, the beat goes on!

*It is recommended you click the link to get the full impact of this article*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bS3O5zg290k>

*And the beat goes on, the beat goes on,*

*Sun keeps pounding rhythm to the ground,  
La de da de de, la de da de da*

*Seeds break open toward the sun, uh huh,  
Reaching up to grab some rays, uh huh,  
Racing up to show their form, uh huh,  
Who will reach the top they say, uh huh*

*And the beat goes on, the beat goes on,  
Sun keeps pounding rhythm to the ground,  
La de da de de, la de da de da*

*Breaking thru is so much fun, uh huh,  
So much more to show, to all, uh huh,  
Harvest time'll be here before you  
know,  
So much good and joy to share, uh huh*

*And the beat goes on, the beat goes on,*

*Sun keeps pounding rhythm to the  
ground,  
La de da de de, la de da de da*



Top center, chair won by T&O at 2019 Conference Silent Auction; upper right, Jane M. pets, monarchs-to-be; center T&O cyclamen; bottom left, Kathy C. lemon tree; far right, Lanell T. orchid.

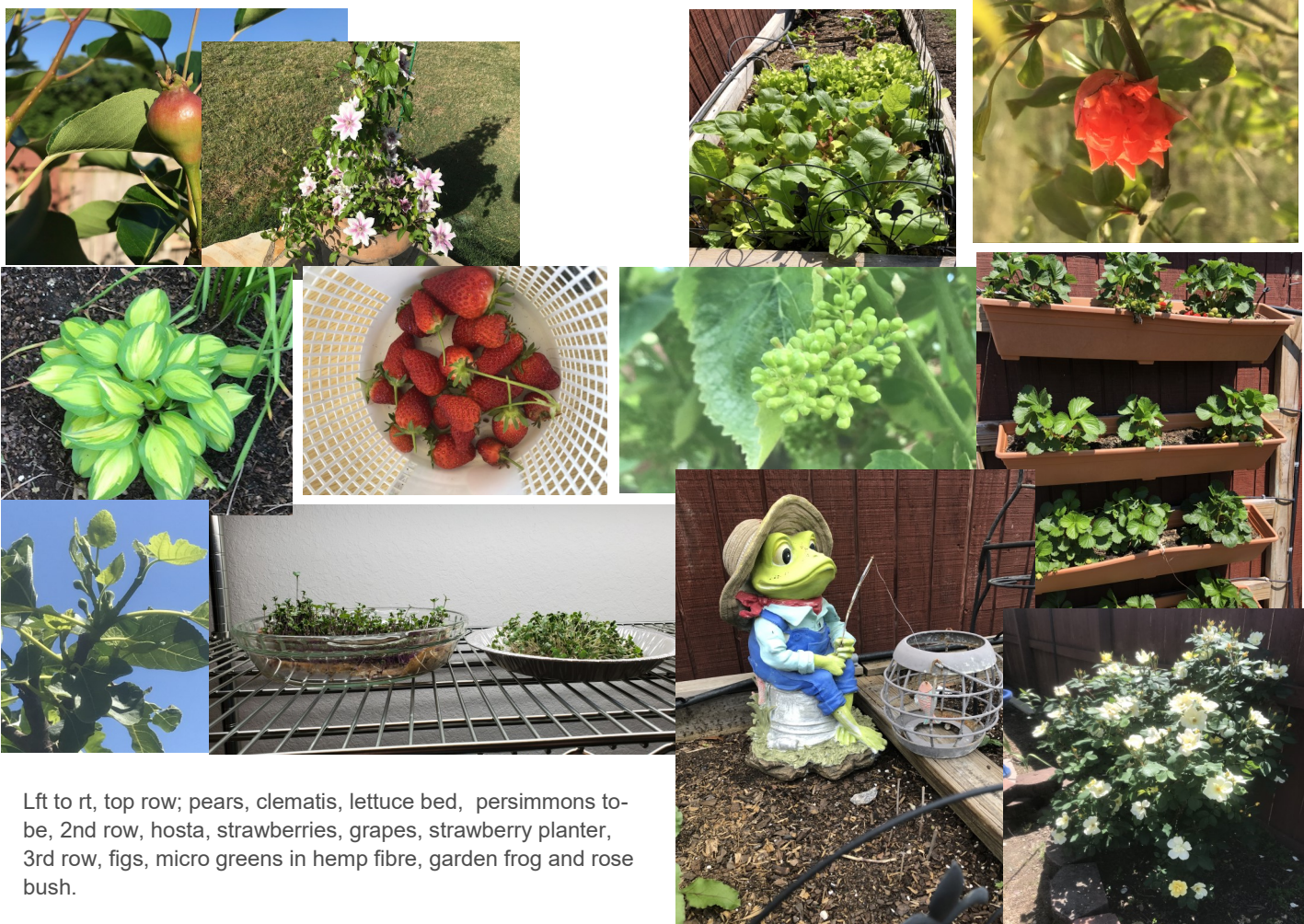




## Cont'd "And the Beat Goes On..."

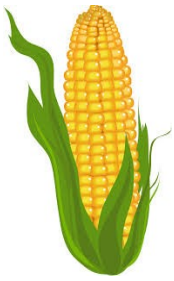
At the beginning of the 2020 New Year, our thoughts were on the 2020 AMGA Conference, our Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale, the remodel of Prattvillage Garden and the Demo Garden and so much more. As an association we were moving along comfortably then 2 months into the year, WHAM! In a matter of moments we were taken out of our comfortable and long enjoyed schedules by *COVID19*. MGs with non-essential jobs (and what retiree has an essential job?) have been sequestered to our homes, placed under house-arrest, if you will, for an indefinite period of time. Please do not get me wrong. My husband and I are well past 65 with compromised health and we know this virus is looking for us. We also know this separation won't be a 20 to life term. But today, it does seem like a long, long time.

So, to keep yourselves going, perhaps you thought that now's a good time to get to those "I'll get to that someday" jobs done, but did you? Uh uh. The more we thought about it, the more it seemed that those jobs could wait for a little while longer since we would have lots of time later on. Of more urgency were gardening chores. The soil needed to be rototilled, seeds planted, and pruning needed to be done. And it wasn't entirely our fault that we haven't done those "someday" jobs. We had rain, sunshine, warm breezes and nature just calling our name to come out and play in the soil. Thoughts of cleaning out the garage, organizing our tools or drawers, cleaning out closets went out the door and into the garden. Yes, we could have tackled all those "someday" jobs, but it's Spring and the sun is shining. At the right time God waters our garden and everything begins to grow beautifully. Obviously our time is best spent watching "things" grow. The master gardener in us wants to follow the day to day growth, to nurture, weed, feed, and just be overwhelmed by the miracle of plants. As for me, I will lay on a lounge, lean back and watch my maple tree grow. I'll get those other jobs done "someday." *And the Beat Goes On...*



