
MG SPROUTS

Calhoun County Master Gardener Newsletter: Volume 21, Issue 5

May 2020



Janice Cain is back!

President's Message

Well, it's May and for now that means it's going to look a lot like April – physical distancing, socially connecting via electronic means, masks to protect yourself and others as well, no group gatherings in small enclosed spaces, and limited trips to town for groceries and essential items. The old saying “April showers, bring May flowers” might be true but what does May Flowers bring?? (answer at end) May is a month full of special times – Full Flower Moon is the 7th, after Cinco De Mayo, Mother's Day is 10th and we close out the month with Armed Forces Day (16th) and Memorial Day (25th) but for now those are just dates but we can still remember each of them in a unique way this year. I've written letters and sent them in the mail, call folks you haven't heard from in a while, connect via Teams/Zoom/Facetime with those that are distant and you miss seeing during special times. For now, we are in a wait and see mode in Calhoun County, numbers are still slow but have shown increases, hospitalizations really have not changed with statistical significance and reported deaths are still about the same for our state.

So what does all that mean for us as Master Gardeners – well for now we are not going to meet in our large group, not going to bring food to share, and maybe even not have our normal volunteer opportunities; BUT you can still learn – there are several great webinars offered by Alabama Extension branches (Alabama Smart Yards, Back to Basics, Trees, etc.) – all offered on Zoom via Auburn University and most are also transmitted on Facebook Live with recorded sessions posted later for viewing up to a month at a time. Check them out!! Our own Dani Carroll is hosting many great topics via Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards. Weekdays at 11:00 a.m. on Zoom/Facebook Live site. If you have run out of things to do around your house and yard, there are some great ideas every day on this webinar!! There is always something to do here on the farm!! Hopefully, everyone has planted their gardens by now – either in the ground, in containers, in straw bales or raised beds. I know I have probably planted way too much again but for now I have the time, right? Well that also means more weeding, more thinning, more pest management, more watering, more of everything --- maybe I should rethink the expansion of my garden with blueberry plants, blackberry trellises, and a few other ideas that come into my idle mind. I am always amazed at how planning the garden, working the soil, and even the planting and caring for it all is really therapy for other stressors in life. Sometimes I just lean on the fence and think how fortunate I am to be outside, being a steward of the land and animals on the farm and seeing the beauty of our world right in front of me!! So for now, y'all take care, be safe and keep washing yo' dirty hands!!

See y'all at the Creek! Answer: Pilgrims

Skooter

MG Calendar

- Alabama Smart Yards Webinar Weekdays at 11 am. Series schedule on the [Facebook page](#)
- Sprouts Deadline, May 25, 2020

In This Issue

President's Message	1
My Favorite Plant	2
MG Happenings	3
Recipe of the Month	3



Garden Inspiration

"Gardens are not made by singing 'Oh, how beautiful' and sitting in the shade."
— Rudyard Kipling

My Favorite Plant: From Sarah Sloan

"I have lost many of my favorite plants to the extreme heat and drought of recent years, but my Alabama Crotons have continued to thrive. This multi-stemmed shrub has bright green leaves with a silvery underside in spring and summer and orange foliage in fall. It is not a picky plant but does well in sun or partial shade, in well-drained to very dry soils, and in slightly acidic to very alkaline soils. An undemanding great addition to any garden!"



Alabama Croton

Master Gardener Laugh for May

Q. How do you know you're a master gardener?
A. You have a decorative container of compost on your kitchen counter.



Beauty from Cane Creek Garden, a charming crocus

MG Mystery Gardener

Mystery Gardener for April

Linda Wakefield stumped us all. I am pleased to learn she enjoys watching Jim garden. Go Jim!

Mystery Gardener for May

This gardener hails from upper state New York.

Working in public gardens is this volunteer's favorite part of gardening.

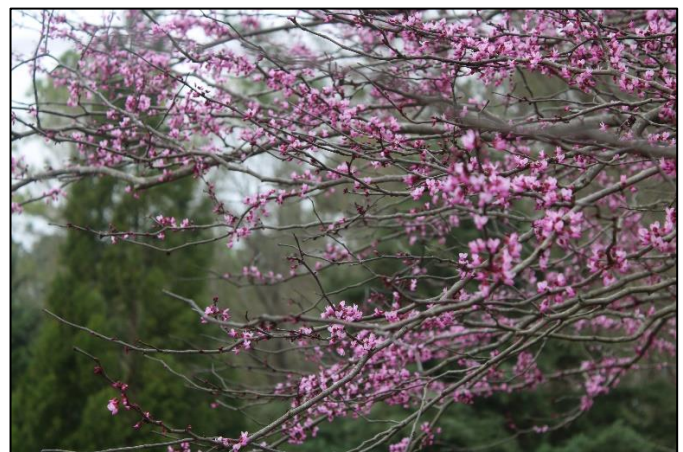
Other than gardening, this volunteer enjoys kayaking and dogs and volunteering at Second Hand Tails.

This person's profession before retiring was Training Developer for the United States Army.

This Master Gardener lives in Jacksonville.

Please e-mail Sherry if you can identify this long time Master Gardener.

