Autauga County Master Gardeners

Our Mission

Volunteering to beautify our communities, to share our knowledge of gardening, and to promote environmental awareness

ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS
ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Newsletter **September 2020**

President's Message

I started working on this article last night in the midst of the storm. The power flickered numerous times, but went out for certain about 11:15 pm. I gave up and went to bed. This morning, my little corner of the world looked totally different. As I started to get depressed with the amount of clean-up that needed to be done, I told myself no, don't go there and count your blessings instead. So here is what I am thankful for this morning:

- My family is fine and our abodes were not damaged or flooded
- The electricity was back on this morning!
- We were on the weaker side of the storm and the storm track ended up being south of us, although I said a prayer for everyone in South Alabama who were hit much harder
- After seven months of trying to get a tree removal service here to take down five dead or dying trees, they came before the storm and put the trees on the ground
- My chickens and ducks are fine
- None of the pea gravel I spent a good part of the last week moving washed away – that project will just have to wait for a few days at this point!

- Plant material fell from the trees that I use to make medicine; this is only available and can be collected after a strong storm
- We received much needed rain! (6.5 inches at my house)
- Cooler temperatures
- My plant sale plants came through with flying colors as I had moved them all into the greenhouse for protection
- The city sanitation department is waiving the yard debris pile size for storm debris
- I am physically able to clean up this debris

All things considered, I came out on the plus side of this storm. So many silver linings for which I am truly thankful! I hope all of our Master Gardener family fared as well.

On another note, our modified virtual plant sale will go on! Hopefully, you've sold your listed plants and we will have a successful sale. I hope to see everyone on Saturday!

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

Debbie

Carrots in the Kitchen and Garden

By: Katherine Chapman

As the seasons begin to change and summer turns to fall, I begin to think about cooking. The summer brought lighter foods that cooked quickly or did not need any cooking. Fall brings with it cooler temperatures and thoughts of slow roasted vegetables. Carrots first come to mind because of their sweet earthy flavors. I can use them raw, roasted, baked, boiled, or steamed. Therefore, now is the time to start succession planting carrots in the garden for a robust fall dining experience.

My success with carrots has been sporadic in the past. Broadcasting them and lightly raking them in or tamping them down so that they had good contact with the soil worked well some times, but sometimes the crop would be sparse. I tried broadcasting, tamping them down, and placing a board over the top of them. This worked very well, unless I forgot to remove the board in time. Then, the plants would end up spindly and weak.

I happened upon a video that showed how to plant carrot seeds in rows with fairly even spacing, so I gave it a try, with a few adjustments, and it was successful. One year, we trialed this method of planting seeds in a row at the demo garden and compared it to the traditional way of broadcasting the carrot seeds. The crop we sowed in rows came up beautifully. The broadcast seeds were few and sporadically spaced. Try it for yourself using the method below.

Mix two cups of water and two tablespoons of cornstarch together in a small saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil and cook for one minute. Place the mixture into a bowl. Once the mixture cools completely, mix in 1/4 of the packet of carrot seeds. Spread the seeds evenly throughout the mixture. Next, place the mixture into a cake decorating bag or a zip lock bag. Cut a small hole into the bag. Make a small furrow in the soil and place the mixture evenly down the entire furrow. Finally, lightly cover over this mixture with soil. Keep the soil moist until the carrot seeds sprout. Water as needed to keep the soil from drying out.

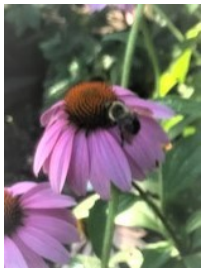
When your carrots are ready to harvest, here is a simple recipe to try:

6 carrots peeled and trimmed. Slice in half crosswise. Cut each of these pieces lengthwise. If any pieces are very thick, cut again lengthwise so they are about equal in thickness.

1 tablespoon of olive oil
1 teaspoon of fresh thyme
1-2 cloves of garlic, sliced
1/4 teaspoon of salt
pepper, to taste

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Place the carrots and garlic on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Toss the carrots and garlic in the olive oil to coat. Sprinkle the thyme, salt, and pepper over them. Roast for seven minutes then stir the vegetables on the pan. Roast for another seven to nine minutes until tender. Watch that the garlic does not burn. Taste and adjust seasonings as desired. Serve hot or room temperature.

