

# DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter

April 2017

## The ACMGA Annual Plant Sale Preparation is Underway

By:  
Tana Shealey

Autauga County Master Gardeners are busily tending to their love-grown plants which will soon have new homes throughout the river region. Yes, that's right; the annual Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Plant Sale is set for the last of this month.



Ann Fuller is chairperson for the event and is excited about how it will unfold this year.

"Hopefully, all ACMGA members have already started preparing plants for this event. We need everyone to participate in two ways: by bringing plants to sell, and by being present on April 29 to help. This is our major fundraiser for the year; proceeds go to fund the various projects we do," Ann said.

Rose McCauley is working with the sale also, and says this is an anchor for ACMGA.

"The plant sale is our only fundraising project, and the money is used to improve and maintain Prattvillage Garden and purchase needed plants and other items for the demo garden. Of course, some of the money is used to just carry on the business of our organization such as the discount for the interns, printing our handbook and other necessary expenses", Rose stated.

Shoppers can expect to find bargains on a wide variety of plants, beautiful yard art, and soil sample testing kits to get their gardens ready for planting. The ACMGA Annual Plant sale will be held at Prattvillage behind Trustmark Bank in downtown Prattville, April 29, 2017, 8:00 AM - Noon. Please contact Ann Fuller if you have questions.



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E-mail your gardening stories to [tshealey@auburn.edu](mailto:tshealey@auburn.edu).

Or call Tana Shealey at 334.361.7273.

# How Does Your Garden Grow?

By: Glenn Huovinen

## Red Buckeye-*Aesculus pavia*

Native to southern US. Can be grown in all soils and is nearly pest free. Flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Mainly found as an under-story shrubby plant that can grow to a height of 15 to 20 feet. The flowers are showy but the nut that is produced is highly toxic to humans.

These are in bloom now in our woods, and the included photo was taken along the Alabama River in Lowndes County. One of a few plants in flower this past week (week of March 13,2017) in these woods.



- **Native habitat:** Southeastern U.S., from North Carolina through Eastern Texas and north to Illinois. Growth habit: Oval, round habit with moderate density. Although irregular when young, it becomes symmetrical with age. Texture is coarse.
- **Tree size:** Reaches a height of 15 to 20 feet, with a width of 15 to 25 feet. In the wild, grows to 30 to 35 feet tall. Growth rate is slow to moderate.
- **Flower and fruit:** Red, showy, tubular flowers are borne in 4- to 8-inch-long panicles. Fruit is a round capsule that is 1 to 2 inches in diameter and is dry, hard and orange-brown. The shiny nuts are toxic to humans.

Source: <http://www.uky.edu/hort/Red-Buckeye>



Pictured left: **Anthony Yarbrough** took this snapshot of a **Zebra Swallowtail Butterfly**.

The zebra swallowtail, *Eurytides marcellus*

The zebra swallowtail is one of our most beautiful swallowtails. Unlike most of our other native swallowtails, they are not involved in a mimicry complex.

The zebra swallowtail has also been called the paw-paw butterfly, kite swallowtail and ajax.

Source: [http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/bfly/zebra\\_swallowtail.htm](http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/bfly/zebra_swallowtail.htm)

# How I Became a Master Recycler

By: Anita Shriberg



I will never master gardening, but I've come close to mastering recycling. I was born a recycler, but we didn't use that word when I was growing up. "Waste not: want not" was my father's motto.

Over the years I've struggled to balance the line between saving items I might use and keeping clutter at bay. When I need something, I search my house and garage for a substitute item that I can remake to serve my purpose. This takes time and creativity, but it can be rewarding economically and ecologically. I cringe for the earth and the landfills when I see piles of wasted refuse that will take years to decompose while harming the atmosphere. Take care of your belongings so they last longer.

I was raised to appreciate, love and value nature. If you are in awe of creation and our beautiful earth, how can you possibly not recycle!????

In the past, we had a walk-up attic and it was packed because we hated to waste anything. I've always believed that everything has a value to someone somewhere. For example, while preparing to move we had frequent garage sales. Our many strategically placed handmade signs for telephone poles read "Garage Sale This Saturday" so we could reuse the signs and the nails. Crazy? Yes, we are crazy

about recycling. We'd like to believe that some of those items are still being used and valued.

We were pleased to learn that Autauga Academy has a recycle bin and accepts paper, plastic and cans. My kitchen has five labeled bins: plastic, paper, cans, compost and garbage. I recently learned that The Demo Garden in downtown Prattville accepts paper and kitchen scraps in their compost bin. The less we can throw away, the happier we are.

