

Chilton County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting

March 10, 2026

Clanton Recreation Center

Welcome/Pledge of Allegiance

Hugh called the meeting to order at 9:30. Clem led the Pledge of Allegiance to open the meeting.

Today's Program

Sonja introduced today's speaker, Deborah Kelso. The topic was, "Teas, Tinctures, and Salves." Debbie started the program with an introduction and a short bio. Her career included serving as a nurse in pediatric, home health, hospice, occupational, and military units. She hails from the Central Alabama Master Gardener Association. Debbie is working on her Advanced MG Certification in "History of Herbs in the South."

There were four display tables of supplies, herbs, admixtures, concoctions, beakers, tea kettles, samples, and even an electric double boiler where Debbie made a first aid salve as she spoke. It is not possible by the written word to capture the depth of knowledge, personal experience, and passion that Debbie displayed. She taught about the variety and origins of teas displaying many forms and ways to brew them. Debbie then described simple to complex types of salves. Lastly, she noted four bases to tinctures: alcohol, vinegar, glycerin, and oil. After the presentation, the members were invited to the tables to taste samples and to smooth on their skin the various creations.

The group applauded Debbie's presentation and Sonja presented her with a commemorative token of appreciation.

Hugh announced a break at 10:37.

After the break (and for the rest of the meeting) door prizes were won by Diane, Cal, Donald, Martha, Peggy, and Pat.

Secretary's Report

The February minutes were distributed electronically and posted to the website. They were accepted without changes.

Treasurer's Report

Kerry said that there were only two minor changes since last month. The checking account balance is \$10,561.25. Total assets are \$19,216.40. The treasurer's report was accepted.

Garden Reports

Demo Garden workdays began last Thursday. Weeding, removal of dead growth, and straightening the beds are underway. But much work remains and all were urged to lend a hand next Monday at 8:00. The schedule of first and third Mondays is in place.

Hugh said the laying of commemorative bricks has started in one section of an entrance walkway. More work is needed, but the early results are encouraging.

Hugh added that Jacob had brought the seed study seeds with him today. Kerry has the seeds for distribution to those that have agreed to participate.

Extension bed update was given by Cal. The working yesterday (March 9th) was productive with major pruning and weeding. Spraying for weeds and more pruning is scheduled for March 23rd.

Rec Center beds will have a workday also on March 23rd to follow the *Extension* working. Plans are underway for replacement bedding plants and groundcover. Amy thanked members for continuing to volunteer for watering.

Conservation Group Report

Hugh said the prescribed burn at the Clanton Flats was a success. He continues to take monthly pictures of the Alabama Canebrake Pitcher Plants to help document progress.

Clem talked about Owl's Eye Ginger Plant viewings in several locations. More information in April.

Hugh thanked David for planting Moore's Barbara's Button plants. He had a one-gallon container full of new plants. They require alkaline soil. Lynne will try her hand at planting these and raising more. Plants are also at the Demo Garden.

Education Committee Report

Skip gave a report of the first Junior Master Gardener class on March 2nd. The participants were enthusiastic and loved the hands-on activity in the soil for container gardening. He encourages everyone to be involved, even if you're not the leaders of the session.

Kerry and Sonja presented yesterday on Soils and Composting. Kerry suggested telling the students about your experience as a Master Gardener to help inspire future learners. The science and nature involved brings out the best in all.

Lanell is leading the next lesson on seed starting (3/16). Amy will demonstrate the block method of starting seeds. Hugh will be assisting.

Hugh said the Fig Propagation workshop was a success. All participants had at least a dozen fig cuttings treated differently to see how various treatments affected rooting. It was a fun outing, and everyone learned a lot from Edgar Vinson. Lucy Ellington played a major role in the success.

As a reminder, the Aldridge Garden tour is set for April 8th at 1:00. A trip to Sugar Hill strawberry farm is planned the week of May 4th. Details to come.

Peach Award

Amy presented this month's Peach Award to Trisha Williams. "Trisha works tirelessly on all aspects of the Master Gardener program." Others added that you can always count on Trisha to be prepared and to help anyone at anytime with anything. Congratulations, Trisha!

Plant Sale

Trisha thanked all the volunteers that already had assignments. She covered several areas that still needed help. Sign up sheets circulated the room. Trisha reminded the membership about tips for preparing and displaying plants, for labeling, and for selling. Trisha and Skip said Country Store items can be brought the day of the sale (April 11th) or to the storage room at CREC. As the single fundraiser for the year, the CCMGA Plant Sale is a vital part of the success of the Chapter. Sausage biscuits, coffee, and water will be available. The sale begins at 9:00 but volunteers are to be on-site at 7:00.

Other

- There are volunteer opportunities for Ask a Master Gardener at Garrison's (every Saturday till mid-May), Walmart Garden Center Open House (3/21), and Friends of Chilton County Animals fundraiser (3/28). Reach out to those in charge to sign up.
- Lucy presented volunteer opportunities for Your Money, Your Life this Thursday (3/12) at CCHS, 4k for 4H (4/4), and The Water Festival (5/7-8).
- Beverly reminded the group about the Helpline sign-up sheet and thanked those that are stepping up.
- Hugh mentioned the new seed exchange program and suggested folks keep the windowed envelopes that come with bills in which to store the seeds.
- There is part- and full-time employment opportunities if interested at Mountainview Orchards and Smitherman Nursery (formerly Blackwell's).
- The group thanked Beverly Williamson for her role in the recent PBS broadcast of Alabama Agriculture. She represented Chilton County very well!
- Sonja said Keith Evans has plastic sheeting to donate if anyone has a need.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:40.

Donald Jones, Secretary