"Mary, Mary, Quite contrary, How does your garden grow? With silver bells and cockle shells and little maids all in a row." The secret to Mary's garden success is quite peculiar in nature: "With silver bells and cockleshells and pretty maids all in a row." Most of us lack the silver bells or cockle shells, but we do have other interesting, colorful and sometimes spectacular plants in our gardens that should be shared with our MG family. At our last "Butterfly" committee meeting, Ms. Jane McCarthy suggested everyone share pictures of their gardens along with the scientific name for each plant. What a great challenge! This will be a standing article every month in the *Dirty Digs* and your pictures and stories are welcome! Please share with us, the little things and the big things—all of it is of interest to your fellow MGs.



Is there anything more melodious than the buzz of those hard-working bees as they go fliter about collecting their pollen and nectar from our blooms? With the scientific name of Apis, there are 5 important species of honeybees.

Pictured above is our loofah vines growing over a metal trellis. Loofah, (genus Luffa), is also called a vegetable sponge, sponge gourd, or rag gourd, genus of seven species of annual climbing vines of the gourd family (Cucurbitaceae), native to the Old World tropics. Great for bathing!

A white gardenia blossom of the genus *Gardenia* is in the major family group, Rubiaceae. Other than tea olive, this is my favorite fragrance in the garden.

Some 4 years back, Tim and I received a pomegranate seedling at a membership meeting. This seedling has become a small tree and is bearing fruit for the first time. The pomegranate (Punica granatum) is a fruit-bearing deciduous shrub. The name pomegranate derives from medieval Latin pōmum "apple" and grānātum "seeded."

The little hummingbird sits waiting for company before partaking of the sweet sugar treat. Hummingbirds are birds native to the Americas and constituting the biological family Trochilidae. They are the smallest of birds, most species measuring 7.5–13 cm in length.

Tim and I recently became owners of butterfly weed in anticipation of hosting monarch butterflies. "Hello Yellow' Butterfly Weed (Asclepias tuberosa) is a native, pollinator-friendly knock-out with cheerful butter-yellow flower clusters. Flowers will bloom in summer, and the rich green foliage is the perfect complement to the flowers. This low-maintenance perennial, is drought tolerant once established, making it the perfect waterwise addition to a pollinator garden. Butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds all love butterfly weed, but deer stay away. Yay!

Hibiscus mutabilis, also known as the Confederate rose, Dixie rosemallow, cotton rose or cotton rosemallow, is a plant long cultivated for its showy flowers. It is late blooming this year.

These are a few samples from the McCoy garden. This will be a monthly article , send us your garden pictures and share with your MG friends.

Hummingbird Award

Location, Size, and Type of Ornamental Garden Pools

Ornamental pools, long common in the Orient, are becoming very popular in the United States. The soothing, visual beauty of pools is enhanced by aquatic plants, the ever-changing view of fish swimming among these plants, and the play of light and shadows reflected in the water. Pools can be found in private backyards, public parks, hotel lobbies, mall courtyards, restaurants, apartment balconies, and even basements in colder climates. In Japan, where ornamental pools have been popular for centuries, pool and garden designs are highly artistic. Some Japanese extend the pool into their living rooms where fish watching becomes a restful evening activity.

Little replicated research has been conducted on ornamental pools, therefore most of the information discussed herein is from related research areas and practical observation. This article is intended to assist in understanding the requirements of fish within these miniature aquatic environments and in evaluating options in pool design.

Pool Location, Size, and Type

Location of the pool can be critical, not only to its owner's enjoyment but to the maintenance and biological performance of the pool. Site your ornamental pool to receive a minimum of 6 hours of sunlight each day. Sunlight is needed for photosynthesis by pool plants including algae, which provide oxygen to the pool. Abundant oxygen means a healthy environment for fish and other organisms in the pool. Locate your pool to avoid direct sunlight at mid-day during the warmest months. Fish can become stressed by high temperatures unless shade is provided by aquatic plants. For indoor pools, lights are available that simulate natural daylight.

Several advantages to locating the pool within view of the house are:

To enhance human enjoyment.

