

DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter

February 2017

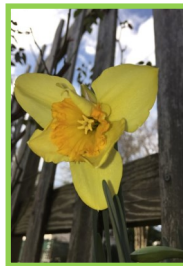
Why Garden?

By: Ofie McCoy,
Autauga County Master Gardeners Association President

Why Garden? Master Gardeners know the answer to this question. Involvement with plants, soil, gardening gloves and that good old friend, their spade, is so satisfying. They celebrate achievements, be it growing a bumper crop or solving the mystery of a dying plant. This is it! They want to know "WHY?" And so, they dig in. They soon learn that gardening requires lots of water, mostly in the form of perspiration.

To grow a great garden, nothing flashy is needed. After a soil test is done to properly prepare the ground, needed tools can be as simple as a shovel, gloves, pruner, hose and seeds to get started.

In today's environment, a main reason for gardening may be to produce safe



and healthy food for our families. With the news of produce-borne illnesses and chemical contamination in store produce, interest in organic food from our own backyards is on the rise. There is confidence in the purity of food when it's grown with our own hands. The added benefit is that fruits and vegetables taste so much better when it's the product of our efforts, although these efforts are sometimes challenged by weeds which have mastered every survival skill known to man. But, the gardener perseveres.

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E-mail your gardening stories to tshealey@auburn.edu.
Or call Tana Shealey at 334.361.7273.

The Autauga County Master Gardeners harvested and donated over 1,063 pounds of vegetables to the Autauga Interfaith Care Center in 2016.

These vegetables are given, at no cost, to food insecure residents in Autauga County.



Autauga County Master Gardener of the Year: Linda Parrish



Linda Parrish is the recipient of the Autauga County Master Gardener of the Year Award for 2016. The annual award is bestowed upon members who demonstrate outstanding dedication to the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association, and to its many charitable events. While volunteering on many projects, Parrish also serves as Chairperson of Prattvillage Garden.

Parrish recently told some of the 2017 Master Gardener Interns that Prattvillage Garden is a work in progress to which she gleefully attends.

Parrish challenges everyone to, “Come on down and get dirty with us!” by helping care for Prattvillage Garden.

Rose McCauley (left) presents Linda Parrish with the Autauga County Master Gardener of the Year Award

The Humming Bird Award

Each month, the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Board of Directors selects a recipient whose volunteer work is full of energy, like the tiny namesake, the Hummingbird. The idea for this monthly award to showcase the exceptional efforts of certified members came from a round table discussion at the 2012 AMGA State Conference. The Board of Directors chose the name Hummingbird Award for this local recognition because Hummingbirds are both fast and beautiful, characteristics that reflect the wonderful efforts of our members.

Pictured Right:
Glenn Huovinen receives
the Humming Bird Award
of December 2016. Present-
ed by ACMG Past Presi-
dent, Rose McCauley (Left).



Pictured Left:
Jean Hare (Right) accepts
the Humming Bird Award
of January 2017 from
ACMG President Ofie
McCoy (Left).



2017 ACMG Officers

President—Ofie McCoy

Vice President— Ann Fuller

Secretary—Tim McCoy

Treasurer— Deb Hill



**Left to Right: Tim McCoy, Deb Hill, Ofie McCoy,
and Rose McCauley.**

Mystery Solved: The Autauga County Master Gardeners Quilt

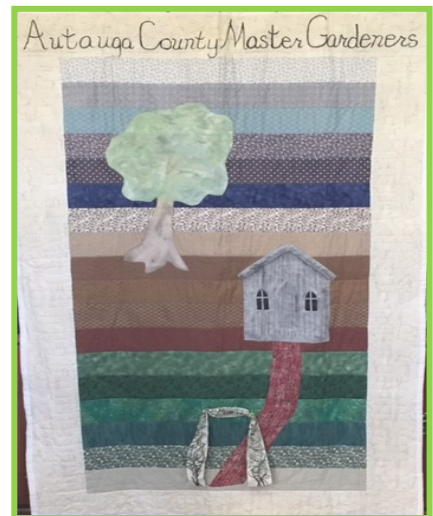
The Quilter...

Debbie Boutelier joined the Autauga County Master Gardeners in 1995, and she said she loves the association so much that she is dedicated to MG projects. In fact, Boutelier has earned lifetime volunteer hours that surpass 6,500.

Boutelier said that when she became a Master Gardener she considered herself a, "kind of Jack of all trades" with a particular interest in herbs and organic gardening. While serving as an Autauga County Extension Agent, Boutelier worked on the grant proposal to start the demonstration garden in front of the Prattville Library. In 1996, Boutelier suggested holding a plant sale, which is now an annual event, to raise money for the Autauga MG Associations' programs. Boutelier said she likes offering public education classes on gardening, including organic gardening and growing herbs. She is also a past president of the Herb Society of America.

Lately, many of us haven't seen very much of her because she is busy with her granddaughter. But she is always in our thoughts as we gaze upon the beautiful Master Gardener Quilt hanging outside the MG room in the Extension Office.

The Master Gardeners Quilt hangs in the Autauga County Extension office, and is admired by many, but few know of its origins. The quilt was the brain child of Autauga County Master Gardener Debbie Boutelier. Boutelier said she and some members of a quilting guild in Prattville, along with Prattville artist Pat Billingsley, pieced together the beautiful work for use as a banner for Autauga County Master Gardeners' events. The quilt was created in 1997.



The Autauga County Master Gardeners quilt was recently cleaned and is now hanging near the entrance to the Master Gardeners Room in the Extension Office. Autauga County Extension Coordinator, Darrue Sharpe, plans to place a plaque near it commemorating its creation and purpose.

By Tana Shealey

How Does Your Garden Grow?



Imagine having your own freshly picked strawberries in the fall or winter. Autauga County MG Glenn Huovinen imagined it, and now he does.

This is how he did it!

"I built a series of gutters on my workshop wall – on a south facing wall. I added drip irrigation. It has been so warm this fall and winter that I got some strawberries. The full harvest will not be until spring."

Glenn Huovinen



Helpline begins March 1, 2017

Why Garden?

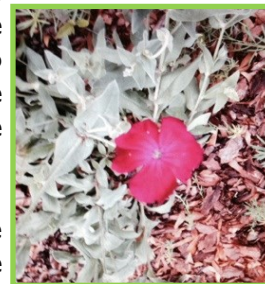
Continued from page 1

Another good reason to garden is exercise. Why pay to exercise at a fancy gym when you can work out in your own garden? After all, contrary to popular belief, hard work never hurt anyone (be sure to buy knee pads!). This is a no-cost way to get your exercise with both cardio and aerobic benefits. It is estimated that in one hour of gardening the average woman can burn up to 300 calories and 400 for men. I know, we're being cheated, ladies!

Some people are attracted to gardening for its beauty. These individuals appreciate color, fragrance and creating beautiful and peaceful settings. They thrive in the knowledge that they are providing food and a home for birds, butterflies, bees and other beneficial co-inhabitants of our earth. A garden adds another fun room to a home, whether enjoyed from inside or outside. A pot of colorful flowers here, a shade tree there, bees and butterflies buzzing around; how much better can it get?

The question becomes, why do Master Gardeners garden? Master Gardeners garden for all of the above

reasons plus an intense desire to learn all we can about plants, soils, bugs and other elements affecting our gardens. We want to know why some plants seem to have a Napoleonic compulsion to take over the world while others take so much "babying" to grow. The more we garden and learn, the more we want to know.



Above: Rose Campion grown in Prattvillage Garden.

As Master Gardeners, we are not shy about sharing our love and knowledge of gardening. Just ask us. When all the chores are done, the avid gardener will invent new ones.

Gardening and laughing are two of the best ways in life to promote good health and a sense of wellbeing.

By Ofie McCoy



2017 Webinars for Extension Commercial Horticulture



Auburn, Ala.— The Commercial Horticulture Extension Team organizes webinars to provide quick updates for producers on various topics of interest. Whether you are interested in the proper way to plant fruit trees or have questions in turf management, these webinars cover a wide range of subjects.

Webinars are streamed live via Panopto on the last Monday of every month starting in January and ending in November. During the presentation, participants can send question via email. The webinars also are recorded and stored in the archive on the Beginning Farmer website.

Webinar Topics

The 2017 webinar topics include: trap cropping for reducing squash insect pests, cowpea curculio updates, nutsedge control, introduction to potting mixes in ornamental container production, dealing with drought in commercial horticulture crops, and many more.

Full Webinar Schedule

To view the full schedule please visit <http://www.aces.edu/anr/beginningfarms/webinars.php>.

Please send questions during the presentations to Ann Chambliss, thameae@auburn.edu. For questions regarding the webinar series or for providing suggestions, please email Dr. Ayanava Majumdar at bugdoctor@auburn.edu.





2017 AMGA STATE CONFERENCE

Gardening HERITAGE

May 1 – 3 | Huntsville, Alabama

ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Master Gardeners of North Alabama (MGNA), with the Morgan and Limestone County MGs, are pleased to invite you to the 2017 AMGA Conference in Huntsville. This conference will celebrate the heritage of gardening in Alabama and honor the founders of Master Gardening in our biologically diverse state. We will conduct our fantastic program at two amazing venues, the Huntsville Botanical Garden (HBG) and the Jackson Center. You will not want to miss the featured speakers, workshops, Silent Auction, door prizes, vendors, and our unique Seed Savers Exchange!

Monday at the beautiful Huntsville Botanical Garden will be jam-packed, featuring hands-on Papercrete workshops, local subject matter experts speaking about roses, orchids, ferns, and hummingbirds; several Advanced Master Gardener topics; and a 'Stroll thru the Garden'. Be sure to register early for the workshops! You will make a papercrete pot to take home and receive instructions for making more on your own. Monday evening will feature a delicious buffet dinner, complete with live music, held in HBG's Nichols Arbor. Because we have so much planned for Monday, starting at 9:00 AM, you may want to travel to Huntsville on Sunday so you can take advantage of as many activities as possible.

Tuesday and Wednesday at The Jackson Center will feature exciting presentations by such celebrated gardening experts as Jere Gettle, Dr. Doug Phillips, Harvey Cotten, Darryl Patton, Sara Bright and Paulette Ogard, and Dr. Troy Marden. Tuesday evening will feature the annual banquet, installation of officers, and awards ceremony. Keynote speaker Dr. Neil Lamb will introduce us to plant genomics. And don't miss the first-ever AMGA Conference Seed Savers Exchange! The Exchange will offer you the opportunity to swap your seeds (no hybrids, please!) for others, including vegetables, fruits, and flowers. We hope you've harvested seeds from this season's flowers and crops. And you'll be able to pay for your Silent Auction purchases with a credit card!

Your registration fee will include your choice of presentations, the Garden Stroll, breakouts, Tuesday's lunch, and both evening meals. A nominal additional fee is charged for the Papercrete workshops. If you register prior to March 1, you'll be entered into a drawing to win a refund on your registration! We've arranged for fantastic rates at 4 area hotels. Huntsville is also home to the US Space and Rocket Center, Burritt Museum, and Lowe Mill, the largest privately owned arts facility in the U.S. Plan to come early, stay late, and enjoy everything we have to offer!

27th Annual AMGA Conference

Registration Form, Page 1



Registration form available online at www.amgaconference.org

Please complete a separate form for each person attending sessions. List any guests on this form. A guest may attend meals only and does not need to complete a separate form.

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Local MG Assoc.: _____ email: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Please Check One: MG MG Intern ACES Speaker Sponsor Vendor Other

Preferred name for your badge: Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

REGISTRATION

Cost

Enclosed

<input type="checkbox"/> Early Bird Registration, postmarked Jan 15–Feb 28, 2017 (Early Bird Registration enters you in a drawing for a refund of your registration fee!)	\$140.00	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Registration, postmarked Mar 1–Mar 31, 2017	\$140.00	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Late Registration, postmarked Apr 1–Apr 15, 2017	\$150.00	\$ _____

TUESDAY BOXED LUNCH (Not available for late registrations)

Check preference: Smoked Turkey Black Forest Ham Vegetarian

T-SHIRTS

\$12.00 each. T-shirts will not be available after March 31. They must be ordered and paid for with registration. Indicate size and number:

S: _____ M: _____ L: _____ XL: _____ 2XL: _____ 3XL: _____ 4XL: _____ 5XL: _____ \$ _____

GUEST MEALS (Not available for late registrations)

Guest Name: _____

Monday Evening Dinner Buffet (\$15.00) Tuesday Evening Banquet Buffet (\$36.00) \$ _____

Guest Name: _____

Monday Evening Dinner Buffet (\$15.00) Tuesday Evening Banquet Buffet (\$36.00) \$ _____

PAPERCRETE WORKSHOP

\$30.00 per session. Refer to Page 2 for Workshop Session Selection \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE

\$ _____



**Gardening
HERITAGE**



27th Annual AMGA Conference

Registration Form, Page 2

Please refer to Conference Agenda for complete list of activities and speakers.

Monday sessions not listed below are open on a first-come basis. Seating may be limited.
Tuesday & Wednesday sessions not listed below are General Sessions open to everyone.

MONDAY, MAY 1, 2017

HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN

9:00 AM–3:30 PM

Registration Open

_____ 11:00 AM–12:00 PM

Papercrete Workshop, Session I

The Arbor

_____ 1:30 PM–2:30 PM

Papercrete Workshop, Session II

The Arbor

_____ 3:00 PM–4:00 PM

Papercrete Workshop, Session III

The Arbor

Each workshop session is limited to the first 40 attendees to register. Please indicate first (1) and second (2) choices.

TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2017

JACKSON CENTER

8:00 AM–12:00 PM

Registration Open

1:00 pm–2:00 pm

BREAKOUT SESSION #1: Indicate first (1) choice

_____ 1. Dr. Troy Marden: Inspiring Gardens Around the World

_____ 2. Sara Bright & Paulette Ogard: Creating a Haven for Butterflies: Your Yard and Beyond

2:30 pm–3:30 pm

BREAKOUT SESSION #2: Indicate first (1) choice

_____ 1. Darryl Patton: Traditional Folk Herbalism

_____ 2. Lee Coates: Miniature Landscapes

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO AMGA AND MAIL TO:

Cathy Brickey
121 Brigadoon Drive
Madison, AL 35757

Cell Phone: 847-602-1747
Home Phone: 256-929-4165
email: cmbrickey@sbcglobal.net

Cancellation requests must be received by March 31, 2017 to receive a full refund.

FOR USE BY CONFERENCE STAFF ONLY:

Registration #: _____

Date Received: _____ Payment Received: _____ Confirmation Sent: _____

Initials _____

Prattvillage Garden- A Labor of Love



"I really am not good at interviews", said Linda Parrish when I asked her about talking with me for an article on Prattvillage Garden. Shari McCandless, sitting next to her, laughed and said the same thing.

Parrish and McCandless are the dynamic duo who for more than three years have braved weather, aches and pains, and changing volunteer schedules to lovingly maintain Prattvillage Garden. It is the beautiful teaching garden located in downtown Prattville that is solely cared for by Autauga County Master Gardeners and its interns.

Parrish and McCandless appear to be the perfect companion gardeners for the job; they have patience, they love gardening, and readily share gardening tips with fledgling growers.

"Putting Flowers in the ground is like painting nature", McCandless said. That canvass has dozens of native plants growing in well weeded and fertile soil-thanks to some very dedicated volunteers who show up every month around 8:30 a.m. (the first 2 weeks of the month they meet on Tuesdays and the latter two weeks of the

month they meet on Thursdays).

The ladies move the plants around in a format that has the design touch of *Petals From the Past* plant guru, Jason Powell.

Parrish said there is always work to be done as the painting is reshaped, pruned, fed and enjoyed because it is "a place anyone can go and see the beauty of God's creations".

Right now, McCandless and Parrish are preparing beds for new plantings. Look them up in our Autauga County Master Gardener directory if you would like to join them, and play in the dirt!

By Tana Shealey



Getting Gardens Ready for Spring

Preparation of vegetable and flower bed gardens for new plants can begin at any time, but the earlier you start, the better the results. Remove any plant debris from flower beds and gardens to keep weeds from growing. Debris left over from the previous season should be removed as soon as possible, especially in vegetable gardens, to reduce chances of insect pests and soil-borne diseases. Soil preparation is necessary for a successful garden. Annuals complete their life cycles over the course of one

year as opposed to perennials which live for several years. Tender annuals cannot withstand frost and may not grow well during extended periods of cool weather. Zinnias, petunias, and vinca are just a few of the popular annuals that are well-suited to Southern gardens. They will add color to your garden well into the summer if cared for properly.

"It is really fun to plant self-seeding annuals that may surprise you by germinating the following year," Carroll said.

“Our Alabama soils do not have a lot of organic matter, so amending it is usually necessary,” Alabama Extension regional home grounds agent Dani Carroll said. “An Alabama climate is rough on organic matter. Organic matter seems to break down as fast as we add it, making it an ongoing process.”

Organic matter also helps bind soil particles together in sandy soil. It helps prevent water from flowing through soil too quickly.

There are different types of organic matter that can be added to garden soil. The best, easiest and most economical and available source of organic matter is compost from your own back yard.

Adding organic matter to garden beds improves drainage and soil structure. Soil is made up of a mixture of different-sized particles, including clay, sand and silt. Roots must grow and move in the soil to obtain water and air. Organic matter builds a better soil structure for roots to forage for life-giving water, nutrients and air.

“It is really fun to plant self-seeding annuals that may surprise you by germinating the following year,” Carroll said.

Garden for the Climate

Heat tolerance is also a characteristic to look for when planting in the spring in a climate such as Alabama’s. This quality can be found in flowers such as Rudbeckia hirta, commonly known as black-eyed susans, and Salvia farinacea. Salvia farinacea can behave as a perennial in the southern most parts of Alabama.



Rudbeckia hirta via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

“Annuals usually have more long-lived color than perennials, but require more maintenance because of re-planting,” Carroll said.

The success of the flowers’ growth will vary across different parts of Alabama, but knowing the characteristics of the flowers you choose will help to create a maintainable garden.

To learn more about how to enhance your garden and landscape, check out Alabama Extension’s “[Gardening in the South](#)” series. You can find the series on [iBooks](#). Based on proven Master Gardener training and seasoned with university research, the “Gardening in the South” series of books is packed with information, tips and tricks to being a successful Southern gardener.

By Extension Daily



Zinnia elegans
via [Wikimedia Commons](#)



**Autauga County
Master Gardeners Association
Lunch & Learn 2017**

**THURSDAY, 2 March
12:00-1:00 pm**



**Christ Lutheran Church
2175 Cobbs Ford Road, Prattville 36066**

BRING A SACK LUNCH FREE PROGRAM DRINKS PROVIDED

**May Day! May Day! HELP!
We Have Fire Ants
Fire Ants & Other Home Invaders**

**Dr. Fudd Graham
Entomologist, AU**

**CONTROL PRODUCTS
BAIT VS. MOUND TREATMENTS
FLEAS, TICKS & SPIDERS
KEEPING THEM OUT**

**For more information, please contact
Autauga County Extension Office
(334) 361-7273**





Avoid Crape Murder & Other Crimes

Pruning Pointers for Southern Gardeners

Hosted by the
Prattville Parks and Recreation Department
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
And
Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

Saturday, February 18th 2017
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

The Doster Center
424 South Northington Street
Prattville, Alabama 36067



In conjunction with the Annual ARBOR DAY TREE GIVE-AWAY

Opening Remarks by Mayor Gillespie at 8:45 a.m.

Topics to be discussed:

Proper Techniques for Training and Pruning Trees and Shrubs
How to Properly Prune Crape Myrtles • Pruning Roses

Timely tips on the proper pruning of crape myrtles (it's a tree, not a bush), roses, and other southern favorites. Instructions on pruning for desired appearance of trees and shrubs, as well as the proper time of the year for flowering plants will be given. Also, included will be a discussion of the proper tools and their uses.

Speakers: Mary McCroan and Linda Griebel, Advanced Master Gardeners in the expertise of pruning. Mary was certified as a Master Gardener in 2006 and Linda in 2005. Both achieved their advanced certificate in pruning in 2008.



To sign-up or for more information, contact the Prattville Parks and Recreation office at 334-595-0800.
Free to the Public, but Pre-Registration is required.

Things to do...

- March Help Line Luncheon, Feb. 13, 2017, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Autauga Co. Extension Auditorium
- Swift Creek Cleanup, Autauga County PALS, Feb. 18, 2017, 9-Noon, Swift Creek Boat Ramp
- Arbor Day Observances: Feb. 18,2017, 9-Noon, in Prattville at Doster Community Center. Feb. 23, 2017, 10-Noon, Autaugaville Fire Department.
- Avoid “Crape” Murder, Feb. 18,2017, 9-10a.m., at Prattville Parks and Recreation, call 334.595.0800 to register.
- Fruit Orchard Field Day, Feb. 22, 2017,9-3:30 at 5664 Cahaba Road, Orville, AL. Call 361.7273 to register.
- **Master Gardener Helpline begins Wed., March 1, 2017**
- All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar, March 3,Protect your Veggie Harvest from Hungry Insects. Visit: <https://learn.extension.org/events/2843>
- Lunch and Learn, March 2, 2017,12—1 p.m., at Christ Lutheran Church, Prattville
- ACMG Monthly Meeting, March 8,2017, 6 pm, First Baptist Church, Prattville.
- Vegetable Irrigation Workshop, Founders Station , 4902 Pike Road, March 7, 2017, 9-11 a.m. Register by calling 334.270.4133.
- Vegetable Gardening, Dr. Chip East, Alabama Cooperative Extension, Petals From the Past, March 18, 2017, 10:30 a.m.
- **Annual Autauga County Master Gardeners Plant Sale-April 29,2017**
- Growing & Cooking with Herbs, June 3, 2017, Prattville Parks and Recreation, call 334.595.0800 to register.

Entertain, Educate, Elevate

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

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 Building in Autaugaville.

PLACE
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