

DIRTY DIGS

Autauga County Master Gardeners Newsletter

May 2017

The Annual ACMGA Plant Sale is a Success!



The Annual ACMGA Plant Sale and Raffle was a huge success bringing in thousands of dollars through the sale of gently loved and locally grown plants, trees and shrubs. The funds will be used to sustain ongoing projects supporting Autauga County residents who are food challenged.

Ann Fuller, AMCGA Plant Sale Chair, had this to say about the 2017 effort, "This year's plant sale is over and I want to thank everyone who helped in any way. It takes all of us to bring this together every year. Rose (McCauley) and I are most grateful for everything you did. Now to begin rooting and dividing plants for next year!" Ann Fuller and Rose McCauley are the Plant Sale organizers.

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

How Does Your Garden Grow?

By: Glenn Huovinen

Fruit trees are fun to grow, and you can enjoy the harvest. You do not want to grow a 15 foot tree and have to use a ladder to harvest and spray. Here is how you can grow a small fruit tree that you can work with two feet in the ground.

1. Make the hardest pruning cut you will ever make. Take a \$30 tree and cut off \$20. About knee high.



2. After the buds start growing select 3 or 4 and that will be the beginning of your small tree. Leave only 1 branch to a bud.

3. Prune all buds at or below the graft.



4. These 3 or 4 branches will form the shape of your tree. Keeping the center open to allow good light and air penetration.



Recycle Your Items !



Shop for Bargains ... Support the Gardens

**On Facebook @
Bargains Fun Fundraiser**

Online until it's sold.....Lamps, Wall decor, Wreaths, Great gifts, Glassware, Collectibles, Baby Strollers. Updated often.

At Doster Center on May 13th (6am-noon).....CD's, DVD's, Books, Tchotchkes, Household items, Clothes and more.

You don't want to shop? Share the page with others. Thanks for your support. Donations still welcomed.

Go to Facebook and search Bargains Fun Fundraiser to see all of the great deals!



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.

Fire Blight



Contributed by:
Mallory Kelley

Alabama Cooperative
Extension Agent, Home
Grounds, Gardens & Home
Pests

Fire blight affects many plant species each year, and once you know the symptoms you will start noticing it everywhere. This spring it seems to be more prevalent and a warmer winter along with the drought stress we had in the fall is what I attribute it to. Fire Blight, caused by the bacterium *Erwinia amylovora*, is a common and destructive disease of pear, apple, quince, hawthorn, many other members of the rose plant family as well as several stone fruit trees. The host range of the fire blight pathogen includes nearly 130 plant species in 40 genera. Badly diseased trees and shrubs are usually disfigured and may even be killed by fire blight.

The term fire blight describes the blackened, burned appearance of damaged flowers, twigs, and foliage. Symptoms appear in early spring. Blossoms first become water-soaked, then wilt, and finally turn brown. Fruit may be infected by the bacterium directly through the skin or through the stem. Immature fruit are initially water-soaked, turning brownish black and becoming mummified as the disease progresses. These mummies often cling to the trees for several months.

Shortly after the blossoms die, leaves on the same spur or shoot turn brown and black. As the twig and leaf blight phase progresses, leaves die and curl downward, but do not drop from the tree which produces a “shepherd’s crook” appearance. This is usually the time when this disease is noticed on a tree or shrub. Spraying at this time is pointless, sanitization is the only cure. This means cutting back at least 12 inches behind the scorched area and sanitizing pruners between every cut. Choosing tolerant plant varieties is an easy way to reduce the likelihood of getting fire blight. Another option is to apply antibiotics (bactericides) very early in the spring, but timing can be very tricky for complete control. Remember, Antibiotics are protectants and not cures so they must be present to prevent the infection. The best way for a homeowner to avoid fireblight is to choose resistant varieties.



If you have gardening related questions, call the Master Gardener Helpline!

March through August the Alabama Cooperative Extension System offers a Gardening Helpline for the general public each Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. This helpline is operated by Master Gardener Volunteers who use research based information to best answer all of your gardening questions.

**If you've got home garden questions,
we've got answers!**

**Call 1-877-252-GROW
(4769)**

Please join us for the FREE Master Gardener Lunch and Learn Program in your area EVERY MONTH from 12:00-1:00, Bring a Sack Lunch, Drinks Provided.

Montgomery (May 3rd)-Growing Herbs, Autauga (May 4th)-Lawn Care and Smart Watering, and Elmore (May 9th)-Propagating Plants are the Lunch and Learn dates and topics for May!

Please join us and bring a friend!

For more information, call your local county extension office.

www.aces.edu

Hummingbird Award Recipient

April 2017

Lisa Carswell

The April recipient of the ACMGA's *Hummingbird Award* is Lisa Carswell (pictured far right). Lisa Carswell was awarded the *Hummingbird Award* for all her work with the Prattville Parks and Recreation department scheduling learning seminars. Also, Lisa is recognized for her willingness to work on any project that needs a hand. Lisa serves as the Education/Booth Committee Chairperson. (Pictured right) Lisa receives the *Hummingbird Award* from ACMGA President Ofie McCoy.



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 Autauga County MGA 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.



Above: Vegetables are growing in the Demonstration Garden!
If you have time, please help every Thursday morning!



(Pictured far Right) Lee Thomas receives a certificate from ACMGA President Ofie McCoy. Lee's certificate acknowledges reaching over 122 hours of volunteer work with the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association!

Cahaba Lilies

Extension Daily



Auburn, Alabama — You can't miss them if you know what you're looking for. Cahaba Lilies are aquatic flowering plants that bloom exclusively in three southeastern states, Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama. Here in Alabama, the shoals of the Cahaba River is one of those select areas.

Cahaba Lilies Location

You can find these lilies concentrated on a geographic feature called a "fall line."

These "fall line" habitats contain sections of layered rock. This creates places for the lilies' bulbs to wedge into the rock's crevices, Dr. Randy Haddock, Cahaba River Society Field Director, explained.

"Anything that lives in a rocky shoal in the river has got to be pretty tough and be able to hang in there pretty vigorously," Haddock said. "That's what the lilies have managed to figure out."

Their tough nature and rare beauty are huge draws for spectators, but it's harder than you think for visitors to sneak a peek at the lilies.

"There aren't any roads directly to where the biggest patches of Cahaba Lilies are," said [Shane Harris](#), coordinator of the [Alabama Cooperative Extension System](#)'s Tallapoosa County office. "The only way to get to them is by water, and those waters aren't navigable except by kayak or canoe."

Nevertheless, people flock to these areas for a chance to float the Cahaba and experience the dreamlike wonder of the lilies.

"It's amazing to see patches and patches of them," [Harris](#) said. "You can float right to them."



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Plant Sale Success!

(continued from page 1)



Master Gardeners began putting out plants and setting up yard art items before 6:00 a.m. on the last Saturday in May.

People lined up shortly after 6 and sat in their lawn chairs waiting to shop!

Bargains were found on hand-made bird houses, door wreathes, plant books, and gorgeous plants and trees!

Plant Sale Success!

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Autauga County Master Gardeners Attend Annual MG Conference



Autauga County Master Gardeners had a great time and learned a lot at the Alabama Master Gardeners Association Conference in Huntsville. (Pictured above, Right,) Glenn Huovinen receives the *Fred Evans Intern of the Year Award!*



Bottom left, Rose McCauley is sworn in as Secretary of the Alabama Master Gardeners Association.



Cahaba Lilies Blooming

(continued from page 6)

The lilies are a striking attraction against the river's muddy banks, producing an eye-catching white bloom. A new flower opens every night, and they last only a day. Each stem, however, produces several buds, [Dr. Nancy Loewenstein](#), an Extension specialist in forestry and wildlife sciences, explained.

Blooming begins the second week of May and typically runs through the middle of June, giving observers about four weeks to take in the lilies' beauty.

"It is a bucket list kind of thing to see," she said. "It is beyond amazing."

Haddock noted that botanist and expert on the lilies, Dr. Larry Davenport has said he does not know of another native wildflower as celebrated as the Cahaba Lily, with three states hosting community celebrations of its blooming.

In Alabama, the West Blocton community hosts a festival with speakers, storytelling activities and a chance for visitors to view the lilies. The festival takes place every year on the third Saturday in May.

Threats to Cahaba Lilies

The lilies must work do face down threats. According to Haddock, the biggest issue facing the lilies is stream flow shifts because of urbanization. Erosion causes stream banks to begin to collapse and can wash trees downstream.

"We are seeing big chunks of trees bang into the rocks where these lilies are and dislodge them," Haddock said. "That clump washes downstream and eventually into the Mobile Bay or the Gulf of Mexico."

Sedimentation can also affect the lilies. Loewenstein added that if sediment fills the nooks and crannies where the lilies' seeds grow, the lilies' survival could be compromised.

Wild Taro

She said that Wild Taro, an invasive plant is another threat to the survival of the lilies.

"If these plants get into the stream, they take root in the exact same place where the Cahaba Lily seeds would want to grow," Loewenstein said. "They take the habitat that could be the Cahaba Lilies'."

Loewenstein described two key factors in keeping the Wild Taro at bay. The first is prevention. All parts of the Wild Taro plant can sprout with the right environmental conditions, therefore, Loewenstein suggests avoiding tossing any part of the plant into the environment.

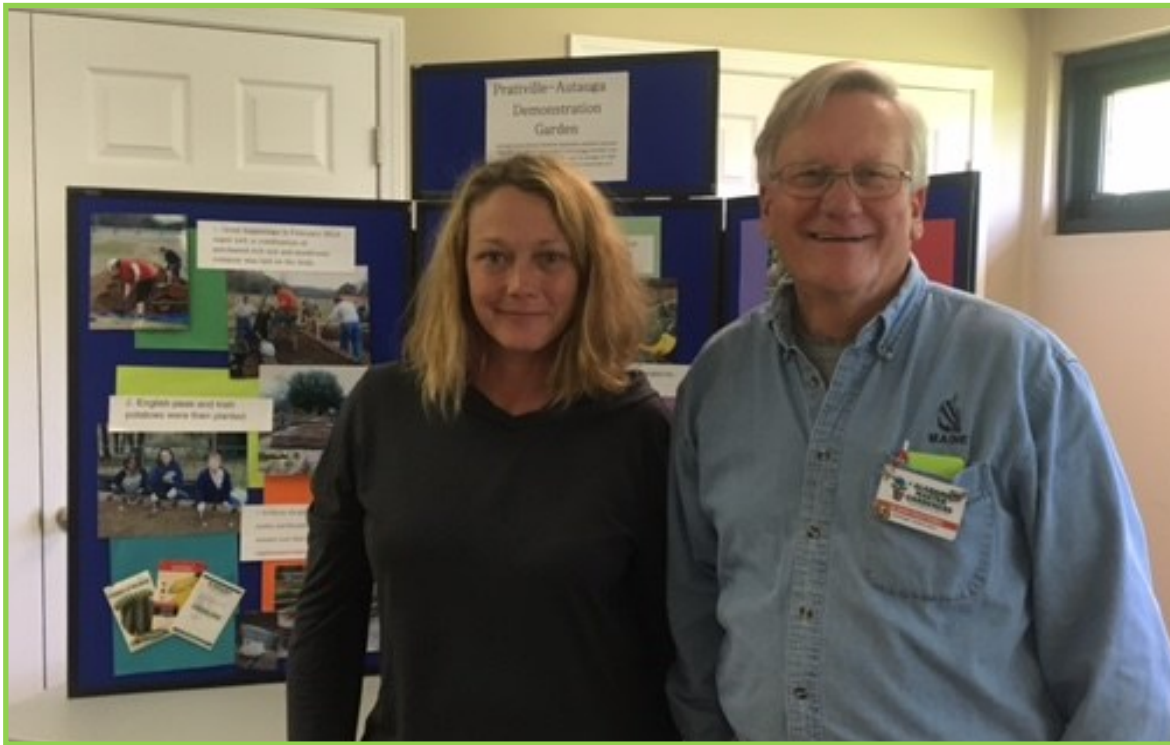
"Don't use Wild Taro anywhere near streams, especially if you are near the upper reaches of the Cahaba River where plants can escape downstream into the shoal," she said.

The second is control. The taro plant can be very difficult to regulate once established, so it is vital to keep its sprouting at bay.

Whether it is urbanization, sedimentation or cultivation of new plants, the Cahaba Lily cannot fight these hazards on its own. It is up to citizens and visitors to ensure this hidden treasure's survival.

For more information, visit the [Cahaba River Society](#).





Above: Dani Carroll (left) and Glenn Huovinen during the April Lunch & Learn at which Carroll discussed the topic “There’s a Fungus on our Tomatoes”.

Broccoli Salad

1 Bunch Broccoli – wash and separate into small pieces

1/2 cup purple onion (chopped)

1/2 cup chopped pecans

1/2 cup raisins

12 strips of cooked bacon (crumbled) I use one package of bacon pieces found in the salad section.

Dressing:

1 cup mayonnaise

1/2 cup sugar

2 teaspoons of vinegar

Mix dressing the night before and refrigerate.

Mix all ingredients together and pour dressing over mixture several hours before serving. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Recipes for Your Garden Pickings! By: Cheri Cook



Things to do...

- **Master Gardener Helpline— Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. ACMGA handles calls each Wednesday!**
- Prattville Cityfest, May 13, 2017, Downtown Prattville, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
- ACMGA Flea Market Fundraiser, May 13, 2017, Doster Center, 6 a.m.-Noon.
- **Growing & Cooking with Herbs**, June 3, 2017, Prattville Parks and Recreation, call 334.595.0800 to register.
- **Lunch & Learn**, June 8, 2017, 12: Noon, Christ Lutheran Church, 2175 Cobbs Ford Road, Prattville.
- **Demonstration Garden Work—** Every Thursday morning (when there is good weather)

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

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