(Continued on page 10)

Extension
ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

HORTICULTURE & HOME GROUNDS

PECAN MANAGEMENT

Bringing Pecans Back to Life

Tuesday, October 20, 2020 | 9-11AM

Pecans are a popular, sometimes challenging, crop to grow in Alabama. Fortunately, with a bit of knowledge and effort, it's possible to produce good quality pecans. This Virtual Pecan Program will help homeowners as well as small producers learn how to rejuvenate their trees and properly manage their orchards to promote greater yields. Regional Extension Agent, Doug Chapman, will be discussing the topics of variety selection, planting and care, pecan pest management, and much more.

BEGINNING FARMER
ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Register online: https://www.aces.edu/go/pecanmanagement

For more information, contact Lucy Edwards (334) 329-1672

www.aces.edu

Intern Classroom at ACMGA

Demonstration Garden

By: Glenn Huovinen with Ofie McCoy

Pubic school students are not the only students demonstrating flexibility in their learning environment. Gone (for the time being) are the traditional ways of classroom learning. Due to Covid19, ACES and the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association's 2020 Intern Class responded with creative ways of teaching by utilizing the ACMGA's existing gardens. Interns enjoyed an outdoor class at the ACMGA Demo Garden which was built in 2003. This garden has been supplying fresh produce to Autauga Interfaith Care Center from 2003 to the present day. This ministry has been a source of pride for MGs and a blessing to the needy of Autauga County. To date, over 1100 pounds of fresh produce has been grown and donated to AICC so far this year.

On September 9, a new group of gardeners was invited to plant, to learn and to enjoy the fellowship of interns and other MGs at the Demo Garden. The 2020 Interns planted most of the Fall garden. Thank you Interns and MGs in making this a productive and fun time.

In this wonderful outdoor teaching environment, MG Kathy Chapman shared a great way to plant those itsy-bitsy, tiny, tiny seeds that are so difficult to distribute evenly. Kathy suggested mixing one cup of water with one TBSP of corn starch, bring the solution to a boil and then letting it cool. As it cools it will form into a gel. The tiny seeds can then be mixed into the gel. Put gel into a piping bag or corner of a zip-lock bag and then snip the corner and squeeze the seed gel into the prepared planting area. And wa-la! The tiny seeds are evenly distributed plus the gel helps keep the area around the seeds moist longer for better germination! Thanks Kathy! Thank you Interns!

Extend the Growing Season of Blueberries and Other Summer Fruits

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, Ala. – As blueberries and other summer fruits begin to grow out of season, gardeners may be looking for ways to extend the growing season. While there are many factors that affect the output of fruit crops, there are several things people can do to put their plants in the best situation possible for a long, bountiful growing season.

Proper Growing Conditions

Chip East, an Alabama Extension commercial horticulture regional agent, said a key component that can potentially extend the growing season is making sure the plant is subjected to the proper growing conditions.

"For the success of the plant, ensure that proper planting, weed management, disease management, insect management as well as adequate irrigation is in place," East said.

The first step to extending the growing season happens before the season even starts. Planting blueberries and other fruits in the proper environments is crucial to overall success. While it is too late to perform this now, East said people can always plan ahead for next year's fruit crops.

"The best way to help extend the season is by first choosing a planting location that is in full sun and where the soil is well drained," he said.

During the growing season, management practices, such as proper irrigation and insect and disease management, comes into play. For proper irrigation, most crops require 1 to 1.5 inches of rain per week during the growing season. Drip irrigation is recommended for summer blueberries and many other crops. This method is affordable and can make a huge difference in production for the plant.

When it comes to managing insects, one of the first steps is scouting the crop. Knowing and identifying which insects are common on the particular fruiting plant helps to know how to manage the insects.

"It is much easier to manage insects earlier before they do damage to the plant or fruit," East said. "This same concept applies to diseases and weeds as well."

Recommended chemicals to manage these pests is in the 2020 Integrated Orchard Management Guide for Commercial Apples in the Southeast.

Know When to Harvest

Knowing when to harvest a particular fruit is also an important factor to extending the growing season. Picking a fruit too early can not only affect the taste, but will affect the timeline of the growing season. The longer the fruit hangs on the plant, the sweeter the taste. However, the shelf life of the fruit will be shortened.

Different blueberries ripen at different times, depending on the species. This is the case for peaches, apples, blackberries and other fruits as well. In order to measure the ripeness of the fruit and know when they're ready to harvest, some farmers invest in a refractometer. This instrument measures the sugar content of the fruit. East said another way to determine if the fruit is ready to harvest is by looking at the color of the fruit as well as eating the fruit to see how it tastes.

Mix it Up

East said by planning ahead, people can make it where as one fruit is going out of season, they have another one coming in season.

"I like the idea of extending the picking season by adding different crops," East said. "If one fruiting season is about to end, I can look forward to another fruit about to begin."

As the blueberry season comes to an end, people can begin to transition to harvesting muscadines. Some of the other common fall fruit crops include apples, pears, figs and persimmons. Kiwi and citrus fruits are less common but can also be grown during the fall season.

HERE I AM

TAKE A LOOK BY: JANE MCCARTHY

Zebra Longwing Butterfly

Scientific Name: *Heliconius charithonia*

Range: Extreme Southern US through Mexico, Central & South America

Larva: White caterpillar with black spots & spines

Host plant: Passionflower, *Passiflora*

State butterfly of Florida
http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/bfly/zebra_longwing.htm

extension
ALABAMA A&M & AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

HORTICULTURE & HOME GROUNDS

Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards!

Gardening Webinar Series (45 minutes)

Wednesdays @ 1:00 p.m. (CDT)

Connect: **https://auburn.zoom.us/j/834500888**

September 2: Backyard Berries, Mallory Kelley

September 9: Fantastic Fall Plants, Allyson Schabel

September 16: Controlling Mosquitoes, Dr. Fudd Graham

September 23: Growing & Cooking with Herbs, Debbie Boutelier

September 30: Fall Vegetable Gardening, Amanda & Lee Borden

October 7: Water Gardens, Mary McCroan

October 14: Fleas and Ticks, Dr. Fudd Graham

October 21: Sustainable Landscape Design, Amanda Borden

October 28: Shade Gardens, Mary McCroan

November 4: ANTS, Dr. Fudd Graham

Master Gardener Helpline (877) 252-4769 www.aces.edu

(Continued from page 4)

To more easily supervise children playing around the pool. But, be sure to take precautions, such as controlling access, to ensure the safety of children.

To help you spot and ward-off predators, such as birds, raccoons, snakes, or that rare human thief.

To reduce expense of pipes, electrical hook-ups, and pumping, which are usually lower for pools built close to the house.

If you plan to excavate rather than build an aboveground pool, check with utility companies on the location of underground gas, water, sewer, and electrical lines. Do not locate a pool above utility services. Pools should not be located directly under trees, as their roots hamper excavation and may eventually cause structural damage to the pool. Also, leaves can foul the water and over-hanging branches may exude toxic substances into the pool.

Pool depths may vary depending on local climate and over-wintering management. Many pools are only 18 to 24 inches deep. Most of these shallow pools will require heaters in winter or the plants and fish will need to be moved indoors. Most permanent outdoor pools should have a portion at least 3 or 4 feet deep. This allows the fish an area deep enough to resist most winter freezes and a cool retreat during hot weather. Koi carp, in particular, tend to lose color and become stressed if they do not have a cool place to retreat to during hot weather. However, a depth of 18 inches is sufficient in the deep South, as long as only a few fish are stocked and plenty of floating aquatic plants are provided for shade.

Ponds are built out of several types of materials. Some of the more common construction materials are earth, plastic liners, fiberglass, and concrete (Table 1).

Many commercial firms selling pool equipment offer consulting services on design, construction, and maintenance. Use available expertise and your own creativity to design a pool that reflects your own imagination and taste.

Pool Type	Advantages	Disadvantages	Special Considerations
Earthen	Inexpensive, especially for larger pools.	Seepage; wild plants may establish.	Soil must be high clay.
Flexible liners	Ease of construction.	Possible punctures; must be pumped or siphoned to drain.	Type of liner will determine lifetime, usually 10 to 20 years.
Fiberglass or plastic	Durables — long life; good for plant-only pools.	Shallow, not year-round habitat for fish. Can crack if water freezes.	Very small pools; could be moved inside during the winter.
Concrete	Very long life; can add decorative tiles.	Expensive, must be cured.	May need coating with Epoxy or pool paint to stop leaching of minerals.

THIS COMPOST!

By: Walt Whitman

1SOMETHING startles me where I thought I was safest;

I withdraw from the still woods I loved;

I will not go now on the pastures to walk;

I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my lover the sea;

I will not touch my flesh to the earth, as to other flesh, to renew me.

2O how can the ground not sicken?

How can you be alive, you growths of spring?

How can you furnish health, you blood of herbs, roots, orchards, grain?

Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses in you?

Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour dead?

3Where have you disposed of their carcasses?

Those drunkards and gluttons of so many genera-tions;

Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat?

I do not see any of it upon you to-day—or perhaps I am deceiv'd;

I will run a furrow with my plough—I will press my spade through the sod, and turn it up under-neath;

I am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.

4Behold this compost! behold it well!

Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick person—Yet behold!

The grass covers the prairies,

The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the garden,

The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,

The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,

The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its graves,

The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mul-berry-tree,

The he-birds carol mornings and evenings, while the she-birds sit on their nests,

The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs,

The new-born of animals appear—the calf is dropt from the cow, the colt from the mare,

Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark green leaves,

Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk;

The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all those strata of sour dead.

5What chemistry!

That the winds are really not infectious,

That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of the sea, which is so amorous after me,

That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all over with its tongues,

That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have deposited themselves in it,

That all is clean forever and forever,

That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,

That blackberries are so flavorous and juicy,

That the fruits of the apple-orchard, and of the orange-orchard—that melons, grapes, peaches, plums, will none of them poison me,

That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any disease,

Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what was once a catching disease.

6Now I am terrified at the earth! it is that calm and patient,

It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,

It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such endless successions of diseas'd corpses,

It distils such exquisite winds out of such infused fetor,

It renews with such unwitting looks, its prodigal, annual, sumptuous crops,

It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such leavings from them at last

RECIPE IDEA

Easy Jelly Roll

Ingredients:

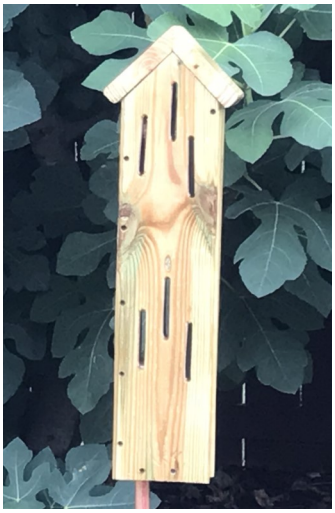
2 tablespoons salad oil
1 teaspoon lemon juice
3 eggs
⅔ cup pancake mix
¾ cup sugar
1 cup jam

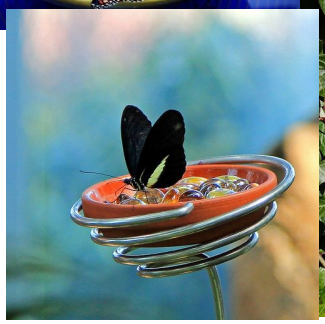
Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease 10-by-15 jelly roll pan. Line with wax paper, dust with flour. Beat eggs till foamy. Gradually add sugar. Continue beating, stir in oil and lemon juice and pancake mix. Pour batter in prepared pan. Bake 9-10 minutes Turn out onto clean towel with powdered sugar on it. Roll towel and cake from long side. Wait 1 minute. Unroll, spread with jam. Re-roll quickly. Sprinkle with fine powdered sugar.

Pictures of butterfly houses and simple watering stations

By Tim McCoy





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

Things to do.....

Start plans for future selection and plantings of fruits and nuts.
Fertilize established strawberry plantings.
Take soil test for new planting areas.
Study landscape to determine shrub needs.
After fall growth is completed, spray all shrubs with a fungicide.
Stop fertilization of lawns three weeks before frost.
Protect fall crop of rose blossoms from aphids and thrips.
Old clumps of perennials may be divided.
Plant hardy vegetable and root crops from seeds.
Plant cabbage, collards, cauliflower, celery, Brussels sprouts, and onion sets.
Start moving houseplants indoors.
Build compost bin or box; leaves will be falling soon.

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

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To: