

DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter

JUNE 2017

ACMGA Member Receives State Recognition

By:
Ofie McCoy



(left) REA Mallory Kelley, (right) Glenn Huovinen

At the 2017 annual Alabama Master Gardener Association Conference held in Huntsville, AL on May 1-3, local Prattville resident, Glenn Huovinen, was awarded the coveted "Fred Evans Intern of the Year" Award.

Glenn, born in Detroit, moved to Florida where he taught high school Biology for 3 years. He moved to Alabama in 1978. As a youngster, Glenn watched and often helped his mother who always had a vegetable garden planted.

Through working with his mother, Glenn developed a passion for gardening. When Glenn retired in 2015 his first thoughts were to pursue his desire for gardening. He had long looked forward to the time when he would be able to take the Autauga County Master Gardeners classes.

Glenn says he learned so much from the Master Gardener classes. He loves to learn and he constantly tries new things searching out better and easier ways to garden. Glenn also loves to teach what he learns to anyone who is interested. As a Master Gardener, he is often stopped by people asking him questions about all aspects of gardening. He states this experience has helped him gain confidence in teaching others. In August 2016, he learned about new alternative gardening methods which grows more produce in smaller spaces, a system he will share with anyone who is interested.

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

May Hummingbird Award Winner: Ann Fuller



(left) Ofie McCoy, (right) Ann Fuller

Ann Fuller is the Autauga Master Gardener Association's May recipient of the Hummingbird Award.

Ann received the honor for all of her hard work supporting ACMGA, including her diligence in organizing this year's very successful Annual Plant Sale (held on the last Saturday of April 2017). Congratulations, Ann, for your hard work!

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.

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Volunteer Honors

During the May ACMGA meeting, the following members received recognition for their impressive volunteer hours in Autauga County! Congratulations on reaching your volunteer hour goals!



Don Armstrong - 1,245 volunteer hours

Glenda Armstrong - 1,019 volunteer hours

Carolyn Gray - 2,489 volunteer hours

Marjorie Hannah - 2,378 volunteer hours

Paula Seamon - 2,008 volunteer hours

Albert Striplin - 4,268 volunteer hours

Billie Willis - 1,052 volunteer hours



Herb Knowledge Grows in Community

By : Lisa Carswell



The second workshop that the ACMGA sponsored in association with the Prattville Parks and Recreation Department was on herbs and was attended by 53 people. We generated a lot of interest in Master Gardeners and the upcoming intern class in September. We even ran out of applications and had to get names and addresses.

The speaker was our own Debbie Boutelier, with over 30 years of experience in growing and studying herbs. Even though the title of the workshop was “Growing and Cooking with Herbs”, she touched on all potential uses of herbs. These uses include culinary, medicinal, teas, beauty and cleaning products and ornamental. She

discussed the overall issues with growing herbs in our lovely southern weather, with its high humidity and temperature fluctuations. Then she delved into several specific herbs, using her own extensive personal experiences. She also shared some of her culinary and beauty and cleaning product recipes with us. The talk was entertaining and informative and made me even more determined to have my own herb garden.

Debbie is a firm believer in organic gardening and composting in addition to using herbs in all of their uses in her life. She travels quite a bit all over the county giving workshops on varied topics involving herbs and organic gardening. In fact, I am looking forward to attending another workshop of hers on Thursday, 8 June, at the Prattville Community Library. The talk begins at 5:30 pm and will be on using herbs in beauty products.

The next workshop in this series will be on Saturday, 23 September, from 9:00 to 11:00 at the Doster Center and is titled, “Making the Most of Your Small Spaces: Bonsai and Alternative Gardening Methods.” Pre-registration starts after 26 July. The speakers will be Mark Waldo, a Master Gardener with the Central Alabama Master Gardener Association and Glenn Huovinen.

The last workshop of 2017 is “Compost Happens: Nature’s Recycling” will be held on Saturday, 18 November, from 9:00 to 11:00 at the Doster Center. Rose McCauley and Paula Seamon will be the speakers.

Debbie’s Bio:

A life-long lover of all aspects of gardening and nature, Debbie Boutelier’s interest in herbs and other edibles began in the early 80’s when she planted her first edible garden with vegetables and culinary herbs. Her interest rapidly grew into a vocation spanning the many different aspects of using herbs in everyday life and incorporating organic techniques in everything she grows.

As an Air Force wife, she has lived in different areas of the country and broadened her gardening knowledge with each new assignment. Upon moving to Alabama in 1994, Debbie pursued her interest in herbs and gardening on a full-time basis, taking the Alabama Master Gardener course in 1995. She has given over 6,000 hours of volunteer service to the Master Gardener program. Her involvement with the Master Gardener program led her into a new career as a County Extension Agent in Autauga County for 8 years. Debbie now teaches nationally and gives many seminars on organic gardening, nutrition, the many aspects of herbs and other garden related topics. She has studied the medicinal uses of herbs for over 15 years and completed a three-year intensive study of the medicinal aspect of herbs at the Appalachian Center of Natural Health. Debbie is a long-time member and past president of the Herb Society of America.