Tips for becoming a Master Recycler:

- If you don't need it, don't buy it.
- If you need it, value it, maintain with care and make it last.
- If you have to replace it, donate your used item.
- Do not discard your plastic bags. Give them to AICC
- Save your paper, plastic, compost and cans for recycling bins.
- Save your yard clippings for mulch, chips or compost.

**EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS!!**



## Cultivate Our Community Reminder

Here's the list of items we collect for AICC as part of our "Cultivate Our Community" program! : shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, adult tooth brushes, small cosmetic bags (new or like new) dish detergent, laundry detergent, household cleaners.

Sample sizes are welcome, too!

These items are collected at every monthly meeting.

## Keeping Weeds out of Your Lawn

By: Mallory Kelley, Regional Extension Agent



A weed can have many definitions, but its true definition is “a plant out of place” and in the case of your lawn, those plants can be hard to control and definitely an eye sore. Some even can be out right painful in the case of the lawn burweed.

When looking for control, the product label is the best source of information as to which lawn grasses can be treated with a particular product. Read the label carefully before purchase and use the information to ensure safety to the applicator as well as the home lawn setting.

Quickly, let’s review a few terms that will help you when trying to control weeds in your turfgrass: Preemergence herbicide: A herbicide that is applied to the lawn grass surface before problem weed seeds germinate and emerge from the ground. These herbicides must be applied before a weed problem is even noticed. Postemergence herbicide: A herbicide that is applied after weeds have emerged, but while they are small and actively growing. This type of herbicide is applied to the leaf and stem tissue of the problem weeds. Generally, postemergence herbicides will not control weeds that germinate and emerge after the application. Non-selective herbicide: A herbicide that kills all vegetation treated. Typically, these products are applied to the foliage of the weeds. This type herbicide will also severely injure or kill desirable plants. “Green-up” period (transition period): A short period of time in the spring when desirable lawn grass is emerging from its dormant state. It is during this time that grasses are most sensitive to herbicides and, in many cases, the herbicide labels prohibit their use.



This year is going to be tricky when it comes to weed control in the lawn due to the crazy fluctuations of temperatures and because we have barely experienced winter. Our turf grasses went dormant, but many of them have been trying to come out of dormancy or “green-up” for weeks now. Generally, I would say February is the time to put out your pre-emergence products to control your spring weeds, but with the February we had, that would not have been a good idea and now March is upon us.

So this year, I say skip your winter pre-emergence application, and if you currently have weeds popping up you could spot spray with a non-selective herbicide if you are extremely careful or use a labeled post-emergence product so you do not damage your turf. Then once your grass has fully emerged from dormancy apply a pre-emergence that will then help control your summer weed seeds that are sitting there waiting for the right temperatures to germinate.

Knowing what type of turfgrass you have is especially important when it comes to weed control. If you are not sure, you can always contact your local county extension office. Below is a link to the Homeowner Lawn Weed Control Manual that will be extremely helpful in choosing what product is right for you.

<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/I/IPM-0590/IPM-0590.pdf>

*The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul.*

*Alfred Austin*

## Hummingbird Award Recipient Charlie French



Charlie French is the March 2017 recipient as acknowledgement of his hard work. Charlie is recognized for accepting the job as Socials and Field Trips Chair for 2017.

In February, Charlie arranged an outstanding tour of Southern Growers in Montgomery followed by an enjoyable lunch and time of fellowship!

Each month, the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Board selects a Hummingbird Award recipient whose volunteer work for ACMG is as full of energy as our fine feathered friend, the Hummingbird. The Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Board of Directors selected the name Hummingbird Award for this local recognition because Hummingbirds are both fast and beautiful, characteristics that reflect the wonderful efforts of our members.



Above: Autauga County Master Gardener Composting Gurus! (Left) Rose McCauley and (Right) Paula Seamon following a composting/vermicomposting class they taught to CCMGA interns March 30, 2017 at the Montgomery County Extension Office.

**COMPOST IT!** It is nature's way of recycling. It happens slowly, but we can speed up the process and have compost more quickly by helping nature along. Backyard composting is the process by which kitchen and yard wastes can be decomposed into a valuable material that can be turned into "black gold" to use in your garden and your house plants.

Paula Seamon

Please note that the article below is the result of a search through old Extension articles on a topic that I have heard my parents talk about consuming when they were children - Pokeweed salad. Please note that the Alabama Cooperative Extension System article below shows that parts of this Pokeweed plant are NOT safe to consume. With that said, it seemed like a fun thing to research and share.

