

Chilton County Master Gardeners Meeting  
April, 14, 2026

Clem Clapp opened our meeting with the Pledge to our Flag at 9:30 AM.

Sonja Johnson, Vice-president, introduced our guest speaker and program for today, Dr. Richard Cybulsky. Retiring after 37 years as an OB-GYN doctor he became a Master Gardener in Jefferson County in 2014. He earned a Certificate of Native plants in 2018, in 2021 he became an Alabama Extension Advanced Master Gardener, in 2025 he became an Alabama Extension Master Naturalist, and he is a member of the Alabama Master Gardeners speakers' bureau. He volunteers at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, is manager at Vestavia Hills corner garden and is a volunteer landscape consultant.

While volunteering at The Birmingham Botanical Gardens he became interested in how to bring butterflies back into the garden. He chose butterflies as his project for his Advanced Master Garden program.

His program explained the different types of butterflies and their needs to keep reproducing. He discussed the types of flowers they need to lay eggs on for the larvae to eat and plants the adults need for nectar to have energy to fly. Choosing the right plants is very important. He explained the life cycle of the butterfly.

1. Eggs
2. Larvae (caterpillar)
3. Pupa (Chrysalis)
4. Adult butterfly

It takes approximately two weeks to complete the life cycle.

He explained the Milkweed plants were great for laying the eggs on and for the nectar plants any plant is good. They do not have a mouth so the adult depends on suction from a tube to feed with. The caterpillar eats all day.

He explained we need to leave some leaf mulch or other shelter for them to over winter in. This was a very good and informative program that was enjoyed by all.

Before our break we presented Jacob Turner with a table of baby shower gifts for their baby due in May.

Lanell Baker, substituting for Donald Jones, as secretary asked for any correction or changes to the minutes. There being none the minutes were approved as posted on our web site.

Kerry Rush, treasurer, reported we collected just under \$3200.00 at our plant sale. Final total will come when all invoices for the sale have been reported. The financial report is listed below.

March 2026

Beginning balance	\$10,561.25
Deposits	0.00
Withdrawals	0.00
Total checks	228.01
Net Balance Checking	10,333.24
Cash box	100.00
CD balance	8,555.15
TOTAL	\$18,988.39

The financial report was approved as presented.

Kerry Rush, advisory council member, reported the next advisory council meeting will be April 21, 2026, 10:00 AM, at the Clanton Recreation Center. Everyone is welcomed to come.

There was some discussion on how to improve our plant sale for next year.

Birthdays for the month of April were Teresa Freeman and Wally Walters.

Door prizes: First prize to Martha Wright, second prize to John Higginbotham and third prize to Hugh Nichols.

Gardens:

Demo garden was fertilized by David and Martha Wright. We need more volunteers to work. The Research Center is having tours and those people also come and tour our garden.

Extension Office is looking good. Put out fresh pine straw.

Recreation Center beds are looking pretty. City has said they will water the bed around the sign and the big pot in front. We will be changing out the Pansies on April 27<sup>th</sup> with summer annuals.

Conservation Group:

Clem Clapp, Sonja Johnson and Hugh Nichols had a great time checking out the Owl's Eye Ginger (*Hexastylis speciosa*) on the tour Clem Clapp organized. They were joined by Mkala Motley, Geological Survey of Alabama, Kelly Cole, Atlanta Botanical Garden, and Jordan Bralley of the Alabama Natural Heritage Program. They viewed the Owl's Eye Ginger plants at Gay and Trisha's family home place before moving on to Clem and Diane's farm to view more of the Owl's Eye Ginger plants. They got to see how a plant sample is vouchered (pressed) as a record of the plant species to be saved in the state Herbarium.

Hugh reported the Canebrake Pitcher plants, after the controlled burn, will have bunches of blooms.

David and Martha Wright seeded a flat of the Mohr's Barbara Button plants in their seeding chamber. These cannot be sold but will be given away for people to plant.

Education Committee:

A great time was had by each one attending the Aldridge Garden tour. Aldridge Gardens will be having a plant sale April 16 and 17, 2026 if anyone is interested.

Our new Master Gardeners class will start in August at the CREC center, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM.

Junior Master Gardener has only two more sessions remaining.

We told Keith Evans' of Sugar Hill Farms we'd come out on a field trip to the farm. The day and time will be announced later.

Our next meeting will be our annual plant swap. Judy Cobb has graciously invited us back to her home for this meeting. Bring a lunch, a plant to swap, a lawn chair and come early if you want to fish, play games or hike. We will have a short meeting at 11:00 AM, eat and swap plants.

Volunteer opportunities:

We will have the Ask-a-Master Gardener table at Garrison Farm thru April, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Pat is going to talk to the manager of the garden center at Wal-Mart about the possibility of setting up an Ask-A-Master gardener station.

Helpline, there is a signup sheet on the table for this.

Pat needs volunteers to help make water bracelets on April 29, 2026 at 9:00 AM for the Water Fest. We have 400 bracelets to make. Water Fest is May 7 and 8, 2026.

Hugh also shared about the seed swap box that is set up in the Extension Office. If you have seeds to share please place them in a white windowed envelope so you can see the seeds and label them.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:14AM.

Members present: 18 Visitors: 5 Total present 23

Minutes submitted by Lanell Baker in the absences of secretary, Donald Jones