
MG SPROUTS

Calhoun County Master Gardener Newsletter: Volume 21, Issue 2

February 2020



Coral honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*

MG Calendar

- "A Gardener's Life," Public Library of Anniston-Calhoun County, 2 p.m., February 11, Sherry Blanton
- MG Board Meeting, 10:45 a.m., February 12, Cane Creek Community Gardens
- MG Business Meeting, 12 p.m., February 12, Cane Creek Community Gardens
- Two workshops for Third Thursday at Longleaf Botanical Gardens, 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., February 20
- Sprouts Deadline, February 25, 2020

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President's Message

February is here and it's a leap year, so you have an extra day to get things done!! On the farm, February is a month for planning pretty much the whole year as you await birthing season, planting season, and so much more. The cold, wet days of February give you time to reflect on the past year's successes and others... plus it gives you a chance to plan things differently where required.

A wise man once said, "To continue to do things the same way and expect different results is the definition of insanity." Change is a constant in life; and living requires us to change in many ways -- daily, monthly, annually. Once we stop looking to change, learn, or impact the lives of others in positive ways then we stop living our best lives!!! One of my pet peeves is to hear the words "that's the way we've always done it!" -- well, doing it wrong for so many years doesn't make it the right way nor the best way. I always strive to be an instrument of change and it wasn't always easy in a military career, but the impacts of change were evident to all involved.

As we begin this year of planning for the State Conference, I'm excited to see folks working hard, making changes in their normal ways of doing things, coming together and working together to make this a huge success for not only CCMG but for Calhoun County!!! We are all learning as we go in this process; but seeing so many of you step up, contribute your talents and skill sets with enthusiasm, helping other committees when needed and showing such willingness to serve our association has been very rewarding and quite overwhelming. These are the successes to focus on when others complain or nitpick our efforts. If you are not involved, I urge you to get involved, work alongside these amazing members, use your talents and learn from others. And in the end, we will all grow, learn from each other, and hold each other accountable; leading to success at showcasing our County to all the state's Master Gardeners.

Garden Inspiration

"Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace."
May Sarton

Plant of the Month from Emily Richardson

Ask me about my favorite plant, and I'm likely to name what's blooming at the time: winter, edgeworthia; earliest spring, rue anemone; summer, spigellia; fall, asters. My year-round favorite is coral honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*. (Front page photo) It blooms heavily in spring and sporadically year-round, even in January. It's carefree and has provided me numerous face-to-face encounters with hummingbirds. I have 'Major Wheeler', which is crimson with yellow stamens, a real showstopper. Now that I think of it, maybe I should try the yellow 'John Clayton'.

MG Happenings

Our monthly meeting is Wednesday, February 12 at noon. Our speaker will be Dr. Charles Mitchell, retired professor from Auburn University, and his topic will be "Camellias!" He has taught the MG training class on soils for years.

The interns will share lunch with us that day. If you can, please try to have your dish on the table at 11:50 so we can start right at noon. It will be a large group to feed. The interns will provide all the desserts and the drinks. The MGs will provide covered dish items. We are asked not to enter the classroom until 11:45 on class days.

Please join me Tuesday, February 11 at the Public Library of Anniston Calhoun County. Our program will be "A Gardener's Life" and we will discuss all the characteristics that define great gardeners (with hints how to get there.) The program begins at 2 p.m.; it is free. There are door prizes and refreshments. These programs count as CEUs for our members.

Our program committee is sponsoring a summer social for our July monthly meeting. We will have trivia contests to test our gardening know-how (with prizes), watermelon, and ice cream treats.

We have also planned a "Brag Book" PowerPoint. Please send via e-mail a picture of something in your garden you are proud of (one flower, a pond, a flower bed, a container garden, or a special tree or shrub). Everybody has a photo or two on their phone. Please send your photos to Janet Evans (or to me and I will pass them on to Janet). Start taking pictures now and join in the fun. Photos must be e-mailed in a jpeg format.

If you prefer to send your pics straight to Janet, her e-mail is in the directory. Please put "photos" in the subject line.

We do not often get to visit each other's gardens; this is an ideal way to share. Photos from any season are welcome. We need the photos by mid-June to give Janet time for her preparations. Thank you, Janet, for offering to compose the PowerPoint. We hope to see something from everyone's garden!

Sherry Blanton

Cane Creek Update from Skeeter Sims

For February:

- We have several special projects planned for this year. Many of these projects will have to be accomplished, weather permitting, during February/March. The Cane Creek Crew could use as many extra hands as possible to continue to make improvements to our home grounds. Our normal working day is Tuesday 8:30-12:30, but we are also trying to use Thursdays to assist interns in getting their 50 hours as soon as possible.
- February is expected to be wetter than normal; but our projects will continue -- empty, clean and organize Coke Shed; empty, clean, organize and repair equipment shed (prepare for painting and sealing leaks); pruning of all knockout roses and identifying those that require removal due to disease; annual servicing of all equipment; and many more items that are on our list to accomplish before Spring arrives.
- Welcome to our interns!! We have had several come out and help at Cane Creek --- what a great bunch of workers and we truly appreciate your help and getting to know you better in the future!!

Skeeter

MG Mystery Gardener

January's mystery gardener is Myra Gann. Lyn Webb, Dick Pritchett, and Skeeter identified this dedicated Master Gardener.

See if you can identify February's mystery gardener:

The gardener is from McDonough, Georgia.

This MG enjoys growing fruit trees and vegetables.

Other hobbies are horses and reading.

This MG's current occupation is the Education of Youth through 4-H

Our mystery MG lives in Alexandria, Alabama.

Sherry

February Recipe of the Month

PESTO PASTA SALAD

Our members requested this recipe when Angela brought it to a MG lunch. Adapted from an Ina Garten recipe. You can use homemade or store-bought pesto.

BASIC PESTO

2 Tablespoons Pine Nuts or Walnuts toasted
2 Cloves Garlic
1/2 cup Olive Oil
1/2 Cup Romano or Parmesan Cheese
2 Cups Basil

Process the garlic, add nuts, process those, then add the basil and process until well chopped. Pour in the olive oil and process everything until smooth, then add the cheese, salt and pepper to taste.

COOK 1 1/2 pounds pasta of choice al--dente, drained, tossed in 2T olive oil, and cooled.

PUREE : 1-1/2 Cups Pesto, 10 oz frozen chopped spinach, drained and squeezed dry. juice and zest of 2 lemons., and 1 tsp sugar.

ADD to puree 1-1/2 cups mayonnaise, and salt and pepper to taste; pulse to combine.

POUR the puree over the cooled Pasta. Add 1/2 cup of Romano or Parmesan cheese, and 1/2 cup of nuts.

STIR IN: 1-1/2 cups of frozen peas and desired amount of chopped sweet peppers and cherry tomato. Best served at room temperature.

From Our Advisor

It has been a sometimes warm, sometimes cold and really wet January. We had 3 large pines down in our yard on a stormy Saturday 2 weeks ago. Luckily, they were our neighbor's trees, so their clan and ours made a day's work of the big stuff. We'll be picking up sticks and pine cones for a while.

The Master Gardener intern class is underway with 24 students eager to learn. They are also eager to work, as they began reporting hours their 1st week. Skeeter tells me they are completing more work than he is planning at Cane Creek! Thank you to our interns for getting involved quickly and to each of you who are mentoring them. many thanks to Ruth and Lyn for facilitating the class. Everything is going smoothly.

Dr. Charles Mitchell taught our MG Soil Science class in January 29, and he will be back at our next meeting to talk about Camellias! Dr. Mitchell does a wonderful job with all his presentations, and I know you won't want to miss it. There will be many established MG's there, and 24 interns will be there. That will make for quite a crowd.

Our interns will be in class until 11:45, and they will need to get back to class promptly at 1:30. Please help us

stay on schedule by arriving ready for our meal and meeting, and then socializing outside the classroom as soon as our meeting is over.

There are several events coming up, so keep an eye on the MG calendar and mark your calendars. Our yearly Earth Day events are scheduled for April 20-24. We'll hope for the 20th and 21st, but please hold the other dates for weather make-up dates.

Linda McDaniel will begin sending your weekly update in February. That doesn't mean you won't get e-mail from me or Lisa, but most of your information will be in Linda's weekly MG Update.

Thanks for all you do!

David

Garden Tip

Invasive plants are hurting our economy, our land, and our gardens. With the help of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council, (www.invasive.org), learn to recognize the invasive plants in our area. These bullies need to be removed once growing and, more importantly, not planted in the first place. Does privet sound familiar? It is on the list.

Register for Alabama MG Conference

AMGA 2020 Conference registration is now available. Visit alabamamg.org, Just click on the 2020 Conference – Mobile, AL, link on the home page to be taken to the insert and the Planet Reg link.

Jacksonville Arbor Day Celebration

Friday 2/21, 3-6:30pm, on The Square in Jacksonville



2020 MG Board of Directors



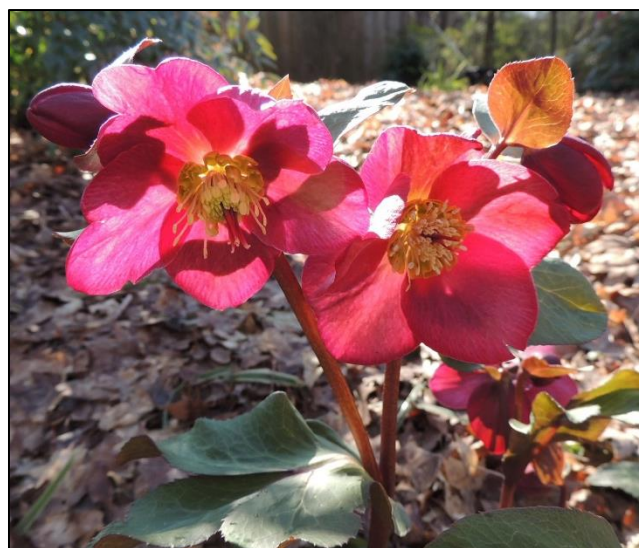
Skeeter gets a laugh at the first day of the intern class



Our over-70 MG gardeners just keep on gardening!



Master Gardener Intern class of 2020



It made my day when I noticed that Helleborus x hybridus 'Anna's Red' (Lenten Rose) was blooming. This perennial does well in the shade garden. The evergreen foliage is attractive and red stems hold outward facing burgundy red flowers. Absolutely stunning. Doris Baucom



Jerry Gilbert drops by to tell interns about the greenhouse and the Beekeepers club



Ellen Cannon invites the 2020 intern class to volunteer at Tree Amigos

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