Lft to rt, top row; pears, clematis, lettuce bed, persimmons to-be, 2nd row, hosta, strawberries, grapes, strawberry planter, 3rd row, figs, micro greens in hemp fibre, garden frog and rose bush.





## Become an Autauga County Master Gardener!

**Do you love plants?**

**Then you are a great candidate for the Master Gardener Intern Training!**

**You do not have to be a garden expert, just come with a desire to learn and grow!**

As part of the Master Gardener intern class, you will receive horticultural training specific to Central Alabama's soils and climate, training materials, and best of all, you will make great new friends, and have an opportunity to give back to your community through volunteering.

**2020 Session: September 2 – November 11 – Wednesdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM**  
**Free Lunch Provided at Each Class**

**Application Deadline August 7, 2020**

**The course fee is \$150 – Early Bird registration gets a \$25 discount**

**Early Bird registration deadline July 10, 2020**

**\*You will be contacted for a class orientation prior to the start date.**

The eleven-week Master Gardener training course is held at the  
Autauga County Extension Office, 2226 Hwy 14 West, Autaugaville, AL 36003.

Classes are taught by professors and specialists from Auburn University, Extension agents, and veteran Master Gardeners.

More information, can be found at <http://mg.aces.edu/autauga/>  
or by contacting Natalie Rimel at 334-361-7273

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### PRE-REGISTRATION FORM- Autauga County Master Gardener Intern Class

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

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

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

Return Pre-Registration Form by August 7, 2020 to:

**Autauga County Extension Office**  
2226 Hwy 14 West, Suite E  
Autaugaville, AL 36003



# PRATTVILLE GARDEN PROGRESS REPORT 1ST QUARTER 2020

By Dian Owens

The mild temperatures and abundance of rain produced a bumper crop of Florida betony (rattlesnake weed) all over Prattville Garden (PVG). Our diligent volunteers descended on PVG and reined in the weeds. Then we laid out 72 bales of long leaf pine straw, began other clean up and moved some early sprouting Spring flowers to more desirable locations. Wisteria vines were used to make three sturdy plant supports for top-heavy plants and a large wattle was woven to corral and support the large colony of phlox. Hopefully a few more concrete benches will arrive soon. Because of the generous size of PVG, it has been possible to continue working while maintaining the recommended six-feet plus distance due to the COVID-19 virus.



*Florida Betony (rattlesnake weeds)*



*Wattle for phlox colony & round plant support*

Outback Landscapers completed the repairs of the existing paths and other approved new hard-scapes. Multiple collars were set to protect the irrigation system running under the main brick path. The existing irrigation system will be replaced by mid-June.



*Repairs begin by lifting the main path*



*The beginnins of the new pergola pad*

Continued on pg. 10



# Bacterial Spot in Peppers and Tomatoes

Posted by: Edward Sikora



Bacterial spot is the most common disease of peppers in Alabama and is a recurring problem on tomatoes grown in the state. The disease can significantly affect marketable yield. Bacterial spot is caused by four species of the bacterium *Xanthomonas*.

## Disease Source and Development

The main sources of the pathogen include:

- infected seed
- infected transplants
- infested crop debris
- contaminated equipment, such as stakes and tools

Fortunately, the bacterium cannot survive on its own in the soil. The pathogen can also survive on volunteer tomato and pepper plants in the field, as well as in enclosed structures—such as greenhouses and high tunnels—during the winter.

Disease development is more likely in moist, prolonged periods of high relative humidity and under temperatures between 68°F and 95°F. Excess nitrogen levels favor the development of bacterial spot.

Infection is often initiated in the greenhouse during transplant production, with inoculum originating from infested seed. Warm, wet greenhouse conditions favor the spread of the pathogen to seedlings where it infects plants through wounds. Bacteria can colonize the transplants without any symptom development. However, once

planted in the field, bacterial spot symptoms start appearing. Thus, asymptomatic transplants harboring pathogen inoculum are often responsible for disease outbreaks in the field.

## Symptoms of Bacterial Spot

Symptoms of bacterial spot on tomato can appear on the leaves, fruit, and stems. Leaf lesions are dark and water soaked initially, eventually turning brownish black. Spots are somewhat rounded but may be angular if restricted by leaf veins. The center of the spots frequently dries out and tears giving the leaf a ragged appearance.

Spots on green tomato fruit first appear as small, black, raised pimples surrounded by a narrow water-soaked or greenish-white halo. Older spots are black, slightly raised, and up to 1/3-inch in diameter. In time, the raised centers develop into scabby, tan to brownish black sunken craters. Ripe fruit appears to be resistant to infection by bacterial spot.

Symptoms of bacterial spot on peppers begin as small, yellowish-green, water-soaked spots on the lower leaf surface. Spots first appear on older leaves in the lower canopy and spread upward with the aid of splashing water, high-pressure sprays, or the handling of wet plants by workers. These spots develop into small, circular, brown-to-black spots often surrounded by a narrow yellow halo. This leaf damage often causes significant defoliation of plants, especially in peppers, resulting in yield losses due to blossom drop and increased incidence of sunscald on fruit. Spots on pepper fruit begin as dark, circular, water-soaked lesions up to 1/4-inch in diameter. Eventually, the spots become raised and cracked and have a warty appearance.

## Management of the Disease

Management of bacterial spot requires an integrated pest management (IPM) approach from seed selection through harvest. Host resistance has been a critical component of an IPM strategy to control bacterial spot on pepper. There are a few bacterial spot-resistant cultivars on the market. Currently, there are no commercial tomato cultivars available with resistance to bacterial leaf spot.

The first step in managing bacterial spot is selecting and purchasing high quality, disease-free certified seed from a reputable dealer.

*(Continued on page 13)*





*View of main brick path & herb garden*



*View of main brick path, pergola & classroom*



*Reset ballist stones in herb garden*



*Herb garden facing toward main path*



*New ramp off main entrance*



*New brick pad for donated bench east of main path*

Continued on pg. 11



The chapel interior was cleaned and organized. All the pots previously stored behind the lattice fence have been sorted by size and moved inside for better organization. There is now better storage and room to move around and work inside the chapel. Old Prattvillage owners (Lori and Richard Terrell) replaced the chapel's side entrance steps, repaired the side door and added a new sign.



*New steps & new brick pad (photo Lori Terrell)*



Dian Owens

*PVG sign next to new OPV sign*

The area behind the northern lattice fence was cleared out. The equipment shed behind the chapel will be moved behind the privacy section that connects to the lattice fence. Along the wire fence row between the chapel and the bank property, the cherry laurel was pruned into hedge height. This opened the area visually and gave much needed air circulation in that area. The beautiful eastern bluebirds moved into their house there within a few days! The tiger swallowtail butterflies are already in the garden, too! As saying goes, the photos do not do justice to the garden!

*1st Quarter Volunteers: Adrienne Y, Ange T, Angie S, Anthony Y, Beverly C, Bionca L, Bob S, Charlie F, Cheri C, Cindy S, Debbie B, Dian O, Glenn H, Glenn N, Jane Mc, JC S, Kathy C, Kathy Q, Lanell T, Linda B, Patrick C, Shari Mc & Valerie B. Please forgive me if I missed someone.*



Dian Owens

*The invasive cherry laurel being thinned out*



Dian Owens

*What an improvement! Even the bluebirds like it!*



# Plant Sale News

By Debbie Boutelier

By now, you know that we cannot hold our plant sale in April as we planned. The board discussed perhaps moving it to May, but this pandemic is very unpredictable and May is probably too optimistic and too soon for public gatherings. The board met last week by teleconference and the plant sale was one of the major agenda items. Our plant sale is our major fundraiser and the proceeds allow us to conduct all of our educational programs and maintain our public gardens. Here are our alternate plans in lieu of the April 25th sale:



1) Conduct a Fall Plant Sale for the public. Fall is really the best time to plant perennials, bulbs, trees and shrubs so we should have a full complement of plants available. We can also offer cool weather vegetable plants. At this time, we are looking at a date in late August so as not to interfere with football season.

