

DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Newsletter

July 2020



President's Message

It was June and wedding bells were ringing. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc with a lot of weddings, but our Prattvillage Garden is a great venue for small weddings. So far, we have reservations for three weddings this season. It's nice to be able to contribute to happy occasions with all of the strife and fear that is infecting our country right now. The first wedding was in June and the garden looked beautiful! The perfect place to start a new life together.

Extension has set a target date of August 8th to begin having face-to-face meetings. This is, of course, predicated on what is happening with the COVID-19 situation. We are moving forward with the planning of several events. Our first-ever fall plant sale is scheduled for August 22nd. Start thinking about what plants can be divided for the sale, or seeds that can be started for fall vegetables or even bulbs that can be separated. Lots of opportunities!

Our other big event is hosting the AMGA fall seminar. The planning committee has made all of the big decisions and the plans have been set in motion. We will need a lot of help the day of the event to welcome our guests to Autauga County. The sub-committees that need help are listed in the Weekly Happenings. We will also have sign-up sheets at the August meeting.



At the July membership meeting, we had an ice cream social in Prattvillage Garden! This was so much fun after not being able to gather for such a long time. We came together (yet were able to maintain safety precautions) to celebrate our interns who have all completed their requirements to become Master Gardeners. We also had a few other presentations planned and then there was ice cream! Yum! See the article '*I Went to a Garden Party*' for all the details.

Thanks to everyone for making our virtual plant sale such a success! I hope you're enjoying all of your new treasures. We wrote up the idea for the Garden Pathways that was released this month. (Thank you Nancy Waggoner!) Other associations around the state were looking for ideas for fundraisers since they couldn't have their plant sales. Hope our idea helps!

On a sad note, we said goodbye to our Master Gardener friend, Gaines Smith. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers. Keep in touch! Always remember, time began in a garden!

Debbie

AMGA Fall Seminar



Save the Date

Thursday,

September 17, 2020

9:30am – 3:45pm

This seminar will also include the AMGA Annual Meeting

Location:

Trinity United Methodist Church
Prattville, AL

Alabama Master Gardeners Fall Seminar



"Fall" in Love with Your Garden

HOSTED BY:



Contact Info: Rose McCauley jmprat@charter.net 334-365-3112

ACMGA is taking extra precautions to ensure your health & safety during this seminar.

Thursday,
September 17, 2020

9:30 am – 3:45 pm

Cost \$30.00

SESSIONS:

Dr. Leila Scott Kelly

*Butterfly Magnets: Adding Plants to
your Fall Garden to aid with the
Migration of Butterflies*

Debbie Boutelier

*People, Plants & Pollinators: The
Native Connection*

Dr. Fudd Graham

*All Insects are Not Pests! Identifying &
Encouraging Native Insects in Your
Garden*

AMGA Annual Meeting

Optional: ACMGA Public Gardens
Tour

3 CEUs will be earned

LOCATION:

Trinity United Methodist Church
610 Fairview Avenue, Prattville, AL
36066

Registration Form:

Deadline to register is September 9, 2020

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

Master Gardener Association/County: _____

Lunch Preference: ☐ Turkey ☐ Ham ☐ Vegetarian

Optional: Garden Tour with 4 Locations on Wednesday, Sept 16th 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Please circle: Yes No

Optional: ACMGA Public Gardens Tour on Thursday, September 17th 4:00 pm Please circle: Yes No

Optional Hotel Information: La Quinta Inn, 261 Interstate Commercial Park Loop, Prattville, AL 36066 334-310-0869
Hampton Inn, 2590 Cobbs Ford Road, Prattville, AL 36066 334-285-6767

Mail Registration Form & Check Payable to ACMGA to: Rose McCauley, 252 Berry Lane, Prattville, AL 36066

Hummingbird Award



Coronavirus: Food Safety Entertainment Tips

by: Terence Martin



During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people are still under stay-at-home orders and practicing social distancing. While summer is the time when people gather for family reunions and other festivities, keep in mind that public health officials continue to prohibit large public gatherings. If you are planning to cookout or entertain, however, consider these tips to remain safe and to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Food Safety and COVID-19

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 is believed to spread through respiratory droplets when a person coughs, sneezes or talks. While it is possible that a person can

(Continued on page 4)

contract the virus by touching surfaces or objects, such as food or food packaging, this is not a common mode of transmission. However, there are food safety practices in place when handling and preparing food.

Transporting Food

COVID-19 does not grow on food. However, harmful bacteria will grow between 41°F and 140°F. Keep this in mind when picking up meat, poultry, or seafood from a store, for example. It's wise to bring a cooler and ice packs to keep food at 41°F or colder during transit.

When unpacking groceries at home:

Prepare or refrigerate meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, and other perishable items within two hours of purchasing. Never allow meat, poultry or seafood to sit at room temperature for longer than one hour if air temperature is above 90°F.

Wash surfaces with hot, soapy water, or a bleach solution if food leaks occur.

Clean Surfaces and Dishes

Clean and disinfect kitchen counters using reusable or disposable gloves.

Clean surfaces with soap and water, then use a disinfectant. Soap and water will reduce germs and disinfectants will kill germs that grow on surfaces. Surfaces that are touched daily, such as kitchen countertops, should be cleaned frequently.

Avoid using disinfectants that are manufactured for hard surfaces, such as bleach or ammonia on food packaged in cardboard or plastic wrap.

Wash dishes and eating utensils using disposable gloves and hot soapy water or place dishes in a dishwasher.

Food Preparation

Thaw food in refrigerator or in cold water. Be sure to change water every 30 minutes.

Cook food promptly when thawed.

Wash hands before and after the handling of food for 20 seconds using soap and warm water.

Avoid cross-contamination of food. Keep raw meat separate from other food and wash counter tops or cutting boards with hot, soapy water after use.

Be sure to cook food at proper [temperatures](#) as indicated by Foodsafety.gov.

Serving Food

Keep hot food hot and cold food cold while serving.

Encourage family and friends to bring their own food and drinks if entertaining.

Limit the access of people to food areas, such as the kitchen or the grill.

Assign food servers to limit the number of people handling utensils.

Purchase condiments and other food items in individual packets.

Other Entertainment Safety Tips

The CDC also offers the following safety tips when entertaining this summer under COVID-19 restrictions:

Advise sick people to stay home.

Host activities outside whenever possible.

Maintain social distancing by placing tables and chairs at least 6 feet or two arm lengths apart.

Wear masks when proximity is less than 6 feet.

Engage in activities like frisbee or dancing that requires little or no contact.

Summer is a time when people like to gather and entertain. However, it's important to practice safe social distancing and other recommended guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

More Information

Find more information about the coronavirus and reducing the spread by visiting the [Alabama Cooperative Extension System](#) online. Visit the [United States Department of Agriculture's Fact Sheets](#) page on food safety and preparation for more information.

REVEALED: KING OF THE DEMO GARDEN

By Ofie McCoy

If you were to try to name the most knowledgeable MG on vegetable gardening, I would venture to guess that (other than Mallory) most of us would name, Glenn Huovinen. Glenn has been coordinating and leading (he is a hands-on leader) the work at the ACMGA Demonstration Garden for almost 4 years. This work benefits not only our association, but the produce feeds the hungry in our community. All of the year-round harvest is donated to AICC for distribution to those they serve. So, if we were to give Glenn a name it would be something like “Vegetable Guru” or “Greens King” or perhaps just, Mister Glenn. Glenn is a “think outside the box” person and has, with the help of Demo Garden volunteers, tried many different methods and vegetables to increase the annual harvest thereby further blessing our community. In 2019, we donated over 1,500 pounds of fresh produce to AICC. Glenn has achieved a special joy in the planting and harvesting of tomatoes, so much so that for Fathers’ Day this year his lovely wife, Sandy, bought him this special shirt. Thank you, Glenn, for your leadership in our community garden and thank you volunteers for your dedication to this effort.



Here are some interesting and fun facts about tomatoes you may or may not know:

Tomatoes are not a vegetable; they are fruit since they have seeds and grow from a flowering plant.

(Alright, I guess everyone knew that one!)

Almost all tomato varieties are red although other colors are possible including green, yellow, orange, pink, black, brown, white and purple.

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, an antioxidant that is good for the heart and is said to be effective against certain cancers.

Cooked tomatoes are actually better for you than raw ones, more beneficial chemicals are released through cooking. They are packed with vitamins A and C, calcium and potassium.

Tomatoes are an important ingredient in pizza and pasta sauce (of course!).

Tomatoes increase in weight as they ripen, even after harvesting (who knew?).

Tomatoes were first brought from the Peru area of South America to Europe in the mid 1500's.

The first tomatoes in Europe were yellow varieties, the Italian for tomato is pomodoro and translates to golden apple.





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

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

Master Gardeners, How Does Your Garden Grow?

By Ofie McCoy

This year, Tim and I have been overjoyed with the number of bees, butterflies, birds and even a few hummingbirds which have visited our garden and partaken of the wonderful pollen and nectar from our flowers. Tim planted some beautiful dusty rose cone flowers that are beautiful to look at and, by all evidence, irresistible to bees. Bees treat these cone flowers like their own personal pink restaurant, buzzing from flower to flower, tasting the nectar of each flower. We also have a beautiful white flowering Rose of Sharon bush which also attracts many bees. They buzz around from one white bloom to another, disappearing deep into the middle of the blossom so that only their little backside shows.



What is happening in your garden? Send stories and pictures sharing with your MG friends what is happening in your garden! Anthony, we expect to see a 100-pound pumpkin from you, so start nurturing your plant now. And did I read on FB that someone had a huge watermelon? Send stories about your gardening experiences in growing peas, cucumbers, squash and other delicious vegetables and beautiful flowers. Send your story to *Dirty Digs* by

forwarding story and pictures to the editor, Tim McCoy, at tnkrzz@gmail.com. Send your story now and we can all read about it in the August *Dirty Digs*.

SOW-A Planting Companion

By Maggie Lawrence

The “SOW – A Planting Companion” app is designed to tell you the optimum time to plant each crop in your home garden. Simply choose your location and start planting. Click on the photo of a crop to see more information including:

- Estimated days to harvest
- Estimated yield per plant
- Spacing between plants
- Planting depth below ground level
- Suggested varieties
- Special notes as needed

Download the app from the Apple App Store here or the Google Play Store here.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System and North Carolina A&T State University Extension have partnered to provide crop and planting information for growing zones 6a, 6b, 7b, 8a and 8b in Alabama and North Carolina. If you would like to see your state/zone in this app, please contact Alabama Extension at acesapp@auburn.edu.



I WENT TO A GARDEN PARTY.....

By Debbie Boutelier

Our July membership meeting was an old-fashioned garden party with ice cream sundaes. It was so good to actually 'see' everyone while still maintaining safety precautions. Most everyone wore their masks and it was fun to see the creativity that went into the making of the masks. And, of course, we did have an Auburn majority. Lots of blue and orange masks! We had a couple reminiscent of old Hollywood with large sun-glasses and with their masks, they were very incognito.

We now have three new Master Gardeners with all the privileges of membership in the organization. Paula Wyatt, James Hussey and Valerie Bice received their certificates and badges. It would have been perfect if Beverly Coutts had been here, but I'm sure she was with us in spirit! Congratulations!

We got to meet Elijah Pugh, an Autauga County intern taking the class in Montgomery this spring. Welcome Elijah!

Mallory Kelley also recognized our state MG awards and recognitions:

Dian Owens received her gold name badge for over 500 volunteer hours

Debbie Boutelier received her Lifetime badge with an amethyst star for over 10,000 hours of cumulative volunteer service

Debbie Boutelier received an award for Top Hours of the Year with 2,139 hours

And a surprise guest, Kerry Smith, came over from Auburn to present a special award for the Intern of the Year. Congratulations to Bionca Lindsey for her efforts during her intern year! It's the only time I've seen Bee speechless with a few tears mixed in!



(Continued on page 9)

To culminate our recognitions, Autauga County Master Gardener Association developed and designed a Length of Service pin as a special honor to our long-serving members. This pin will be presented on the tenth anniversary and then in increments of five years. The following members were recognized:

Ten Years

Glenda Armstrong
Carolyn Gray
Marjorie Hannah
Jean Hare
Martha Hughes
Pam Olson
Paula Seamon
Margaret Smitherman
Nancy Waggoner
Billie Willis
Anthony Yarbrough

Fifteen Years

Elissa Davis
Tina Kuykendall
Albert Striplin
Pam Hattemer

Twenty Years

Jo Felio
Bob Scheffler
Gene Stapleton

Twenty Five Years

Helen Allen
Debbie Boutelier



As a membership organization, we are only as strong as our dedicated members. These members have withstood the test of time. Thank you for your continued service to the organization. If you were not at the meeting, please contact Debbie Boutelier to get your pin.

To celebrate, we all enjoyed ice cream sundaes in the beauty of the garden. We should do this again some time!

I went to a garden party to reminisce with my old friends,

A chance to share old memories and play our songs again

When I got to the garden party they all knew my name

No one recognized me I didn't look the same.

Ricky Nelson "Garden Party"



Keeping Perennials Healthy All Year

By Rudy Cacumbaba



Herbaceous perennials are common favorites in any garden or landscape. They require little maintenance and unlike annual plants, will bloom for two or more years. Perennials also come in an array of colors, giving gardeners more options to add color to their landscapes. The following information will help gardeners grow healthy perennials all year long.

Popular Perennials

Popular perennials grown in Alabama include

- black-eyed susan
- purple coneflower
- sedum
- peony
- bearded iris
- daylily
- salvia
- coreopsis
- hosta
- phlox
- false indigo (*Baptisia*)
- aster
- Russian sage

These perennials will die back in the winter, while their roots, clumps of stems, or buds will survive just underneath the soil surface. New shoots will appear in the spring. Some perennials are short lived, lasting only two to three years, while others will last longer. No matter the perennial a gardener chooses, understanding the basic gardening practices – such as adequate

watering, soil and sun conditions, regional planting recommendations, and fertilizing – will help the plants thrive.

Soil Testing

Prior to installing new plantings, growers should conduct a soil test. Soil condition is an important factor in growing healthy plants. Plants need water, air, and nutrients to grow. A soil test will provide vital information on the pH and fertility of the location. Perennials generally thrive in soil with a pH acidity balance of 6.0 to 7.0. Adding soil amendments, such as nutrients, are based upon the results of a soil test. A grower may need to amend their soil regularly since plants and rainwater may deplete nutrients from the soil. Over time, a gardener will get to know their garden or landscape soil better.

Planting Conditions

After determining the condition of the soil in a garden or landscape, choose perennials based on regional location and garden design. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed the [USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map](#) to help gardeners determine what plants are more likely to thrive in their area based on temperature and sunlight. Observe the plant site to see how the sun moves across the ground from morning to dusk. This will help to determine whether plants will need shade, partial, or full sun.

In addition, consider how tall the plant grows based on garden design. Taller perennials should be placed in the back rows of a garden so that shorter plants can take full advantage of the sun. Taller plants may have to be staked in early spring to allow plants to grow through or around them. Some perennials make good border plants along walkways, while others serve as vibrant focal points around shade trees or as attractions for butterflies or humming birds.

As plants grow, consider dividing them to give them more room. The best time to divide perennials depends on the region. In cold regions, early spring is usually the best time. In warmer and hot climates with mild winters and hot summers, fall may be a better time to divide plants. Make sure the plant looks healthy and that they have four to six weeks to root before the ground freezes.

Adequate Watering

Just as plants need sun and room to grow, they also need water. New plantings require deep, regular watering to prevent drying out, so be sure to soak

(Continued on page 11)

the soil. Establishing a good root system during the first year's growth is important for the plant's continued health and vigor. Longer duration and less frequent watering times promote deep strong root systems. Water also allows fertilizers to dissolve in the soil which is better for plant growth.

Fertilizing

A soil test will determine any initial fertilization requirements. Most perennials do not need frequent fertilization. Over fertilizing flowering perennials will produce excessive vegetative growth and few flowers. Fertilizers with lower formulations are sufficient unless otherwise indicated by a periodic soil test.

Seasonal Care

The following is a list of actions to take for seasonal care of perennial plants:

Spring

- Test the soil
- Cut back tall ornamental grasses
- Remove winter protection gradually
- Weed, much, and clear edges
- Thin and divide plants
- Pinch plants back
- Prepare stakes and support cages in late spring

Summer

- Weed and water as necessary
- Pinch and deadhead plants
- Cut back where necessary
- Stake taller plants

Fall

- Weed and water as necessary
- Deadhead plants
- Divide and move plants
- Cut back where necessary

Winter

- Weed and water as necessary
- Add 2 to 3 inches of mulch to plant site
- Winterize the planting bed after the frost

Conclusion

Because of their variety and vibrant blooms, perennials are a longtime favorite plant choice for gardens and landscapes. With little mainte-

nance in nutrient-rich soil, perennials can be enjoyed in any garden or landscape for several years. Visit www.aces.edu for more information on gardening.

JULY

Boris Pasternak

A ghost is roaming through the building,
And shadows in the attic browse;
Persistently intent on mischief
A goblin roams about the house.

He gets into your way, he fusses,
You hear his footsteps overhead,
He tears the napkin off the table
And creeps in slippers to the bed.

With feet unwiped he rushes headlong
On gusts of draught into the hall
And whirls the curtain, like a dancer,
Towards the ceiling, up the wall.

Who is this silly mischief-maker,
This phantom and this double-face?
He is our guest, our summer lodger,
Who spends with us his holidays.

Our house is taken in possession
By him, while he enjoys a rest.
July, with summer air and thunder-
He is our temporary guest.

July, who scatters from his pockets
The fluff of blow-balls in a cloud,
Who enters through the open window,
Who chatters to himself aloud,

Unkempt, untidy, absent-minded,
Soaked through with smell of dill and rye,
With linden-blossom, grass and beet-leaves,
The meadow-scented month July.

RECIPE IDEA

Ingredients

- 1 small carrot
- 1 small red onion, halved
- 1 lb ground chicken breast
- ¼ cup panko bread crumbs
- 2 tbsp hoisin sauce
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 4 sesame seed hamburger buns
- 1 large peach, chopped
- 1 tbsp orange marmalade
- 1 tbsp red onion, finely chopped
- 2 tsp cider vinegar

½ tsp grated fresh ginger

Steps

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Mist a baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Grate the carrot and 1/2 onion into a large bowl. Add the chicken, panko, hoisin sauce, and ginger. Mix until combined.
3. Shape the chicken mixture into 4 patties and place on the prepared baking sheet. Bake until cooked through, about 20 minutes.
4. Serve on buns and top with the peach salsa.
5. Salsa:
6. In medium bowl, combine all ingredients.
7. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
- Makes about 1 cup.



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.....

Protect figs and other ripening fruit from birds.

Continue to root shrub cuttings until late in the month and mulch to keep moist.

Watch lawns for diseased, mow regularly, water as needed.

Apply fertilizer to roses.

Iris and spider lilies can be planted late this month.

Plant beans field peas, rutabagas squash, New Zealand spinach, and Irish potatoes.

Plant cabbage, collards, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and celery for the fall crop.

Keeping flowers, shrubs, trees, and lawns healthy is the major task this month



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

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

To: