

DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter

March 2017

What Inspires You?

By: Ofie McCoy,
Autauga County Master Gardeners Association President

What inspires you? What excites you as you envision the possible impact of Master Gardeners in our community? Is it the smell of Spring just around the corner? Is it the daffodils peeking up through the cold soil? I believe it is the sense of purpose, the goals of positively impacting our community.



These opportunities make a difference in the lives of our friends and neighbors and is what inspires, motivates and activates Master Gardeners. The Demonstration Garden proved this by growing over 1,000 pounds of fresh produce in 2016. What an accomplishment! The food is given out to the needy in our community through the auspices of the Autauga Interfaith Care Center. This project blesses people where they live, in their homes, on their tables. Also, Master Gardeners maintain a beautiful, old chapel in the middle of downtown Prattville called Prattville Garden. Take a look to see the beautiful impact this has on our downtown community. Other things can provide inspiration – working together to accomplish more than what can be done alone, the comradery

of working toward a common goal, and listening to other members describe successful ventures into new growing methods. We must keep our eyes and our hearts focused on our mission statement. We are to volunteer to beautify our communities, to share our knowledge of gardening, and to promote environmental awareness. Don Shula once said, “The **start** is what stops most people.” Well, we have not been stopped! Together we have started and will continue to work toward our common goals. Great things are in the future. Watch out 2017!



Above: ACMGA's February Membership Meeting

This Issue

- What Inspires You?
- Pruning Lessons
- Prattville Parks and Recreation Class is a Success!
- How Does Your Garden Grow?
- What Can You Do With All of that Garbage?
- AMCGA Field Trips
- Hummingbird Award



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



Master Gardener Helpline
1-877-252-GROW

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

“The best place to find God is in a garden. You can dig for Him there.” George Bernard Shaw

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter - Entertain, Educate, Elevate

February Field Trip!

Fruit Orchard Training for Certified Master Gardeners



Master Gardeners from central Alabama participated in a day long fruit training class February 22, 2017. The event was held at Dr. Mike Drummond's orchard in Orville, Alabama.

Training included instruction and hands-on pruning and orchard management of variety of trees including Pecans, Apple, Pear, Plums and Asian persimmons. Additionally, participants toured the Log Cabin Vineyard & Winery in Selma, Alabama.

ACMGA Supports Arbor Day Sapling Giveaways in Prattville and Autaugaville



Above: Autauga County Master Gardeners on February 8, 2017 beginning their tour of Southern Growers Nursery. See more pictures of the tour on page 9.

How Does Your Garden Grow? By Glenn Huovinen

No room or loose soil to grow potatoes? No problem. Get some potatoes from a seed store. Cut them in pieces with at least 2 eyes on each piece. Put 3 inches of potting mix in a cloth shopping bag. Cover the potatoes.



When they sprout add more soil. Continue covering new growth with soil, and add some fertilizer as you go. When the leaves brown, dump out the bag and you will have fresh potatoes! Fun!



Use Your Garden Vegetables in a Tasty Dish Zucchini Bread by Margie Hannah

Ingredients:

3 eggs
¾ cup oil
1 tbs. vanilla
1 cup of brown sugar
1 cup white sugar
4 cups shredded zucchini

Combine together in mixing bowl:

1½ tsp baking soda, 1½ tsp salt, 1 tsp baking powder, 4 cups flour, 1 tsp cinnamon, ½ tsp ground cloves, ½ tsp nutmeg.

Directions:

Sift together dry ingredients and add to wet mixture. Add 1 cup chopped nuts and 1 cup raisins. Add to greased and floured loaf pan. Bake at 350° for 1 hour. Makes 2 loaves.



“Master Gardener Helpline, may I help you?”

Autauga County Master Gardeners, and Interns, are ready for a new season of phone calls from gardeners needing a little help on their projects. In February, REA Mallory Kelley held a training session for Interns at which she thanked all of ACMGA members for their tireless support of the Helpline.

If you have questions about volunteering with the Helpline, use your membership directory and contact Kelly McCloskey.



Pictured above:
 Kelly McCloskey (left)
 Paula Seamon (Right)
 Both were door prize winners during the training session!

Upcoming Events Contributed by: Ann Fuller

April 13 – 9:00 am		Plant Sale workday @ Prattville Garden.
May 11 – 6:00 pm	Skip Lobmiller	Autauga Creek & the Canoe Trail
June 8 – 9:00 am	Glenn Huovinen	Home tour of his garden. Meet at church first for business.
August 10- 9:00 am	Ethan James Alabama Power	Right Tree/Right Place



Cultivate Our Community Reminder from Pam Olson...

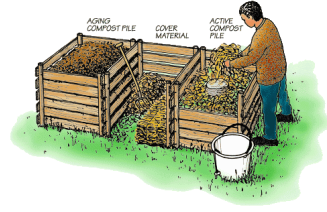
Here’s the list of items we collect for AICC as part of our “Cultivate Our Community” program! : shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, adult tooth brushes, small cosmetic bags (new or like new) dish detergent, laundry detergent, household cleaners.

Sample sizes are welcome, too!

These items are collected at every monthly meeting.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH ALL THAT GARBAGE?

By: Paula Seamon



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.

Why should I compost?

I am always surprised at how many gardeners do not compost! There are so many reasons to compost kitchen and yard waste. Composting is good for the environment. It improves soil structure in your garden. Compost has basic nutrients that plants need for healthy growth. Last but not least making your own compost to use in your garden will save you money.

How To Get Started Composting. Compost can be made in an open pile or in a structure that keeps the pile neat and in a size and shape that allows it to heat up in the middle and decompose faster. A structure can also hide the waste. There are many types and sizes of structures. They can be constructed out of any material. I have seen some that are unusual and some that have beautiful artwork on them to make them more attractive. Mine is made out of wood pallets and is in 3 sections. The 1st section is for the startup waste and I move that to the 2nd section in about 2 months and depending on how much muscle I use to turn it, this can be moved to the 3rd section in about 4-6 weeks. Turning the pile is also a great workout! If you have limited space by all means compost in a garbage can with holes drilled in the sides and roll it around in your yard. You can also purchase compost bin containers or tumblers.

The key to successful composting is maintaining a balance between carbon (browns) and nitrogen (greens). A healthy compost pile should have a C:N ratio around 30:1. Some good examples of carbon (browns) are shredded newspapers and paper- leaves, shrubbery trimmings, tree branches-cardboard-wood chips. It is best to cut up or chop large pieces of limbs and shrubbery before composting so that they will break down faster and speed up the composting process. Do not add any diseased plants to your pile. Some good examples of nitrogen (greens) are fruits-all vegetable scraps-tea bags-coffee grinds and filters-paper napkins or towels-crushed eggshells. Do not add any animal products to your compost. Layer your browns first and then add your greens and continue layering until your pile is about 3 to 4 feet tall. Turning the pile insures oxygen for your "workhorses" the microbes in the pile. If your pile is dry add water until the consistency is that of a wet sponge. If your pile smells, add browns. Turning the pile will deter ants. Keeping your greens covered with brown materials will deter critters.

YOUR COMPOST IS READY- Compost is mature when it is dark and crumbly, slightly moist and has an earthy smell. With a good ratio of browns and greens, your organic waste can compost in around 3-5 months. Finished compost contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

Composting is easy and nature is on your side. Start Composting!



I watched this grow for a few weeks and finally decided to snap a picture of it. It is one of nature's examples of companion growing, I guess.

This fungus is growing on one of the pecan trees in front of the Extension office.

February Hummingbird Award Recipient Helen Allen



Helen Allen is the February 2017 recipient of the Hummingbird Award. Helen receives this award, for her hard work as chair of the telephone committee which works to remind membership about meeting dates and other project dates and times. 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 tiny 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.

was presented the Hummingbird Award for all the work she does as chair of the telephone committee, behind the scenes calling each member to remind them about the regular meeting times and other project times.

Quilting With a Purpose



Master Gardener Intern Anita Shriberg is working on a quilting project that she hopes will benefit the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association.

She started the beautiful quilt in January and plans to sell it with proceeds going towards the ACMGA's many programs.

Shriberg's quilt is a skillful combination of fabric that reflects the nature that all gardeners love.

"Every single piece has

leaves or flowers on it", Shriberg noted.

Shriberg is part of a quilting group with First United Methodist Church of Prattville. The group creates quilts for *Project Linus* to provide love, warmth and comfort to seriously ill children statewide. Last year the group completed 74 quilts. They accept ALL sizes of cotton fabric scraps as donations to their charitable quilting effort.



INAUGURAL PRATTVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION CLASS A SUCCESS!

By: Lisa Carlisle



Last year the Prattville Parks and Recreation Department asked the ACMGA if we would be interested in sponsoring some classes in 2017. Since the purpose of our Association is to foster education about gardening, the answer was, “Yes!”



Initially we decided to start with four classes, one each quarter. The classes are held on Saturday mornings from 9 -11 in the Doster Center in Prattville. Pre-registration is required, although we will not turn away walk-ins.