## Pokeweed in Your Garden

Pokeweed, pokeberry, poke or pigeonberry (*Phytolacca americana*) is a hardy, native perennial herb that was used by American Indians as a salve and a cure for rheumatism. However, today, Americans know it as a weed growing wild in pastures and gardens and along fencerows and roadsides.



The roots, berries and older stem parts of pokeweed are poisonous, but the young tender leaves are edible, says Mary Beth Musgrove, a horticulturist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The leaves are best when harvested at 5 to 6 inches long. Cut young pokeweed shoots in the spring the same way you harvest asparagus. Be careful not to cut any part of the poisonous root or older stem. Boiling the green leaves will remove some of the bitterness.

If you enjoy poke salad, plant some pokeweed in your home garden, says Musgrove. Pokeweed roots can be transplanted in late winter or can be grown from seed planted in early spring. Pokeweed blooms from July to September.

To propagate from seed, collect the purple berries and crush them in water. Allow the seeds to sit in the water for a few days. The good seeds will settle to the bottom. Spread seeds out to dry; store in a cool, dry location.

Soak pokeweed seeds in sulfuric acid to break dormancy and germination. After soaking seeds for 5 minutes, wash them under running water. Allow seeds to dry thoroughly before planting. Cover seeds lightly when planting. Seedlings can be transported into the garden after the chance of frost has passed. Set them at least 3 feet apart.

**SOURCE: Mary Beth Musgrove, Extension Horticulturist, Alabama Cooperative Extension System**



*One lifetime is never enough to accomplish one's horticultural goals. If a garden is a site for the imagination, how can we be very far from the beginning?*

Francis Cabot Lowell

Prattvillage Gardens: A work in Progress  
By: Shari McCandless



Shari McCandless snapped these pictures of our beautiful Prattvillage Gardens.

Looking at these photographs just makes us want to sit on that lovely bench crafted by Glenn Huovinen and enjoy the beauty of nature!

The top photograph includes the new bench under a beautiful Wisteria.

Below, Tulips and Pansies surround a Crepe Myrtle.

Contact Shari McCandless and Linda Parish if you would like to volunteer in keeping up this treasured garden. Most work is conducted on Thursday mornings, but you can make arrangements with them to work if you would like to on other dates, too.



**ALL PURPOSE  
VARMINT REPELLENT**

By: Cindy Salyer

**This is NOT to be eaten.**

2 eggs  
2 cloves of chopped garlic  
2 TBS. hot chili pepper 2 TBS. ammonia  
2 cups hot water

Mix it all up. Let the mixture sit for 3 to 4 days. Then paint it on fences, trellises, and wherever unwanted varmints are venturing. One whiff, And it's vamoose varmints! You can put the mixture on pinecones and place in flower beds etc.

## Master Gardener Helpline Open for Business

By: Extension Daily

The Alabama Master Gardener Program is an instructional program. It is designed to train volunteers in the subjects of horticulture, entomology, plant pathology and soils. The Master Gardener program was created to increase the availability of home horticultural information through qualified volunteers, and to improve community life with community projects. To understand the depth of the program, [Kerry Smith](#), an Alabama Extension Outreach Administrator, offers her insight and expertise on the Master Gardener Helpline.

“The program is used to expand the outreach mission of Extension. It is an example of partnership between the land-grant universities, Auburn University and Alabama A&M, and motivated volunteers interested in educating their communities,” said Smith.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System offices consistently receive calls concerning home grounds. Master Gardeners work in partnership with county and regional Extension agents to answer all requests. Master Gardener volunteer programs have been implemented all over the United States and in four Canadian provinces.

“The helpline has been in existence since 2006, as a statewide effort,” added Smith. “We’ve had more than 50,000 calls to the helpline statewide, and if we were to estimate separate county efforts prior to 2006, this number would probably double.”



To become a certified Master Gardener, Interns participate in a minimum of 50 hours of Extension training and 50 hours of initial volunteer service. Every volunteer contributes to the success of the program, by providing Extension outreach to the public. These Master Gardener volunteers are ACES partners, community educators, advisors and helpers. They offer the community reliable gardening information and educational opportunities. Volunteers help in the county office or they may provide an educational program for a civic group.

“Roughly 1,700 volunteers reported hours last year,” said Smith. All volunteer service must be approved by the local Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

The Alabama Master Gardener Program is based on the idea of shared ownership. Extension staff and volunteers both share ideas, visions, dreams and responsibilities for the program. Volunteers have the opportunity to work with other Extension programs, federal agencies, state agencies, county agencies and local schools and organizations. All Master Gardeners represent Extension as educational resources for their communities. Their overall mission is to approve the quality of life where they volunteer.

