

Chilton County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting
January 13, 2026
Clanton Recreation Center

Welcome

Hugh Nichols, President welcomed all to the first meeting of the new year and called the meeting to order at 9:02. Clem Clapp offered the Pledge of Allegiance.

Program

Sonja Johnson introduced the speakers: Lucy Ellington, Chilton County Extension Director and Jacob Turner, Extension Agent.

Lucy reported on the following activity for Extension with added information about each:

- Tree Giveaway February 24 (workday 9:00 am Extension office 2/23)
- Fig Propagation Workshop March 5 CREC
- Water Festival May 6-7 CREC
- Herbs and Spices Workshop June 10
- Pollinator Census August 21-22 (prep session June 30)
- Landowner Tour October 20 (alternate October 27)
- Classroom in the Forest November 12-13 (tentative)
- Cloverbud Winter Workshop December 15

Lucy reported these additional events are on the calendar for 2026:

- Johnny Appleseed Day
- Clanton Trick or Treat the Streets
- Farm City Program
- Leadership Chilton

Finally, Lucy mentioned many other activities for which Extension is involved:

4-H Clubs	Horse Club	Home School Club
School Clubs	Peach Pals	Chick Chain
4-H Youth Council	Forestry Club	Cloverbuds
Summer Day Camps	Teen Camp	Your Money. Your Life
iCook	Beef Cookoff	
Competitions (Club/School, County, Regional, State)		

Lucy thanked the Master Gardeners for their tremendous help in supporting the Extension activities. She said it would not be possible to accomplish notable results without the CCMGA.

Jacob reported some of the programs and offerings across his 6-county area of responsibility. Not all the workshops and presentations dates are finalized.

Lakeside Living	Gardening
Seed Starting Workshop	Pollinators
Homesteading	Garden 2 Pantry
Herbs	Hydroponics

Jacob then added detail on each of the following topics:

- State Veggie Variety Trials
- Alabama Smart Yards: Webinar 4th Wednesday January – November from 1:00 pm-2:00 pm.
- EMG Intern Class
- Extension-MG Update Zoom Meeting on the last Monday of each month, 1:00 pm, February through November

The membership applauded the presentations by Lucy and Jacob. Sonja presented a token of appreciation to both presenters and posed for pictures.

After a short break, Hugh led the meeting through the remainder of the agenda. At different times today, door prizes were won by Clem, Harriet, Kerry, Sonja, and Beverly.

Birthdays

January birthdays were Kimberly Hudson, Jane Rabey, Lee Walters, Leslie Durham, Imogene Bresse, and Becky Roper.

Secretary’s Report

Lanell Baker gave the report for December. The minutes were approved as electronically submitted.

Treasurer’s Report

Kerry Rush gave the financial report (included below).

December	For January Meeting
Beginning Balance	10,882.84
Total Deposits	1,060.00
Total Withdrawals	131.46
Total Checks	1,338.94
Net Balance Checking	10,472.44
Cash box	100.00
CD balance	8,555.15
Total	19,127.59

Kerry reminded the group how to request reimbursement and where to find the forms. A comment was made for the membership to ponder how funds could be used to benefit the Chapter and to honor the mission of the organization.

Kerry then reviewed the 2026 Budget (copy attached for permanent filing). To summarize, some line-item categories were renamed to more align with current operations. Slight changes in expenses were explained. The total 2026 budget (\$5,550) decreased from 2025 (\$5,900).

Motion made by Beverly Williamson to approve the 2026 budget as presented. Lynne May seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

Gardens Update

- Kerry gave the Demo Garden report. A pallet of Black Kow potting soil was purchased from Blackwell Nursery, which is going out of business. It is under the carport at the Demo Garden. Members may purchase a bag for \$5 each. If interested, pick up your supply and give the money to Kerry.
- Cal Alred gave the Extension Office report. The off-season continues but work should resume in February to begin removing dead branches, etc. to get ready for spring. The 2025 class of interns will be asked to continue the maintenance of the beds until the next class is ready to assume responsibility.
- Amy Baker gave the Clanton Recreation Center update. All is well. She thanked members for volunteering to water the beds (once a week is fine during the winter). The roses look better since they were pruned a couple of months ago, even showing signs of new growth without disease.

Conservation Group Report

Clem Clapp said the Owl's Eye Ginger plant tour will likely be in March to hopefully witness spring growth. He asked folks who had planted some to let Hugh or others know so that the location can be officially documented. A discussion about the Canebrake Pitcher Plant followed. Hugh said a visit to the primary site is January 19th. A follow-up prescribed burn is planned for the spring. Plans to develop a Canebrake bed at the Demo Garden is well underway.

Education Committee Report

Pat Farmer gave an update on the Junior Master Gardener Program with 4-H at S.P.A.N. (Student and Parent Academic Network). The program will begin March 2nd and continue almost weekly for eight weeks. There is a mandatory planning meeting for coordinators and volunteers on January 14th.

Peach Award

Peggy McGraw is the recipient of this month's Peach Award. She was recognized by Amy Baker "for consistently stepping up in an unassuming way to help anyone with anything." A picture was taken.

Master Gardener of the Year

Trisha Williams led the secret ballot voting for the MG of the Year Award. There were seven candidates. Qualifications are attendance at 75% or greater of the membership meetings and 100 hours of combined service/CEUs. Ballots were distributed and collected. An announcement will be made at a future meeting.

Other Topics

Helpline

Beverly Williamson thanked those that had volunteered to monitor the Helpline. To facilitate continued success, she will now have a sign-up sheet at the monthly meetings. She volunteered to insert the volunteers on the website schedule and to be available for anyone that needs a refresher on how to handle and record the calls.

2026 Volunteer Activities

Trisha Williams distributed the updated master list of volunteer activities. The information included the month/date, the activity, and the contact person of responsibility. New this year is that Trisha included the reference for where to report volunteer hours for the respective activity in the online Service Report. (A copy of the Chilton County Master Gardener Volunteer Activities will be filed with the minutes.)

Plant Sale is April 11th

Trisha Williams provided several tips and reminders for a successful Plant Sale. Volunteers are a must. Let Trisha know where you can serve. More coordination and work are upcoming in the next couple of months to get ready.

Skip Coulter will again host the Country Store at the Plant Sale. He gave some pointers and encouraged all to participate in donating items for sale.

Seed Exchange

Hugh Nichols has a vision to explore a Seed Exchange for members (and others). He asked for volunteers to develop the concept and to consider logistics for such an activity. Volunteers are Amy, Peggy, Skip, Sharon, Lynn, Sam, and Trisha.

Youth Protection

Jacob Turner reminded the members that if they work with children or youth while volunteering that Auburn requires an annual Youth Protection training. The content is online

and takes about twenty minutes to complete. He will provide a link for members to comply with this requirement. Jacob also announced that an annual MOU is not required this year since there were no changes. He encouraged members to review what was already on file.

Adjournment

Before the meeting ended Hugh mentioned some ways the monthly meeting could close. He paid tribute to the trivia that Skip faithfully prepared and led each month. One idea is Garden Sharing (in fact several members mentioned what was happening in their garden right now). After a bit of discussion, it was decided that for February the group would share their best or latest garden read.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:15.

Donald Jones, Secretary