Sherry Blanton



Redbud blooming at Cane Creek

MG Happenings by Sherry Blanton

Most things, including local plant sales, meetings, and Lunch and Learn so far have been cancelled. The gates at Cane Creek have been locked. To prevent confusion, no information will be provided about May's activities at this time. Please pay careful attention to updates from Linda McDaniel in her weekly e-mails to find out what is planned or what has been cancelled or rescheduled.

This time at home has offered a chance to spend extra hours in our own gardens. This is an ideal time to submit photos to me or Janet of your beautiful spring gardens for the July power point. Participation has not been good up to this point. Everyone has pictures of their gardens; additionally, we have many wonderful photographers in our group. Please share to allow our members to admire your gardens. All photos need to be sent in by May in an e-mail.

We may also be cleaning our houses. If you found a special craft object that no longer fits in your decor, please consider donating it to the craft boutique at Fall Fest.

I would like to thank all the Master Gardeners who attend my programs. Everyone has full calendars; thus, your choosing to be there becomes even more meaningful. It is great to see friendly faces; additionally, our Master Gardeners provide a greater knowledge base for our audience.

Paula and I are humbled and proud of the recognition by our Board for nominating Sprouts to receive a state award and actually receiving an award. The involvement of our members helps produce a great product; recipes, mystery gardeners, favorite plants, and our president's words are important parts of Sprouts.

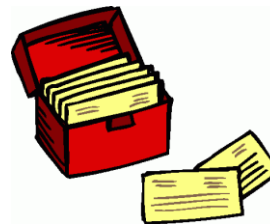
Aside from enduring all the horrible consequences of this terrible illness, on a humorous note: gardeners are having to go cold turkey as it is more difficult to run into Lowe's every day to see what is new. I look forward to seeing you there again soon.

Our community is also hoping our local farmers' markets get up and going so we can "Buy Local, Buy Fresh."



Cane Creek Crew hard at work

May recipe from Linda McDaniel



Linda has brought this soup to our meetings and folks have really praised it.

Cheeseburger Soup

Ingredients

- 1 lb. Ground Beef
- 4 Tablespoons Butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Chopped Onions
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Shredded Carrots
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Potatoes (about 4) Peeled and Cubed
- 3 Cups Chicken Broth
- $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup Corn Starch
- 1 lb. Velveeta Process Cheese – 1 inch cubes
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cups Whole Milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Teaspoon Salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Teaspoon Pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Sour Cream

Directions

- Cook and crumble ground beef until no longer pink, drain and set aside
- Add butter, potatoes, onions, carrots and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cover. Cook until potatoes are tender (about 15 to 20 minutes).
- Add ground beef, broth and bring to a boil.
- Mix corn starch with a little water. Add to soup.
- Reduce heat to low and stir in cheese, milk, salt and pepper. Cook until cheese has melted.
- Remove from heat, blend in sour cream and serve.

AMGA Awards Announcement

Congratulations to the following Calhoun County Master Gardeners for their respective awards:

Gold Badge: Nancy Gillespie, Linda McDaniel, Ruth Sarro, Judy Shew and Linda Wakefield.

Platinum Badge: Skeeter Sims, Sheila Webb and Marge Lyons.

Diamond Gem Stone: Patricia Patty.

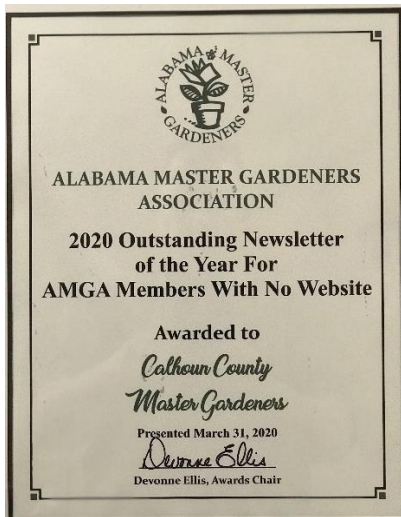
Calhoun County Master Gardeners also received a Project Funding Grant of \$1,000 for development of a native plant demonstration/educational garden (Sweet Tea Garden) at Cane Creek Community Gardens.

Calhoun County Master Gardeners home newsletter, SPROUTS, was also selected for 2020 OUTSTANDING NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR for organizations without their own website.

Congratulations to all for these awards and for making Calhoun County better through your efforts!



View from the bridge at Cane Creek (bridge built by Cane Creek Crew)



Lovely yellow Hyacinth from Cane Creek



Meet Master Gardener Intern Tanya Johnson

Calhoun County Master Gardener Officers

President:	Skeeter Sims
Vice President:	Linda Wakefield
Secretary:	Judy Shew
Treasurer:	Myra Gann
Members-at-Large:	Gary Lawson and Linda McDaniel

Sprouts is published by:

Master Gardeners of Calhoun County

Editor:	Paula Barnett-Ellis
Copyeditor/Proofreader:	Sherry Blanton
Advisor: Dr. David H. West, County Extension Coordinator	
Advisor: Mr. Hayes Jackson, Urban Regional Extension Agent	
Advisor: Ms. Dani Carroll, Regional Extension Agent	