Click here <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1155/ANR-1155.pdf> for applications for the Master Gardener volunteer program.

Home garden questions? Please call the Master Gardener Helpline at 1-877-252-4769 for assistance.



# Field Trip Time!

By: Charlie French

Autauga County Master Gardeners  
Association

*Presents*

## Urban Management Greenhouse Tour

This tour will view their procreation of greenery and greenhouse operations.

**Wednesday, April 12**  
**9:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.**

Come tour the Prattville Urban Management Greenhouse. We will see their greenhouse operations and the history. See some of the plants they are propagating and the techniques the horticulturists are using. The tour will take place at 122 Ridgewood Rd, Prattville. After the tour we have reserved space for lunch at the Prattville Pasta Mill on 205 S. Court St, Prattville. If anyone has any questions please call Charlie French at 334-322-6054



## Recipes for Your Garden Pickings!

By:  
Cindy Salyer

### VIDALIA ONION PIE

2 lbs. onions, thinly sliced (4 large)  
1 stick butter or oleo 3 eggs, well beaten  
1 cup sour cream ¼ tsp salt  
½ tsp. white pepper ¼ tsp. Tabasco sauce  
Grated Parmesan

Sauté onions in butter. Combine eggs and sour cream. Add to onions. Season and pour into pie shell. Sprinkle cheese on top. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes. Lower temperature to 325° for 20 minutes or until cheese melts and is brown. This is good hot, room temperature or cold.  
Serves 6 - 8

### COUNTRY CHICKEN BAKE

½ -1 cup cooked rice  
½ cup celery, chopped  
1/3 cup chopped onion  
1 Tbs. oleo  
½ tsp. parsley  
1/3 cup mayonnaise  
½ can mushroom soup salt pepper  
1/8 cup milk  
½ lb. carrots, cut up  
1 chicken cut in pieces

Combine rice, celery, onion, oleo and seasoning mix. Spoon into pan and top with chicken. Combine soup, mayonnaise and milk. Pour over chicken. Add carrots to top. Bake at 350° for 30 to 45 minutes.

### BROCCOLI CORN BREAD

1 box frozen chopped broccoli  
1 large onion, chopped  
4 beaten eggs 1 stick melted oleo  
2 cups grated cheese 1 tsp. salt  
1 box jiffy corn muffin mix

Thaw and drain broccoli. Combine all ingredients and pour batter in 9 X 13 baking dish. Bake at 350° for 20 min.

### SQUASH CASSEROLE

1 cup milk  
1 ½ cup cooked squash,  
salt/pepper to taste  
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese  
2 beaten eggs  
2 Tbs. chopped onion  
1 Tbs. pimento  
1 cup crushed Ritz type crackers

Mix first 7 ingredients well. Sprinkle crackers over top and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

**Autauga County  
Master Gardeners Association**



# Annual Plant Sale

**Saturday, April 29, 2017**

**8:00 a.m. – Noon**

**Prattvillage Garden**

**Downtown Prattville  
Off 1st Street Between Washington & Chestnut Streets  
Behind Trustmark Bank**

- ◆ **Plants of all Types**
- ◆ **Soil Testing Kits**
- ◆ **Gardening Items**
- ◆ **Yard Art**

For more information, call 334.361.7273



Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce. Educational programs of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin.

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

## Things to do...

- **Master Gardener Helpline— Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**  
**ACMGA handles calls each Wednesday!**
- **Plant Sale Workshop/Preparation**, April 13, 2017, Prattvillage Garden, 9:00 a.m.
- **Urban Management Greenhouse Tour**, April 12, 2017, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., 122 Ridgewood Drive, Prattville.
- **Annual Autauga County Master Gardeners Plant Sale**-April 29, 2017
- **Lunch & Learn**, May 4, 2017, Lawns, 12: Noon, Christ Lutheran Church, 2175 Cobbs Ford Road, Prattville.
- **Prattville Cityfest**, May 13, 2017, Downtown Prattville, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
- **ACMGA Flea Market Fundraiser**, May 13, 2017, Doster Center, 8 a.m.- Noon.
- **Growing & Cooking with Herbs**, June 3, 2017, Prattville Parks and Recreation, call 334.595.0800 to register.

**Entertain, Educate, Elevate**

## 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.
- ⇒ The December Meeting/ Christmas Luncheon will be announced during the November meeting. It will be held at 11:30 a.m. in the Ag Center

Autauga County Master Gardeners  
c/o Autauga County Extension Office  
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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE