



MG SPROUTS

Volume 18, Issue 4

April 2017

Message from the President ***By Sheila Anne Webb***

Congratulations to our recipients of Reach for the Stars awards. Your volunteer hours, which accumulate into the various award levels, are greatly appreciated. Your stewardship and dedication leave a terrific foot print for the flora, fauna and future. For further information, refer to your MG Directories for a description of the Stars program. Listed below are the recipients for this year. Following their names find the total hours and, in parentheses, the year they became Master Gardeners.

Bronze Star: Joan Alexander 114 (2015), Mary Banks 196 (2015), Linda Emanuel 104 (2015), Myra Gann 244 (2015), Susan Gibblins 178 (2015)

Silver Star: Janice Cain 342.5 (2012), Amelia Crow 338.8 (2014), Linda McDaniel 443.85 (2015), Yun Prater 390 (2014), Judy Shew 359 (2015), Skeeter Sims 392 (2015) Joe Trawick 447 (2015)

Gold Star: Paula Barnett-Ellis 575.3 (2002), Ruth Sarro 506 (2013), Jim Wakefield 630 (2012), Linda Wakefield 566/5 (2012)

Gold Badge: Shirley Heifner 1129 (2005), Betty Hines 1748 (1997), Gary Lawson 1067 (2011), Marge Lyons 1764.5 (2000)

Platinum Badge: Mary Andrews 2190.5 (2006), Jane Auller 2648 (2005), Truman Norred 2534.5 (2005)

Advanced Award Ruby Star: Sherry Blanton 4435 (1998)

Stars are awarded at local Master Gardener meetings. Badges and Advanced Stars are awarded at the State Master Gardener conference.

I'm now in the "wait and see" mode to ascertain which plants survived the rainless 3 months and drought of 2016. So far, the plants are looking better than I expected. Lots of early bloomers with this warm winter. Had a few azaleas bloom then they got hit by the 2-night freeze, but now the other azaleas are blooming. My lizards are back and busy; always love seeing them turning from brown to green to camouflage themselves as they pass through their environment. The endless variety of wildflowers provides beautiful colored cluster spots hither and yon. Am always fascinated by the tiniest of flowers that appear. Don't forget the hummingbirds need clean feeders as they return at the end of March. Hope you've enjoyed the melodious birds of spring. And don't forget the woodpeckers who are a gardener's friend by eating copious amounts of insects as well as berries and nuts. You can befriend them since they will also enjoy oily black sunflower seeds, peanuts and mealworms plus a ground level shallow birdbath areas.

Early congratulations to the interns as you wrap up the course work and seek to complete your volunteer hours. This month we'll have a brown bag luncheon during our business meeting. Happy spring!



Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CalhounMGs>



MG Calendar

MG Board Meeting	10:45 a.m.-noon, April 12, Cane Creek Community Gardens
MG Business Meeting	12 p.m., April 12, Cane Creek Community Gardens
Sprouts Deadline	April 25

From Our Advisor

Spring is busting out all over! We are just beginning to see the impacts of our drought situation. We have received numerous calls and inquiries regarding dead turf, trees and shrubs. Perennial pastures are in poor condition, and forests are dotted with dead or dying trees. I have a dead magnolia tree, dead dogwood and 2 dogwoods with no blooms. It was a hard summer and fall for plants all around. It is possible that we will see plants bloom or leaf out and then fail. We are still in a significant drought, and it will take many rainy days and nights for us to catch up. While topsoil moisture may be adequate, subsoil moisture is still likely short. Let's hope for continued spring rains.

Earth Day is nearly upon us. Due to dates when schools needed to attend we will have a 2-day event. April 17 and 18 will be our primary days, and April 19 and 20 will be make up days. Sherry Blanton has many of you signed up for volunteer work. We will see almost 500 children on the 1st day and almost 400 more on the second day. These will be busy days with full educational stations, but they will be exciting. This is our opportunity to help these students connect with nature and to share our sense of enjoyment and wonder regarding plants, gardening and the environment. We have good community support as well, so Calhoun County Master Gardeners are seen as volunteers who serve their communities. Thank you! We are also thankful that the County Highway Department was able to make some improvements to our outdoor classroom area last week. This included improvements to abate our flooding problems when water gets out of the creek channel and to move excess soil that had been store in the OC area. This will help us prepare for Earth Day!

I was working with Charlie on the greenhouse project yesterday, and I got to thinking about how long this project has been on the table. Part of our initial plans, we found the opportunity to purchase a quality used greenhouse frame around 2010. I think Jane Auiler was our MG President then. Truman Norred was our President later, and we had funds to put the frame up.

Here we are 6 or 7 years later, and we have funds to enclose the house and hopefully add exhaust fans. Our current President, Sheila Webb, wrote a grant application that was funded to assist with greenhouse development. The new siding for the greenhouse looks great, the donated gravel makes a nice floor, and it will be a great asset towards educating the public and perhaps raising funds for future development of Cane Creek Community Gardens. We are grateful for the foresight of our past leadership, willingness of our current leadership to proceed and generosity of numerous sponsors. Thanks to all of you who have been working to get the greenhouse up and going this spring!

Mr. Fran Byrd, an intern in our current class, has taken on the task of repairing one of our barns. He has made some quick progress, and I know he would appreciate your help. This barn had become a safety issue, and we are grateful to Fran for volunteering to tackle this project and providing his tools and expertise to get it done. I know one or two of our interns have assisted him, and I am sure he would appreciate further assistance. Please check with him and see what needs to be done and when.

From all indications, the MG class has gone well this year. It is an unusually large group for us, and it has been a good spirited group. I've shared class and lunch with them on several days, and they've had some great meals and interaction. Thanks to Dani Carroll for leading the way and keeping it fun. Thanks to the MGs for purchasing the new TV so that presentations can be viewed from all areas of the classroom!

Many activities are planned for Longleaf Botanical Gardens. There is a calendar full of wonderful activities for Master Gardeners and the community at large to take advantage of. Registration for events has been great, and MGs are seen as volunteers who can make a difference, I know many of our MGs are involved in this work, and Hayes has done a great job of pulling resources together to get the botanical gardens up and going. Be sure to like the Facebook page of the botanical gardens for regular updates, and there is also a newsletter available. Be sure to like Facebook pages for all of our programs and projects to stay informed.

Our 11th Annual Fall Fest will be September 16, 2017, at Cane Creek Community Gardens. Be sure to get that on your calendar and to help recruit vendors for the event. The more, the merrier.

Also, mark your calendars for Lunch and Learn. Sherry has lined up some excellent programs for us, and the first one comes up in April. We will have our MG final that morning, and we will be through in plenty of time for

Lunch and Learn. You'll get to enjoy class with some class graduates, and some of them may have many of their service hours completed by then.

Our beehives at CCCG were inspected this week, and they have very good activity. Let's hope this is a good year for our bees!

After years of someone else doing weather and crop surveys, that has come back to me. I will likely post an inquiry on our MG Facebook page one day per week regarding soil moisture. If you have noted any planting or harvesting activities in your area, you can share those, too. For instance, this week my report will likely be that topsoil moisture is adequate or surplus, subsoil moisture in short and pastures are thin. Any insight like that is helpful and it is all that I am asked to provide.

Thanks for all you do! 2017 is starting off in exciting fashion.

David West



MG Notes

Thank you to our President Sheila Webb for the beautiful March program on "Art in the Garden." As usual we had a delicious lunch.

We are pleased to have our own Ruth Sarro speak to us about GMOs and other nutritional topics at our April 12th meeting. Lunch and beverage are brown bag. Anyone want to bring dessert? This will be our last official meal with the 2017 intern class as a whole. The class concludes at the end of April.

Earth Day activities have been changed from three days to two. The events will take place on Monday, the 17th and Tuesday, the 18th. Wednesday, the 19th will become the rain date for a make-up date if necessary. Monday and Tuesday volunteers will still attend on the days they originally agreed to help. Anyone who had signed up for Wednesday will be our rain date volunteers and will only help if we need to make up a day on Wednesday. Please keep Wednesday on your calendars in case we need to use Wednesday. There will be no rain dates on Thursday or Friday.

Please plan to attend the first Lunch and Learn April 26th and welcome Dr. Harry Holstein. He presents an interesting, informative, and entertaining program. Learn more about "The History of Alabama's Native Americans." The program is from 12 to 1 p.m. No charge and no reservations needed. Bring your lunch if you would like.

The next two months are packed with sales by groups whose members include Master Gardeners. Support them with your purchases and help them fund their projects.

Congratulations to all the MGs who received stars and badges. Our community is so much better for their dedication and sweat equity.

April Garden Tips

Spring and summer gardening begin in earnest in April. Remember, however, that the average date for our last frost is April 15. Take care planting tender annuals and vegetables giving the soil and the night airtime to warm up before installing new plants.

Keep new plantings watered. Do a finger stick check (insert your finger into the ground to check soil to make sure it is moist) every few days. Water deeply and less often.

Spraying lawns in the greening up stage with chemicals is not healthy for the lawn. Before you spray, read the label carefully and follow the directions exactly, making sure to follow temperature requirements for spraying. If a little is good, more is not better.

If you have not serviced your lawnmower yet, sharpen the blade as a sharp blade does a much better of cutting the grass, keeping the edges neat instead of jagged.

It is easy to get carried away with the size of a vegetable garden; plant what you can care for in terms of weeding, watering, and picking.

Farmers' markets will be gearing up in the next month or so. Buy local, buy fresh.

According to the May Rule of pruning, plants that finish blooming in April and May can be pruned once they finish blooming. Pruning them while they are in winter dormancy will destroy this year's blooms.

Garden Calendar

It is the season of plant sales! Tree Amigos Master Gardeners: April 8th from 8 a.m. until 12 noon at Cane Creek Community Gardens at McClellan, 77 Justice Ave. Great selection of native azaleas, gardenias, banana shrubs, and aroni azaleas

Longleaf Botanical Gardens Green Team: Friday, April 21, members only from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, open to public 12 noon to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 22, from 8 a.m.

until 2 p.m. at Longleaf Botanical Gardens, Anniston Museum Complex.

Jacksonville Garden Club, May 6th, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., Dr. Terry Bonds parking lot, 601 Pelham Road, Jacksonville.

Longleaf Botanical Gardens Third Thursday, April 20th, "Choosing the Right Orchid" with Dayle Brooks, from 5 to 6 p.m., the James P. Roberts Education Room at Longleaf Botanical Gardens. Cost: \$5 per person and free to members. Call the Anniston Museum at 256-237-6766.

Lunch and Learn, April 26th noon to 1 p.m., with Dr. Harry Holstein, JSU Professor of Archaeology, "The Story of Alabama's Native Americans" at Cane Creek Community Gardens at McClellan. Free. Bring your lunch!

North Alabama Rare Plant Society Annual Free Lecture

Little Cypress Natives & Nursery presents The Beauty of Natives, by Harry Wallace, May 9, 2017, First Presbyterian Church, Fellowship Hall, 1701 Henry Road, Anniston, AL 36207

10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Silent Auction viewing and bidding. Unique plants, decorative plant related items. 12:00 Noon – Lecture

In Florence, Alabama, Harry and Linda Wallace have a native plant nursery and landscape business. Peggy Davis, a sister-in-law, sells hundreds of varieties of Hosta. You might want to consider using a native to replace what you lost in last year's drought. The Wallaces have a large selection of native shrubs and trees, as well as perennials.

A free sack lunch starts at 11:30 a.m. A variety of natives from the nursery will be available for sale after the lecture. Visit the nursery on-line and call to pre-order plants for delivery the day of the lecture, littlecypressnatives.net. Plants from Lotsa Hosta will also be available. Phone: 256-766-0537, Email: littlecypressnatives@yahoo.com

Reservations required. Phone: 256-236-4842 or 256-236-7300. Email: abugsy1@aol.com, or twodog@cableone.net, by May 4, 2017

Directions: From Quintard Avenue, (Hwy 21, Anniston) turn east at 10th street, and travel through 5 traffic lights until you see the church appearing to be in the middle of the street. From I-20, take exit 188 and head north. One-quarter mile after the third set of traffic lights, turn left toward downtown Anniston. Go over the hill and the

church is at the bottom of the hill on the right. From Veterans Memorial bypass, turn toward downtown Anniston and go over the hill.



Carolyn Patton presents stars at MG March meeting.
Bronze: Carolyn to Mary Banks, Linda Emanuel, Myra Gann
(not shown Susan Gibbins)



Silver: Carolyn to Linda McDaniel, Yun Prater, Judy Shew,
Joe Trawick (not shown Janice Cain, Amelia Crow, Skeeter
Sims)



Gold: Carolyn to Linda Wakefield, Ruth Sarro (not shown
Paula Barnett-Ellis, Jim Wakefield)

Officers - Calhoun County Master Gardeners

President: Sheila Anne Webb Vice President: Don Crow
Secretary: Emily Richardson Treasurer: Ruth Sarro
Members-at-Large: Jim Wakefield and Dick Pritchett

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