The first class “Avoid Crape Murder and Other Crimes: Pruning Tips for Southern Gardeners” was held on February 18 in conjunction with the Annual



Arbor Tree Giveaway and taught by Mary McCroan. Even though just 30 people pre-registered, we had 56 attendees. Most brought in their saplings from the Tree Giveaway and asked questions about their saplings. Even though Mary taught my pruning class when I was an intern, I learned something new during this class. I knew about pruning crossing and rubbing branches to prevent damage, but I did not know that another goal of pruning was to open the branches to allow air inside the canopy. It makes sense because all living things like to breathe. We had many door prizes donated by Petals from the Past, Russell Do-it Center, Home Depot, and Lowe’s of Prattville.



The next classes start with “Growing and Cooking with Herbs” on June 3. This one will be taught by our own Debbie Boutelier. The first half will be a discussion on proper growing techniques and the second half will focus on the proper uses of the more popular herbs. Pre-registration starts on May 5 when the Parks and Recreation Summer brochure comes out.

The third class is “Make the Most of Your Small Spaces: Bonsai and Alternative Gardening Methods” on September 23. The first half will be about Bonsai and will be taught by Mark Waldo. The second half will be on alternative gardening methods and will be taught by Glenn Huovinen. The fourth and final class for this year will be “Compost Happens: Nature’s Recycling” on November 18. The instructors are still to be determined. Based on the response to this first class, I am already looking ahead to 2018!

ACMGA Tours the Southern Homes & Gardens Nursery

Master Gardener Member Charlie French organized a fun outing for Autauga County Master Gardeners on February 8, 2017. The group toured the Southern Homes and Gardens Nursery in Montgomery located off the Wetumpka Highway. The group got a chance to learn about the nursery operations for growing annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs sold in all Southern Home and Garden Centers. This nursery is only available for wholesale purchases.





All Bugs Good and Bad

2017 Webinar Series

First Friday of the Month 2:00 pm (Eastern)

Join Us for This Free Webinar Series on Pests



February 3

[Don't Let Tramp Ants Take Over Your Home](#)

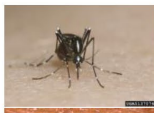
Dr. Karen Vail



March 3

[Protect Your Veggie Harvest From Hungry Insects](#)

Zach Snipes



April 7

[Mosquitoes and Insect Borne Diseases](#)

Dr. Derrick Mathias



May 5

[Ticks](#)

Dr. Thomas Mather



June 2

[Aphids, Scales, and Whiteflies](#)

Dr. Erfan Vafaie



August 4

[Drain Flies, House Flies, and Fungus Gnats](#)

Elizabeth "Wizzie" Brown



September 1

[Meet Our Native Pollinators](#)

Molly Keck



October 6

[New Invasive Ants to Know About](#)

Dr. Timothy Davis



November 3

[Pantry Pests, Carpet Beetles, and Clothes Moths](#)

Dr. Eric Benson



December 1

[Don't Let Bed Bugs Hamper Your Vacation Plans](#)

Alan Brown



For more information on the series and how to connect to the webinars, visit:

<http://articles.extension.org/pages/73368>



Image credits in order of appearance: Joseph LaForest, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org; Dani Carroll, Alabama Cooperative Extension System; Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org; Scott Bauer, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org; Elizabeth "Wizzie" Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; Pest and Diseases Image Library, Bugwood.org; Dani Carroll; Forest and Kim Starr, Starr Environmental, Bugwood.org; Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org; Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org

**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

Things to do...

- **Master Gardener Helpline— Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. ACMGA handles calls each Wednesday!**
- Vegetable Irrigation Workshop, Founders Station , 4902 Pike Road, March 7, 2017, 9-11 a.m. Register by calling 334.270.4133.
- Montgomery Botanical Gardens at Oak Park Volunteer Work Day, Thursday, march 16, 2017 , 8:00 a.m. to Noon
- Vegetable Gardening, Dr. Chip East, Alabama Cooperative Extension, Petals From the Past, March 18, 2017, 10:30 a.m.
- Springing Into Spring Garden conference, March 23,2017, 8:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m., Tuscaloosa County Extension Office.
- Lunch &Learn, Thursday April 6,2017, 12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m., Christ Lutheran Church. Topic: April Showers Bring Problems for Tomatoes.
- Plant sale workshop/preparation, April 13, 2017, Prattvillage Garden, 9;00 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

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
2226 Highway 14 West
Autaugaville, AL 36003

PLACE
STAMP
HERE