



MG SPROUTS

Volume 18, Issue 2

February 2017

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

We all extend a special welcome to our new intern master gardener class. Master Gardeners will bring casseroles or some complementary luncheon item to share at our first joint meeting on February 8. Hayes Jackson, ACES, will present "Weather for Gardeners." Happily, that will include our much welcome January rain.

January also brought nearly an extra hour of sunlight. February, the rainiest month of the year, will contribute an average of 5.1 inches of rain. It's time to think of the butterflies and birds. Our four winged friends need a variety of items including different host and adult plants. The Extension Office has great handouts available on feeding needs of various types of butterflies. The U.S.A. has 700+ varieties of butterflies. They'll also need a basking surface, flat rock, etc. since they are ectotherms (they rely on external sources for body heat) and places to camouflage themselves during resting times. It's also time to make sure birdhouses are clean and ready for the next occupants. Nesting season is nearly here. If you haven't lately, now would be a great time to tour Cane Creek's land; the area near the creek by the Outdoor Classroom is also a bird sanctuary with appropriate "housing."

Climate changes, such as global warming, have been top of the news for a few years now. You may want to contribute to the dialogue by sharing your observations of climate change. Perhaps things happen earlier, such as bird migrations, nesting birds, emerging perennials, etc. Consider such sources for sharing observations as Monarch Watch, iNaturalist, eBird, Nature's Notebook, Project Budburst, the Great Sunflower Project, fellow Master Gardeners, etc. Hopefully, you've had time to read all your seed catalogues and mentally create spring, summer and fall garden designs. Perhaps even order some special items. I always think this time of year matches William Blake's quotation: "In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy."

Help us celebrate Arbor Day this month and recall the history of the occasion. Julius Sterling Morton (1832-1902) originally a politician from Michigan, then Nebraska journalist, President Grover Cleveland's Secretary of Agriculture, and member of Nebraska's board of agriculture planted orchards, windbreaks and shade trees on his Nebraska farm and urged his neighbors to do the same. He proposed a special day for education on the importance of trees and planting of trees. The first Arbor Day was April 10, 1872, when over one million trees were planted in Nebraska. The second one was 1884 and beginning in 1885 Nebraska made it an annual holiday using Morton's birthday of 4/22 as the date. The idea spread to all the states and internationally to several countries. Each state celebrates Arbor Day during its climate's optimal tree planting time. State trees are listed after each state which lists Arbor Day for us and our neighbors: Alabama last full week of Feb. (Longleaf Pine); Georgia 3rd Friday in Feb. (Live Oak); Mississippi 2nd Friday in Feb. (Southern Magnolia); Tennessee 1st Friday in March (Yellow Poplar); Louisiana (Bald Cypress) and Florida (Cabbage Palmetto) both celebrate Arbor Day the 3rd Friday in January. Don't forget to survey your own property to determine tree needs during this Arbor Day period.

I always remember Johnny Appleseed at this time of year. His real name was John Chapman (1774-1845). He was a nurseryman and conservationist who introduced apple trees to Pennsylvania, Ontario, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and West Virginia. He really didn't throw seeds everywhere but carefully planted nurseries in all those areas and returned to all sites to nurture the trees. He's remembered in folklore, signage in his Massachusetts hometown, and in 1966 on a 5-cent U.S. postage stamp.

Enjoy the month as the volume of bird songs intensifies and a whiff of spring smells perfumes the air.

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



MG Calendar

MG Board Meeting	10:45 a.m.-noon, February 8, Cane Creek Community Gardens
MG Business Meeting	12 p.m., February 8, Cane Creek Community Gardens
Third Thursday Program: Gallery of Camellias	February 16, 5-6 p.m., Longleaf Botanical Gardens
Sprouts Deadline	February 25
Fruit and Vegetable Production Meeting	February 28. 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Cane Creek Community Gardens at McClellan.

All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series

Please join us for this webinar series for information you can use about good and bad insects. We used your feedback to bring topics that you suggested. We will discuss troublesome insects such as invasive ants, landscape pests, vegetable pests, and house dwellers as well as arachnids too. Not all insects are bad, though, come and meet some of our native pollinators! Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 1 p.m. Central time.

<https://learn.extension.org/events/2842>

FEBRUARY 3, 2017

Don't Let Tramp Ants Take Over Your Home

Presented by Dr. Karen Vail, University of Tennessee
Moderated by Mallory Kelley, David Koon



MG Notes

Welcome to the 2017 training class of MG interns. As you can see from the photo, it is a large class with members from Calhoun as well as other counties. Thanks to Judy and Skeeter, Emily, Cheryl, and Linda (Crow), Dick, and Linda (Schiff) and Sherry for stopping by on the first day to tell the interns about our MG projects. Please invite them to come by and see what happens at your site. Now is the time to brag!

Join us on Wednesday, February 8, for our monthly meeting when Hayes Jackson talks about "Weather for Gardeners." Lunch will be casseroles and the MG intern class will be joining us for lunch.

Mark your calendars:

Calhoun County Beautification Board Arbor Day Celebration: February 21, 2:30-4:30pm, Alexandria
Anniston Arbor Day Celebration: February 23, time/location TBA

Jacksonville Arbor Day Celebration: February 24 time/location TBA

Master Gardener Plant Sale: April 8, 8am-noon, Cane Creek Gardens, McClellan

Earth Day Activities: Week of April 17-21 (including weather days)



New 2017 Master Gardener Intern Class

February Gardening Calendar

February can be a busy month in the garden! Getting your lawnmowers and other tools to the shop this month will get you ahead of the spring rush.

Nice winter days offer great opportunities to clean up your gardens of any leftover decaying plant matter. A fresh layer of mulch will spruce your garden up and get it ready for spring and summer.

Keep bird feeders stocked and baths filled with clean water. Check to see that the water source is not frozen.

We are still in the midst of planting season but the optimum time to add shrubs and trees is growing short. February is a good month to prune ornamentals (for example, Knock Out roses, sun loving hydrangeas, and butterfly bushes) and trees. Inspect trees for damaged, dying, safety issues, or crossed branches. Avoid "crepe murder" when pruning crepe myrtles. If a plant blooms before May, winter pruning will remove the flower buds. Since many camellias are in bloom this month, a visit to a camellia nursery will allow you to choose your plants while they are in bloom.

If you have not taken a soil sample in the last two years, consider doing that now to prepare your garden for summer planting.

Liriope should be trimmed before it begins to put on new growth.

Trimming the tattered leaves off your Lenten roses will neaten up your plants and allow the new blooms to stand out.

Enjoy the beautiful winter days as they come. February often brings lots of them.

Gallery of Camellias

February 16, 2017
5 - 6 p.m.

LONGLEAF BOTANICAL GARDENS
920 Museum Drive, Anniston, AL
Reserve your spot today!
256-237-6766

Join us for the February Third Thursday program, which will feature the queen of the winter garden and Alabama's state flower, the camellia! The presenter, Hayes Jackson, has 300 different camellias in his garden. Camellias are well suited to central Alabama landscapes. The plants are tough once established and make excellent hedges, mass plantings, and foundation plantings. Camellias come in a bewildering number of varieties and can bloom from late August through April depending on species and variety. The program will focus on a variety of unusual and stalwart cultivars. Weather permitting and plants cooperating, there will be a nice display of blooms to ogle. Join us at 5 p.m. to discover the wonderful array of beautiful camellias and talk about camellia culture in central Alabama.

To reserve your spot, call Anniston Museum of Natural History at 256-237-6766. Reservations are required. Cost is \$5.00 per person or free to members. Payment is due at the time of registration and can be made by cash, check (made payable to Longleaf Botanical Gardens and earmarked for educational programs) or charge card in person or by phone.



Grow and Tell: a Celebration of Houseplants

Plants that spend the winter inside with us are especially appreciated during these cold, often dreary days.

A Sunday afternoon coffee has been planned to enjoy these interesting plants. Ferns, begonias, orchids, amaryllis, African violets, bromeliads and mixed containers are a few examples. The coffee will be at Longleaf Botanical Gardens, February 5, 2017, from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m.

We are asking you to help us with the display by bringing your favorite plant(s) to add to the collection. They will be tagged with their identification and the owner's name. We can all admire them and their owner can give advice on how to care for them.

Susan Gibbins, Master Gardener, Longleaf Botanical Gardens Board Member, and plant enthusiast will facilitate this event. There will also be plants for sale.

NOTE: CHANGE OF PLANS FROM THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER. Due to the possibility of a February weather event, which might cause a power outage that could be a disaster for plants left in the building overnight, we are changing the plan. Instead of plants being delivered ahead of time, please bring them with you when you come on Sunday afternoon.

From Our Advisor

Our new Master Gardener intern class is underway. We have 25 participants, and some of those are from as far away as Randolph and Cherokee Counties. Please welcome them and get them involved with our programs. We have one of the most organized and involved MG groups in the State, and they need to see the good work you do. Thank you to the Master Gardeners who spoke to the group last week for orientation and those who will be teaching or assisting with classes.

We received some generous sponsorships over the Christmas break that will help us complete our greenhouse at Cane Creek Community Gardens. Improvements have already begun, and I am sure Charlie would appreciate extra hands. Hopefully, this project will begin to take shape. Thanks to the volunteers who worked on some operational rules for the greenhouse. These can be amended, but it is great to having a working plan in place.

Longleaf Botanical Gardens continues to improve its garden areas and its educational offerings. I have seen several very interesting programs planned for 2017, and I hope you will support those. Check out and like their Facebook page for regular updates.

Earth Day for County 4th Graders is scheduled for April 17-19 and April 20 and 21 will be weather make up days. We'll begin planning for the event soon, so begin thinking about what days you can work and what events you like to work with. Master Gardeners host the Birds and Worms relay, and the teachers and students also appreciate the guides to lead them from one station to the next.

April 22 is the Botanical Gardens Plant Sale and the first day of The Downtown Farmers Market. Mark your calendars for these events.

We are still woefully short in our rainfall, and we can only hope that this will change in time for our growing season. I expect to see many tree and shrub deaths that have gone un-noticed during the winter. I already see many evergreen deaths. It was a brutally dry Fall, and Winter rains have only slightly improved our lot.

Arbor Day comes up in February, and there are multiple events planned. Check with the ACES office for specific dates and times for local events to celebrate with free trees!

Thank you for your work to improve our little area of the world!

David West

Fruit and Vegetable Production Meeting

Tuesday, February 28, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Cane Creek Community Gardens at McClellan.

Topics to be covered include: Muscadines, Cover Crops, Safe Food Handling, variety and selection. Q&A Session. Cost is \$3, including lunch

To register, contact the Calhoun County Extension Office at 256-237-1621

Lunch & Learn

There will be another great lineup of topics and speakers for this year's Lunch & Learn, a series of FREE gardening programs. The first session is April 26,

from noon -1p.m, at Cane Creek Gardens at McClellan, 77 Justice Avenue.

April 26, The Story of Alabama's Native Americans
Harry Holstein, JSU Professor of Archeology

May 24, Planting, Transplanting and Repotting
David Doggett, Jefferson County Master Gardener

Lunch & Learn is held the 4th Wednesday of each month and Cane Creek Gardens from noon- 1 p.m. Bring your own lunch!

**Dates and speakers are subject to change. Contact the Calhoun County Extension Office at 256-237-1621 to confirm.*



Daffodils are beginning to appear in Calhoun County



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