The William Howard Smith Agricultural Building an Inviting New Look!





The landscape around the William Howard Smith Agricultural Building is bursting with color, now, thanks to the hard work of the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association.

Glenn Huovinen and Charlie French conceptualized the new landscape for the space. After receiving approval and funding from the Autauga County Commission, ACMGA members went to work laying out the changes.

Glenn and Charlie were joined in the beautification process fellow ACMGA members Tim & Ofie McCoy, Beatrice & Bob Hill, Sheri Cook, Patrick Cook, Linda Parrish, and Bob Scheffler.

The building is home to the Autauga County Extension Office, Alabama Forestry Commission, NRCS, and Farm Services Agency.

ACMGA planted Vitex Trees, Variegated Flax Lilies, Day lilies, Purple Fountains, iris, Gardenia Bushes, and Gold Mop Cypress in the area for a beautiful new entryway!



Glenn finds great satisfaction in working in the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association Demonstration Garden which grows vegetables which are then donated to Autauga Interfaith Care Center to be given out to people in need. Last year over 1,000 pounds of produce was grown and donated to AICC.

His goal is to continue to learn and to use that knowledge to help others. Glenn has devoted energy and manpower to this garden that supports feeding of the needy in this community but which is also a wonderful teaching tool to all those who visit.

At the end of Glenn's last Master Gardener class, he asked Regional Extension Agent, Mallory Kelly, "Now that the classes are done, what am I going to do next Wednesday?" Fortunately, she was able to direct him to numerous classes and work-

shops to sharpen his gardening skills.

Glenn states, "I went camping at Gunter Hill last fall, took the boat out to go fishing, but quickly realized that instead of fishing, I was looking at the plants on the bank."

His next project is to work on his Advanced Master Gardener certificate, studying espalier techniques.

Glenn resides in Prattville with his wife, Sandy, and two Papillon pups, Trooper and Patches.



Autauga County Master Gardeners

Work During Prattville CityFest

Right: Autauga County Master Gardeners share information during Prattville CityFest.



(left) Ofie McCoy holds tickets while a Prattville resident pulls the name of the winner of a Rototiller as part of the ACMGA fundraising effort.

4th Annual Kids' Fishing Rodeo The Mystery Under Pratt Pond

Contributed by:
Ofie McCoy

On a beautiful, sunny day, kids from all over the community gathered around Pratt Park pond for the 4th Annual Kids Fishing Rodeo. Lots of action was happening on the southern half of the pond, however, very little, or let's say, no action on the opposite side (NF for non-fishing). The NF side of the pond had some kids with their families seated on the bank, tossing their lines into the pond over and over again with no results! However, the opposite side was teeming with activity as young anglers tossed in their lines and hauled in one catfish after another. Event coordinators were Autauga County Master Gardeners Association President Ofie McCoy, Autauga County Extension Office Coordinator Darrue Sharpe, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries agent Jay Haffner, Autauga County Regional Extension Agent Chris Jaworowski. Organizers watched, perplexed, and unable to identify the cause for the lack of activity on the NF banks. It was a real mystery. The experts walked around

the pond checking the water depth and looking for anything unusual in the water, but no identifiable reason was found to explain the lack of fish activity. The fish were simply absent in that area or not biting. Was there some mysterious evil creature lurking beneath the surface, scaring the catfish out of that area? Was the algae excessive in that area? What possible reasons could keep hungry, aggressive catfish away from that side of the pond?

Determined to find the cause, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries agent, Jay Haffner, a master fisherman, decided to challenge two very successful young anglers from the active side, to a fishing contest to see if they could lure a fish onto one of their hooks. They gave it their all for 15 minutes, but no matter what advanced and secret angling skills they possessed and used, not a single fish was caught during those 15 minutes.

So, what is the mystery in Pratt Pond? To date the reason remains hidden. Hopefully the answer will come soon or at the latest...on the first Saturday in May, 2018 when the 5th Annual Kids' Fishing Rodeo will be held. Watch for the answer!



Slime Molds, Nostoc Appear in Yards after Heavy Rains

Extension Dailey

AUBURN, Ala.—Many Alabama homeowners felt the effects of torrential downpours in the garden and in their yards.

Dr. Dave Han, an Alabama Extension turfgrass management specialist, said homeowners may see a plethora of strange-looking organisms popping up in the yard.

“Besides the usual mushrooms, moss and algae, two strange-looking things are popping up: slime molds and *Nostoc*,” Han said.

Slime Molds

“Slime molds are really cool critters that live in soil and thatch, feeding on organic matter,” he said. “When it rains, they will ooze up onto the foliage of the lawn in order to reproduce. They sit on the surface of the leaves and produce spores, which will dry up and disperse.”



Pictured left: Dr. Han captures a picture of Slime mold growing on a lawn in Auburn.

Slime molds can grow in many different colors. Yellow and purple/black types occur are most commonly on turfgrass.

Han said yellow ones may be mistaken for dog vomit, while the dark ones could be mistaken for oil or soot. Harmless to turf, remove them by hosing down the molds, or when they dry out, by brushing or mowing the grass.

Additionally, Han said homeowners should not worry because slime molds are not harmful to people or pets.

Nostoc

The other strange-looking organism popping up in yards is *Nostoc*, which is a genus of cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria is a photosynthetic bacteria also known as blue-green algae, but is of no relation to true algae. *Nostocs* produce a greenish or blackish-green gelatinous matrix and appear most often on turf. Some people say it resembles pieces of really ugly gelatin on the turf.

Han said if one ventures to pick them up, they

would feel like gelatin, too. These are slippery to walk on when wet, but dry out to a dark crust.



Nostoc growing on the lawn of St. Michael's Catholic Church in Auburn, Alabama.

“Like slime molds, *Nostoc* is not a parasite of grass, but if enough of it covers the turf it can cause shade issues,” Han, who is also an associate professor in the Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences Department at Auburn University, said. “Usually it appears in places where the turf is already thin, taking advantage of the lack of competition.”

Han said *Nostoc* can fix nitrogen. This means it can grow in areas of low fertility— and in some cultures it is eaten as a food. *Nostoc* control methods include drying out areas where it grows and thrives.

“It is moderately sensitive to copper-based algacides and very sensitive to herbicides with pelargonic acid,” he said. “Because this is a non-selective product, only use this herbicide where burning the turf can be tolerated.”

With more rain expected, look for more slime molds and *Nostoc*.

Look What They Found! The Adventures of Rose and Paula



Paula Seamon & Rose McCauley got a little more than they expected when they opened a bird nesting box at Lanark last month.

They found a huge snake inside one of the nest boxes!

Rose said, "Paula can move fast when she needs to!"



How Does Your Garden Grow?



A few issues back, Glenn Huovinen introduced the idea of growing potatoes in old cloth shopping bags. Well, because I am always searching for projects to do with our 5 year- old son, Robert, we jumped on the project.

We planted in Black Cow soil the "eyes" of quartered red potatoes in three bags. As the potato plants grew, we covered them up with more soil and fertilizer. Three months later we had sacks full of pretty red potatoes. It was a great experience for our family! Thanks, Glenn, for the wonderful idea!



Spring Garden Salad

15 oz. can English Peas
15 oz. can Shoe Peg Corn
15 oz. can Lima Beans
15 oz. can Black Eyed Peas
4 oz. chopped Pimentos
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup chopped bell pepper
Small bunch of green onions (top and all)

Dressing: 1 cup Sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup White Vinegar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Oil
 1 tsp. Salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Pepper

Drain can vegetables and pimentos. Combine with onions, bell pepper and celery. In a sauce pan, warm over heat all dressing ingredients, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Pour over vegetables and toss lightly. Put in refrigerator. (Best if it's refrigerated for 10-24 hours.)

Spring Garden Salad Contributed by: Cheri Cook



(What's in the Water?)



Saturday, August 5, 2017

8:00—11:15 am

Pratt Park Pond, Prattville

Plan on coming to this interesting and Exciting trip to
Prattville's Pratt Pond and discover
"What's in the water?"

Provided By:

Autauga Forestry & Wildlife Stewardship Council
Prattville Parks and Recreation Dept.
Autauga Creek Improvement Committee
Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

To Register Call 334-595-0800

For Further Information call 334-361-0576



Things to do...

- Autauga County 4-H Cooking Class for youth. June 7, 2017, 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m., Autauga County Extension. Call 334.361.7273 to register.
- ACMGA meeting, June 8, 2017, 9:00 a.m., First Baptist Church, Prattville.
- Canning Workshop, June 9, 2017, 9 AM – Noon, Autauga County Extension Office. Register by calling 334.361.7273.
- Master Gardener Free Lunch & Learn, 1st Thursday of each month, Christ Lutheran Church, Prattville, AL., 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM, bring a lunch.
- Autauga County 4-H Appreciate Alabama's Natural Resources—June 14, 2017, Lanark, 8:30 a.m.—Noon, \$10.00 per youth. Register at 334.361.7273.
- Landscape Appreciation Meeting, June 15, 2017, 11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m., **All ACMGA** members are invited. Please RSVP as lunch will be served. Call 334.361.7273. Please bring a desert to share with all!
- Autauga County Grassroots Meeting, July 13, 2017, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM, RSVP at 334.361.7273.

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 Building in Autaugaville.

Autauga County Master Gardeners
c/o Autauga County Extension Office
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Autaugaville, AL 36003

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