2) Virtual Plant Sale NOW for members only. Ange Trimble, Plant Sale Chair, and I have discussed this subject and have developed the plan to execute this idea. The way this will work to minimize personal contact and money handling is as follows:

a) If you have plants you have propagated that will either not last until fall or you do not want to babysit over the summer, make a list of what you have and **REPLY ALL** to this email listing the plants you have available.

b) If another MG is interested in what you have, they should contact you directly and set up a time to pick them up from you. You can then leave the plants in your driveway or other designated place at the agreed upon time for pick up.

c) The person getting the plants is responsible for making a donation to the ACMGA for the plants by mailing the donation directly to our treasurer, Cheri Cook. Her address is 813 Bluegrass Drive, Prattville, AL 36066.

d) This virtual plant sale is on the honor system. We are not setting a price on each plant, but hope you will be fair and generous in figuring your donation to the organization. These monies will allow us to meet our operating expenses until we can have a public plant sale in the fall.





## ← RECIPE IDEA →

### *Crock Pot Red Beans & Rice*

Lee Ann Morana

#### Ingredients:

1 Lb. Conecuh Sausage sliced into thin circles  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
2 cans Van Camp's New Orleans style Red Kidney Beans, undrained  
2 cans dark red kidney beans, undrained

#### Preparation:

Precook sausage in skillet and drain fat (or sausage may be added raw). Combine sausage, beans, and onion in crock pot. Cook on low for 6-8 hours; then serve over white rice with greens and cornbread or sides of choice.



(Continued from page 9)

Sanitation during transplant production is critical to managing this disease. Transplant producers need to remove all plant material from the greenhouse before starting a new crop and between crops. Weeds and volunteer plants also need to be eliminated in and around the production house.

Establish and maintain a balanced fertility program. Tomatoes and pepper crops growing under low fertility conditions are more susceptible to severe outbreaks of bacterial spot. Also avoid excessive fertility levels especially before fruit set as this can result in excessive foliage, low fruit set, and increased disease severity.

Application of fixed-copper products is still the primary method of managing bacterial spot in the field. Tank-mix the copper product with the

fungicide mancozeb to increase the bactericidal effect of the copper. Actigard 50 WG (a.i. acibenzolar-S-methyl) is an SAR (systemic acquired resistance) product that can stimulate the plant's own disease defense system. Actigard has been shown to reduce bacterial spot incidence and severity on tomatoes and should be used in combination with copper-based products in production fields. Always follow the manufacturer's directions and restrictions when using any pesticide.

Plow crop debris soon after harvest is complete to help facilitate decomposition of the residue, eliminating the substrate on which the pathogen survives in the field.

*Trade and brand names used in this publication are given for information purposes only. No guarantee, endorsement, or discrimination among*

April

HOW can the day be dreary,  
How can the heart be sad;  
How can the soul be weary  
When all the winds are glad —  
When every bud is leaping,  
Triumphant, from its bed;  
When March is spent and sleeping,  
And Summer 's just ahead?

There 's joy among the flowers,  
There 's glee upon the hills;  
There 's laughter in the showers  
That swell the leaping rills;  
There 's gladness in the hedges  
Where happy songsters wed,  
Exchanging loving pledges,  
With Summer just ahead.

There 's joy in every cluster  
Of reeds upon the slope;  
Each morning puts new luster  
Upon the shield of hope!  
Why should a heart beat sadly,  
An eye look out with dread,  
When all the woods ring gladly  
And Summer 's just ahead!

Crafty Secrets copyright © 2004



## Monthly Meetings (temporarily postponed)

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.....

- Start spray program for all fruits.
- Plant blackberries and raspberries. Continue budding apples and peaches.
- Fertilize azaleas and camellias.
- When new growth is half completed on shrubs, spray with a fungicide.
- Fertilize lawns at 3 to 6-week intervals.
- Watch for diseases and insects on roses.
- Keep old flowers dead headed.
- Plant early started annuals and bedding plants from nurseries and garden centers.
- Divide mums or root cuttings. Dig and divide dahlias.
- Feed bearded iris with superphosphate and spray for borers.
- Spray camellias, hollies, etc., for scale insects.

*Note: Lunch & Learn programs are postponed until further notice.*

April

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

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

To: