

# DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Newsletter

May, 2020



## President's Message

The state is beginning to re-open, albeit slowly. Even so, the COVID-19 numbers are still rising. Therefore, Extension is moving very slowly toward re-opening for business. It seems to be a very prudent decision. For now, we continue our current course, no face-to-face meetings of over 10 people and no offering of public education courses. For us, that means, no Lunch & Learn in June and we will continue with our membership meetings and board meetings utilizing technology to communicate.

What it also means is that we are continuing to work in our gardens – in the fresh air and sunshine and maintaining social distance. Our gardens look fantastic! The warm temperatures, a little rain and a lot of attention are paying great dividends. With many people getting outside to walk, we have seen a surge in the number of visitors to Prattville. We have received a lot of very nice compliments. The Demo garden is going strong after a slow start. There was a beautiful harvest this morning to take to AICC for distribution. We are fortunate to be a blessing to others in these difficult times.

We are winding up the projects that have been funded through the Mid-South grant. Most of the improvements through the grant have been made to the Demo garden and just this morning the guys assembled the new composting system.



Our garden trash has a brand new home! The pollinator beds were increased. They are very colorful and doing their job – attracting pollinators. The new trellises have gone up and you should soon see plantings making their way up as they reach for the sun.

Our virtual plant sale was a huge success! Our members have really enjoyed shopping with each other while adhering to the social distancing rules. Several members have asked to make this an annual affair! Some of the benefits of the virtual sale, other than getting plants, was the opportunity to visit our members in their gardens and best of all, we now have a piece of each other's gardens in our own garden. This is what being a Master Gardener is all about!

We said farewell to a very special Master Gardener this morning. Beverly Coutts is returning to Canada with her husband. Even though she was only here a short while, she has become very dear to us. We wish her the best in her new home, but are really hoping they may be able to return!

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



*Debbie*



# Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards Series

By Tim McCoy



The daily webinar series from the Alabama Extension home grounds teams is making some changes. The series is continuing but it is going to become a weekly series. Join the Alabama Extension home grounds team for the Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards online series. This online series provides common gardening and landscaping information for gardeners.

## **Date and Topic**

There is no fee to participate in this series. A session is hosted weekly on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. CT and will last for 30 minutes. The sessions currently scheduled are.

May 27: TBA

## **How to Participate**

Each session is presented through Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. To participate in this online series, register on the [Auburn University website](#).

For more information on the Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards Series, contact [Dani Carroll](#).

## **Tips to Keep your Tomato Plants Healthy**



By Mallory Kelley  
Regional Extension Agent  
Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests

The tomato is by far the most popular plant in the vegetable garden, but it can also be the most problematic. There are so many things to watch for when growing tomatoes to insure you have a healthy crop. I hope these tips below will help keep your plants healthy the further we go into summer.

Start with drip irrigation or hand watering only at the surface of the soil to avoid splashing. Then prune all lower limbs off the tomatoes that are touching the soil and apply mulch. Mulching your tomatoes keeps the plants moisture level consistent and will help prevent blossom end rot. Mulching helps control weeds where insects like to overwinter and eliminates their competition for the fertilizer you have applied. Mulch also creates a barrier between the plant leaves and the soil to help control many of the fungal problems that come from the surface of the ground.

Remove yellow and brown spotted leaves as soon as they appear and if not already, start a fungicide application to prevent "Early Blight." No tomato grower can avoid this problem so apply the PREVENTATIVE fungicide before the tomatoes get the fungus. Products with the active ingredients: Chlorothalonil, mancozeb or copper will control Early Blight.

Scout daily for insects. Go out and inspect for armyworms, fruit worms, hornworms along with stinkbugs. (The main insect problems on tomatoes). Products that contain *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) will work when the WORMS are young or use products containing carbaryl if the worms are larger. Another insecticide that will control stinkbugs and some of the other pests you may find is bifenthrin. Don't wait until your plant has no more leaves before you start your search for the hornworm. Scout today because the plant may not be there tomorrow!!!!

(Continued on page 4)





# ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS FALL SEMINAR

HOSTED BY:



**Save the Date**

**Thursday,  
September 17, 2020**

**9:30am – 3:30pm**

**This seminar will  
also include the  
AMGA Annual  
Meeting**

**LOCATION:**

Trinity United Methodist  
Church, Prattville, AL

More information will be  
forthcoming  
[abacus@sprintmail.com](mailto:abacus@sprintmail.com)

## Hummingbird Award

Beverly Coutts was presented with the hummingbird award for all the work she has done in the demo garden and elsewhere for our organization. She worked in the demo garden even before taking the master gardener program. Beverly earned her certification early after completing all her requirements.



(Continued from page 2)

Weather challenges, garden insects, viral, fungal, and bacterial problems, and disorders are all challenges we face with growing our own backyard tomatoes. Like I said, they are the most popular vegetable/fruit to grow, but also the most problematic. If you have more questions on what may be affecting your tomato plants and what you can do to stop it.

plete the order form, print your order form, and mail it along with the payment to the address on the form. Once we receive our designated number of orders, we will place our order to the company and eagerly wait for our bricks to arrive. Once the honor bricks arrive, we will place your special brick in one of our Pathways in Prattvillage Garden, where it can be viewed for many years to come. It's that simple!

If you have any question, please contact Bionca Lindsey, [bioncalindsey2015@gmail.com](mailto:bioncalindsey2015@gmail.com) or (501)765-9882.

## ETCHING SOMEONE'S NAME IN HISTORY

BY BIONCA LINDSEY

Often times we want to say, "thank you", "I love you", or even, "I miss you" and sometimes saying those words alone doesn't quite get the message across. We want it to be more meaningful, more special, and more unique. Well, look no further! We, The Master Gardeners of Autauga County, are excited to bring you a way to say all those things and more! Our newest fundraiser will allow you to honor, pay tribute or even pay your respects to your loved ones. "Honor Brick" is what we are calling it, and that's exactly what we want to do! We want to honor people by having their names and a message, if applicable, on a brick which will be placed in the pathways at Prattvillage Garden. The brick will cost \$50.00. To place your order you will need to visit our website, <https://donationbricks.com/acmga>, com-







Sheila Pearson

Saying farewell for now to our ACMGA member Beverly Coutts. She, husband Dan and canine boy are heading back to Canada in a few days



Linda Blackwell

Our own Debbie Boutelier garnered the top hours award for all master gardeners in 2019 with 2,139 hours.



Dian Owens receiving her gold badge for volunteering 1,064 cumulative hours since becoming an Alabama Master Gardener.



Debbie also received a lifetime badge and amethyst star for her 10,220 cumulative hours since becoming an Alabama Master Gardener in 1995



## 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



# Grow More, Give More

Alabama Extension is proud to announce a new program called Grow More, Give More. It's a program for new gardeners and it has developed out of our COVID-19 sheltering in place. People who have never gardened want to know how they can get started. Their interest reaches beyond their own table. They want to share the bounty of their gardens with local food shelters and others who need help. Grow More, Give More teaches people how to garden and connects them with local people who really need the food. The program starts with online learning about gardening and is supported by a wealth of information and resources from Alabama Extension, one-on-one assistance through Master Gardeners, and helpful social media posts.

## Alabama Extension Inspiring Gardeners to Grow More, Give More

Posted by Justin Miller

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, Ala. – Home gardeners can now use their passion for gardening to make a difference in their communities through the Alabama Extension Grow More, Give More project.

Designed for both novice and experienced gardeners, this project provides the information required to have a successful vegetable garden. This project goes one step further and encourages citizens to use their garden bounty in ways to meet community needs.

"We are excited to launch this project that not only teaches people the ins and outs of gardening, but also helps provide much needed food assistance to communities across Alabama," said Bethany O'Rear, an Alabama Extension home grounds regional agent.

### Grow More

Grow More, Give More is a collaborative effort between Alabama Extension horticulture agents and Alabama Master Gardener Extension volunteers. The Grow More aspect of this project is now underway.

Alabama Extension horticulture agents are distributing kit plans for growing vegetables at home. These plans cover some of the basic growing information related to commonly grown Alabama vegetables.



"These plans will have information specific to different garden types, such as how to grow tomatoes in a five-gallon bucket," O'Rear said. "We will suggest supplies needed, where to place it, when to plant it and how to maintain it."

Kits include plans for large container gardens, raised beds and in-ground row crops.

### Informational Resources

Worried about getting started? Don't fret. Extension agents will help growers every step of the way by providing informational resources through a variety of platforms. Master Gardener Extension volunteers are also dedicating their time to support the project.

"These resources are great tools that help guide home gardeners through the entire process," she said. "In addition to the publications and informational articles on the Extension website, the Grow More, Give More project will have brief on-line tutorials, social media posts and one-on-one assistance through the Master Gardener Helpline."

### Give More

According to O'Rear, the team is still finalizing plans for the Give More aspect of the project. However, the goal is that people use their extra produce to make a difference in their communities.

"People who grow more than they can use are encouraged to share with neighbors or donate it to local food assistance efforts," O'Rear said. "As people learn to Grow More, we hope they will Give More too."

This summer, the project will provide a way for gardeners to record their donations and also tell the story of how they utilized the Give More aspect of the project.

### More Information

For more information on this project, visit the [Grow More, Give More](#) page on the Alabama Extension website, [www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu).



## RECIPE IDEA

### SINFUL SALAD

By Ofie McCoy

#### Ingredients:

1 6-oz. pkg strawberry Jell-O  
1 cup boiling water  
2 pkg (10 oz each) frozen strawberries  
1 20-oz can crushed pineapple, drained  
3 medium bananas, mashed  
1 cup chopped pecans  
1 pint sour cream

#### Directions:

In medium bowl combine Jell-O and boiling water. Stir until completely dissolved. Cool, add bananas, pecans, strawberries and pineapple to cooled Jell-O and stir to combine.

Pour half Jell-O mixture into a 13X9 dish, refrigerate until set. Keep remaining Jell-O mixture at room temperature. Spread sour cream evenly over set Jell-O, and then pour remaining Jell-O over sour cream. Cover, and refrigerate until set.



Editor's note: trust me folks this is so sinfully good.



## TREE Fund Webinars

TREE Fund webinars bring you the latest in tree research, directly from the scientists themselves.

TREE Fund's one-hour webinars are **free** and offer **1.0 CEU** (only for live broadcast) from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the Society of American Foresters (SAF), the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) and sometimes the Landscape Architecture Continuing Education System (LACES). See webinar descriptions for specifics. **Space is limited, and pre-registration is highly recommended;** in doing so, you'll receive a reminder email the day before the broadcast.

### **Future Webinars**

## *The Calm Before: Tree Adjustments to Wind & Ice*

## *Storm Loads*

[Register Here](#)

**Tuesday, June 2, 2020, at 12 p.m. Central**

**Kim D. Coder, PhD,** Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia

Trees grow with, and adjust to, large lateral and vertical loads caused by wind and gravity. Storms with strong winds and ice can push trees beyond their ability to reconfigure or fall back to reduce drag. Exceeding tree structural ice and wind load limits cause branch, root, and crown failures, or complete catastrophic loss of the tree. Wind loads greatly increase with small mile-per-hour velocity changes. Storm wind loads and ice storm issues, and how they impact trees, will be reviewed.

This webinar is co-sponsored by the [Alabama Cooperative Extension System](#) and [ISA Southern Chapter](#)



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## [Fighting Microbes with Microbes to Protect Our Native Trees](#)



[Register Here](#)

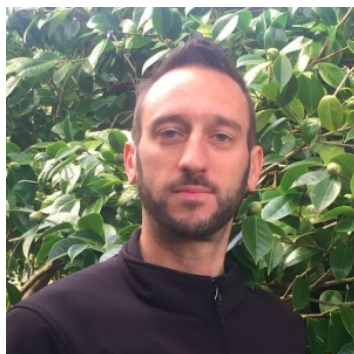
**Tuesday, June 9, 2020, at 12 p.m. Central**  
**Rachael Antwis, PhD, University of Salford**

Ash dieback is a fungal disease sweeping through Europe, causing up to 95% loss of ash; one of our most common tree species. In this seminar, Dr. Rachael Antwis will provide an overview of the disease, and how researchers are attempting to limit the loss of this important tree species. She will also discuss her recent research, funded by the TREE Fund's Jack Kimmel International Grant, looking at how natural microbial communities in ash leaves may be important for regulating disease progression within the host.

This webinar is co-sponsored by the [Alabama Cooperative Extension System](#)



## [Protecting trees from construction impacts](#)

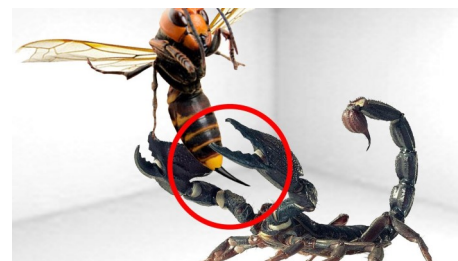


**Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 3 p.m. Central**  
**Andrew Benson, PhD**

With increased intensification in cities throughout the world, urban trees are often at risk of becoming damaged by construction impacts, such as utility trenching or pavement / sidewalk repair. If the damage is severe and a tree loses a lot of its roots, the consequences may result in tree

failure, or tree removal due to subsequent poor health. In this presentation, we will look at some of the reasons why urban trees become damaged during construction and some of the more suitable methods available to prevent or limit that damage occurring. We'll also look at some recent research which aims to improve what we know about the consequences of construction damage effects, and hopefully provide some useful tools to practitioners who work with roots on a regular basis.

This webinar is co-sponsored by the [Alabama Cooperative Extension System](#)



## 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.....

Continue spray program for fruit and nut trees.  
Keep grass from around trees and strawberries.  
Peaches and apples can still be budded.  
Newly planted shrubs need extra care now and in coming weeks.  
Now is the best time to start new lawns from seed.  
Spray or dust roses for insects and diseases.  
Fertilize monthly according to a soil test.  
Prune climbing roses after first big flush of flowering.  
Watch for insects on daylilies.  
Do not remove foliage from spring flowering bulbs.  
Plant heat-loving and tender vegetables.  
Start cauliflower, brussel sprouts, and celery in cold frames for the fall garden.  
Plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and sweet potatoes.



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

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HERE

To: