

GARDEN THYMES



Master Gardeners of North Alabama, Inc.

First Quarter 2022

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 2021 Christmas Social
- 2021 Awards
- 2022 Officers and Directors

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MGNA Celebrates 2021 with Holiday Party and Awards Ceremony

By Barbara Stansky (w17)

MGNA celebrated 2021 with a beautiful potluck dinner and awards ceremony on December 9 at the Community Fellowship Baptist Church in South Huntsville. The well-attended event began with appetizers and an opportunity to peruse and bid on the many quality items available in the Silent Auction. Bids closed promptly at 6:30 PM and members enjoyed the many tasty entrees, sides, and desserts offered on the buffet line.

Following the dinner segment, winners of the Silent Auction were announced, and the Awards Ceremony began. Master Gardener of the Year was awarded to Soozie Pline. Group Project of the Year was Lewter's Adopt-A-Spot in downtown Huntsville under the guidance of Helen Carr. Lifetime Achievement award was presented to Elouisa Stokes. Intern of the Year was presented to Carlita Edwards. The New Initiative Award was presented to Josie Asquith. Community Fellowship Baptist Church and



Allyson and Owen Hofer share a laugh with President Janet Booth

Morris Elementary were honored with the Friend of Master Gardeners award.

In addition to honoring this year's winners of the different categories, several interns were recognized for completing their hours. Recognized Interns were Holly Christensen (2019), Lorraine Herel (2019), Colleen Innes (2020), Paula Eggert (2020), Janice Davis (2021), Maria Cayse (2021), Ken Johnson (2021), Jackie Johnson (2021), Elaine Hubbard (2021), Dawn Nelson (2021), Carlita Edwards (2021) and Anita Reeves (2021).

Jane R. Parks grants were awarded to Huntsville Madison Public Library, Riverton Elementary School, and Horizon Elementary School.

Jean Lee oversaw the installation of the 2022 MGNA Board of Directors. The mem-

bership of MGNA was encouraged to volunteer to support the leadership as well as the various MGNA projects.

On a lighter note, an "award" was presented to Rhonda Britton to honor her enthusiastic dedication to the Alabama football and the Million Dollar Marching Band! Members autographed a bucket that sported the famous Alabama logo to honor Rhonda's support of her handsome son, a senior at Alabama and a proud member of the Million Dollar Marching Band.

In addition to being just good old-fashioned fun, the Silent Auction gave members an incentive to mingle and chat as they viewed the items. The auction generated more than \$1200 that will be utilized to fund our many great community projects next year.

Many thanks to everyone that contributed in any way to make this evening a success!



Pictures of our award winners on page 2

MGNA 2021 AWARD WINNERS

Pictures by Jean Lee

Presentations by Stephanie Boyd unless noted otherwise





**Seated: Officers: L to R: Barbara Stansky, Susan Beam, Liz Gould and Janet Boothe
Back Row: Board Directors: Carol Weand, Jim Mullen, Candy Trowbridge
(Not pictured: Carolyn Wade, Walt Lindblom and Paul Gohmann)**

MGNA 2022 Officers and Board of Directors

Article and Picture by Jean Lee (W95)

Newly elected Officers for the Year 2022 and Board Directors were installed at the December 9th Christmas Social. Janet Boothe will serve a second term as President. Liz Gould was installed as Vice President, along with Susan Beam as Secretary and Barbara Stansky as Treasurer. A special thank you to Soozie Pline, who served as Vice President for 2021. Officers serve a one year term, and can be re-elected to serve a second term.

Newly installed Board Directors include Candy Trowbridge and Carolyn Wade who will serve a one year term (2022), replacing the unexpired terms of Susan Beam and Barbara Stansky. Jim Mullen will serve a two year term (2022 and 2023), replacing the unexpired term of Liz Gould. Paul Gohmann and Carol Weand were installed for three year terms, ending in December 2024. Continuing his three year term is Walt Lindblom. A special thank you to Connie Carr for her service as a Board Member. Board Members serve a three year term, unless filling the unexpired term of a current board member.

As stated during the installation, please volunteer to support this team to help MGNA continue to make a difference in our community as we educate the public on the latest techniques in horticulture.



**MGNA PRESIDENT
Janet Boothe (W06)**

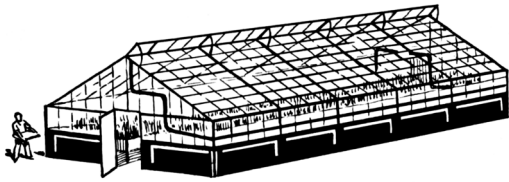
A Word from the Prez

We have put our gardens to bed, the leaves are raked, and our hoes and trowels have been cleaned and put away. We know that winter is here. All I see as I look at my vegetable and flower gardens are stalks of what once bloomed and plants that are now dormant. What did not get done in 2021 goes on my 'to do' list for 2022 with hope that they will not be forgotten, again. Thank you, Carol Weand, Jim Mullen and Paul Gohmann, for volunteering to serve as new Board Directors. A huge thank you to Liz Gould for stepping up and taking on the Vice President position.

To those of you who worked so hard and put in countless hours this past year without much recognition, thank you! Each one of you played an important role in the success of MGNA. Let's all make a New Year's resolution that during 2022 we will continue to work together to make MGNA the most active MG organization in Alabama. Look in the front of your Membership Handbook and pick any project or committee that interests you, then call the Chair(s) of that project(s) or committee(s). We need your help!

I look forward to seeing each of you at our next meeting January 13th at 11:30am at Murray Hall. Our February and March meeting will also be at the same time and same place.

President,
Janet Boothe



Tales from the Greenhouse

By Paula Eggert (W20)

in Corroboration with Josie Asquith (1984), Master Gardener Greenhouse Manager

While the volunteers at the Morris greenhouse wait in anticipation for the move to the new greenhouse, they continue to parent many different plants. One big project spearheaded by the group of volunteers is growing the ever-popular succulents. Why have succulents become so favored as the choice of plant for so many to adorn their homes? Succulents require minimal attention with infrequent watering and no exceptional care, and some succulent plants continue thriving when neglected. Gardeners who are not blessed with a green thumb or kill every plant they ever try to grow can have great luck in growing succulents.

Succulents are remarkably hearty plants that communicate their happiness or unhappiness in a couple of ways.

Light:—Most succulents grow best in bright light. Some thrive in full sun; others prefer shade. Most of our greenhouse succulents have done well in bright indirect sunlight. When we notice a plant turning pale yellow or with scorched areas, it could be a sign the plant is receiving too much direct light and the plant may need to be moved.

Water:—Proper watering is the hardest part of successful succulent plant care. The #1 mistake gardeners make with succulents is overwatering. They hate wet feet! A clear sign of overwatering is mushy or wilting leaves, or leaves turning yellow or brown. Allowing the soil to dry between waterings is the key to keeping succulents happy.

We are currently propagating and growing various kinds of succulents in the greenhouse including aloes, kalanchoes, ha-worthia, echeveria, sempervivum (hens and chicks), and sedum.



The ha-worthia, with their textured, spikey leaves, are looking great in their clay pots. As you can see in this photo many already have pups and may soon be ready to divide.



Echeveria plants come in a range of different shapes and colors, but they all have a striking rosette appearance. We are lucky to have many beautiful echeveria, which were generously donated by one of our members, and then divided into single clay pots by our volunteers.



Sempervivum sometimes called houseleeks or 'hen and chicks,' are well-known by their rosette shape and brightly colored, pointy leaves. They are easy to care for, very hardy, and can grow indoors or out.

Continued on Page 11. . .

FALL FLORAL ARRANGEMENT WORKSHOP

By Carol Milton (W08) and pictures by Brenda Tapp (W98)

In late November, the MGNA Workshop Committee offered our first in-person workshop in almost two years at the Butterfly House classroom of the Huntsville Botanical Garden. This was a fall floral arrangement that could be used at our Thanksgiving holiday. The 22 available seats were snapped up immediately when registration opened. The wonderful presenters were from The Huntsville Florist on Franklin Avenue, Millie Jones, owner, and Joe, a designer.

The evaluations indicated the participants enjoyed the presentation with much enthusiasm. We were all surprised to be able to take home not just one beautifully self-created fall table arrangement but also a vase of mixed colorful flowers arranged with eye appeal.

It was great to be able to take part in a live, hands-on workshop again, and the workshop committee is looking forward to offering more of them in 2022.



Diane Rogers (W20) and Susan Beam (F17)



Pam Price (F98), Doty Henry, Rosie Rymut (W06), Loretta Stinnett



Our 2021 Master Gardener Canadian Rocky Mountain Trip

By Ameree Young (F13)

Our International Master Gardener trip organized by Sandra Pape was a wondrous journey through the Canadian Rockies.

Day 1, Sept 16, was a free day spent exploring Seattle's Pike Place Market, a Japanese garden, and other sights.

Friday, Sept 17, we boarded a bus, crossed the Canadian border, then boarded a super ferry and crossed the Puget Sound to Victoria.

We spent Saturday touring the world famous Butchart Gardens where we saw beautiful plants blooming in many landscaped areas of the botanical garden. Some members of the group enjoyed delicious High Tea consisting of bite size sandwiches, scones, sweets and different teas.

On Sunday, we rode the bus to Vancouver and toured Van Dusen Botanical Gardens, and the University of British Columbia Japanese Garden.

In Vancouver, we boarded the Rocky Mountaineer train and traveled to Kamloops, BC arriving late to our hotel.

The second and final day of the train trip, we boarded the train again and traveled to Banff, Alberta. We saw many stunning vistas of the Rocky Mountains and traveled through spiral tunnels. There was also lots of wildlife such as deer, bald eagles, mountain goats and salmon running in the rivers. The waters of River Fraser and Thompson were filled with dangerous rapids.

We arrived in Banff late on September 21st, and the next day toured the region with our awesome bus driver, Bob. We toured two national parks, Banff and Yoko. We visited two lakes, Louise and Emerald and our final day was spent touring a glacier at the Columbia Ice Field. We rode to the glacier in the Ice Explorer, and came back down the mountain to Sky Walk which was a glass observation deck. We finished our time in Banff with a gondola ride and seeing a beautiful waterfall and a very old castle hotel.

Our bus carried us to Calgary that afternoon of September 24th where we checked into our hotel. Some members of our group did walking tours of the city, and took an elevator to the top of Calgary Tower to see the 360 degrees views of the city.

We had three Covid tests on the trip to ensure all nineteen members of our group were all Covid free and remaining healthy for the trip.



Left to Right: Owen Hofer, Allyson Hofer, Al Stokes, Elouisa Stokes, Jerry Householder, Jessica Thornburg, Patti Householder, Cindy Hearn, Ann Tippi, Ameree Young, Mary Reumann, Dorla Evans, Bill Young, Mike Cantor, Marcia Cantor, Sandra Pape, Libby Loose, Jack Loose, Betty Richardson



Barbara Stansky (W18) MGNA Treasurer

Barbara Knight Stansky spent her childhood and most of her adult life in the Coastal Plains of South Carolina - where the soil is rich, black, and loamy! Her school reports were always geared towards the natural sciences and accompanied by elaborate poster drawings. She was constantly starting new flower beds (without permission!) and filling every available container with a plant. Her father finally gave in and cleared space for a large vegetable garden. He invested in a 1956 Minneapolis Moline tractor and the small family farm in Timmonsville, SC was born.

The garden thrived with an abundance of summer vegetable crops! Even after filling two large freezers of produce for the family of five, there was still a great excess of produce. Barbara's entrepreneurial spirit began at a very early age, and she was soon selling vegetables from the backyard. In a tiny town of one thousand people, the opportunity to stop by and purchase a few freshly picked cucumbers and tomatoes for an evening supper was welcomed. Barbara's little backyard produce stand was complete with a little ticket book, a scale, and a handwritten poster of the day's offerings and prices. Her price points were based on the current Farmer's Market prices listed daily in *The Florence Morning News*. Word of the quality produce spread and soon the managers of two grocery stores in nearby Florence, SC were coming over to buy bushels of corn, butterbeans, and peas! That early introduction into the world of retail grocery resulted in a lifetime career of working in the retail grocery environment as a sales representative for national brands of food products.

Barbara graduated high school and then attended Francis Marion College in Florence, SC. Her early adult years were filled with the busyness of rearing two sons and working full-time. With major life changes and an empty nest, Barbara eventually found time in the '90s to attend the Master Gardener class through Clemson University.

She met Mike in 2003 and they married in 2004. They had both prayed to meet someone that would share the love of gardening and the outdoors, which is a good lesson that we should be careful what we pray for! They built a beautiful and elaborate garden in Whiteville, NC that gave them hours of pleasure. When they moved to Madison County in 2014, Barbara loaded every single landscaping stone they had purchased and moved them here as well! She knows from experience that they weigh eleven pounds each!

After settling into a home in Harvest in 2016, Mike and Barbara once again found a large project to fill their hours. They cleared a heavily wooded area on their property and created walking paths that meander along the creek. The project is ongoing, and the to-do list is endless!

Barbara completed the ACES Master Gardener class in Winter 2018 and has been an active board member since 2018. She currently serves as the MGNA Treasurer. She holds board positions with Newcomers Club of Greater Huntsville and the Madison County Homemakers and Community Leaders as well.

Mike works in Alaska, but they enjoy spending their time together boating, traveling, and working on their gardening projects. Barbara's favorite pastime is "treasure hunting" and finding interesting pieces for her antique booth. Mike and Barbara enjoy a combined family of five adult children and five grandchildren, none of whom live nearby so there are many road trips to visit the Grands! They recently enjoyed a trip to Alaska and their next goal is to explore the New England states. Life is an adventure, and they plan to enjoy every possible moment!

Please share this flyer with anyone interested in the Master Gardener program.



February 3rd – May 5th | Thursdays
9:30-11:30 AM & 1:00-2:30PM

Do you love plants? Do you love to volunteer your time? Then you are a great candidate for Master Gardener Intern Training! You do not have to be a garden expert. Simply come with a desire to learn to grow!

Early Registration: November 3 – December 18, 2021 - The cost is \$150

Regular Registration: December 20 – January 23, 2022 – The cost is \$200

For more information contact

Rhonda Britton at 256-690-8979

Rcb0003@auburn.edu

ONLINE REGISTRATION:

<https://www.aces.edu/go/2022springMGclass>

Extension
Volunteers



Alabama
Master
Gardeners
aces.edu

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Morris Elementary School

Pictures and Article by Carolyn Wade (W12)

Master Gardener volunteers have spent Tuesday mornings mentoring 5th grade students at Morris Elementary school. The students are taught about the environment, recycling, gardening, and so much more. Bird feeders were made and monitored. An assistant from Rose of Sharon spoke to the children about the soup kitchen, who benefits from the soup kitchen and how the donated food is used. The students then harvested their fall crops and donated the produce to the Rose of Sharon soup kitchen. The students have begun propagating herbs and perennials for their spring plant sale, hopefully to be held in early May. Students and volunteers finished the semester by making Christmas ornaments from okra and gourds, grown in their garden. If you would like to join us on Tuesdays, we meet with the students from 1130 to 1230. We hope to start back in mid-January.



Tales from the Greenhouse, continued from page 5

Hampton cove Middle School donated plants to our greenhouse including several varieties of sedum. Even though the plants spent weeks in shallow pots and plastic bags, after being dug up, transported, and then waiting to be repotted, the plants are flourishing. These sedum plants are a perfect example of succulents that thrive on neglect!



Josie Asquith has shown the greenhouse volunteers how to propagate the succulents through stem cutting, leaf cutting, and division (including removing and transplanting the pups/offsets). With leaves and stems, it's best to let them callous over before planting. Since we can't bear to throw anything away, we have taken EVERY LAST leaf and stem, no matter how small, and are working to propagate all.

Succulent Fun Fact

Since we're in the holiday season, we can't forget about the Thanksgiving cacti and Christmas cacti! So are these plants succulents? Yes, they are, but are not true cactus. The Christmas cactus and Thanksgiving cactus aren't completely drought tolerant. These plants grow in tropical rain forests and need a constant water supply to imitate its natural habitat, which is why you should water them as soon as the soil feels dry. These cacti flower best when slightly potbound and don't often need repotting. With proper care, Christmas and Thanksgiving cacti can live for 20-30 years! Now that's a gift that keeps on giving.



At the greenhouse, we're enjoying our gorgeous Thanksgiving Cactus.



Murphy's Law—Gardener's Version

Author unknown but is most likely a pessimist!

Whichever garden tool you want is always at the back of the shed.
The only way to ensure rain, is to give the garden a good soaking.
Weeds grow at precisely the rate you pull them out.
Nothing ever looks like it does on the seed packet.
Autumn follows summer, winter follows autumn, drought follows planting.
The only way to guarantee some color all year round is to buy a garden gnome.
However bare the lawn, grass will appear in the cracks between the patio paving stones.





Reminder

As you purchase items from Amazon remember to go through Smile Amazon – smile.amazon.com. Pick Master Gardeners of North Alabama as your charity. Amazon will give us a percentage of your purchase. In November we had **\$173.99**.

Thank you for using Amazon Smile!



You're making a difference!



Your current charity
Master Gardeners of North Alabama Inc
has received

\$173.99
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www.smile.amazon.com

JANE R. PARKS MEMORIAL GRANTS AWARDED AT MGNA CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

By Janet Boothe (W06), Pictures by Jean Lee (W95)



Suzanne presented the grant check to Horizon's Jessica Schmauch, Gifted Specialist

The Jane R. Parks Memorial Grant was established in 2012 as a memorial to a mother who was also a MGNA member. This grant supports educational horticultural projects in Madison County.

The 2021 recipients of the grant were: **Horizon Elementary School** - Their goal is to provide longer term horticultural experiences to the students. With a watering system, they will be able to maintain their projects through school breaks and interruptions. **Huntsville Madison Public Library** – Their goal is to plant additional native plants, vegetables, herbs, flowers and shrubs to create a pollinator garden and develop an array of learning experiences for children. **Riverton Elementary School** – Their mission is to provide an Outdoor Classroom that is conducive to outdoor learning experiences that relate directly back to the curriculum taught in the classrooms.

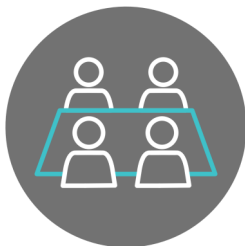
The Grant committee is comprised of Janet Boothe, Sue Bish and Suzanne Kirkhuff. Donations to the Jane R. Parks Memorial Grant are deeply appreciated and are tax deductible.



Sue presented the grant check to Madison Library's Cindy Hewitt, Assistant Branch Manager



Sue presented the grant check to Riverton's Haley James, Principal



NOVEMBER ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWS

By Elouisa Stokes (1981)

Advisory Council met on November 3 in Jemison, Alabama. Liz Gould, the new representative in 2022 from MGNA, and I attended. The main speaker was Michael Durban who spoke about the new Agricultural Center being built in Clanton. It will have room for many types of venues and events. In addition, Roger Clark talked about the new Transformation Garden at Auburn. He has challenged all the Master Gardeners to send a donation for it to allow Auburn to name the pathway in the garden, Master Gardeners Way. Debbie Boutelier was elected chair of the Advisory Council. Kerry Smith reported that the state-wide project will transition from food to horticultural therapy. Harvest for Health will complete its work in 2023 but the hope is that associations will continue this good work. Intern fees after December 19 will be \$200 for the new interns. The meeting ended with a great pot luck.



The Demonstration Vegetable Garden Article and Pictures by Susan Parker (F17)

The Demonstration Vegetable Garden (DVG) has transitioned from summer crops to fall crops. Cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, collards and mustard have replaced lima beans and cowpeas. There is a colorful patch of lettuce from the light green Black Seeded Simpson to the burgundy Red Salad Bowl. Other fall crops include Swiss chard, carrots, onions and strawberries. A cover crop of Daikon radishes is growing in beds that have performed poorly. We hope the radish's deep roots will break the hardpan allowing air, water and nutrients down into the soil.

The most recent DVG harvest brought the 2021 total to 1,301 pounds. The produce is donated to the Rose of Sharon Soup Kitchen and the CASA Garden, and the weight is recorded as donated to the ACES Grow More Give More program. (For more information on Grow More Give More go to <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/products-programs-lawn-garden/grow-more-give-more>).

Jim and Marge Mullen are conducting a seed trial sponsored by Grow More Give More. The final radish harvest resulted in a total of 373 radishes with a total weight of 13.84 pounds. The radish trial ended with a tasting at the November MGNA meeting. Jim and Marge continue to monitor the kale planting.

Thanks to the DVG scarecrow team, Eileen Tully, Carlita Edwards, Tina Cechovic, Susan Beam and Lisa Crump for creating the MGNA scarecrow "The Birdwatcher" to represent MGNA in the HBG annual Scarecrow Trail.

The DVG crew continues to step up to the challenge of maintaining the garden, greeting guests and suggesting projects and demonstrations. We have lots of fun volunteering at the DVG, and we welcome other master gardeners to join us.

Hurray! The DVG met their 2021 goal!



Top Left to right, David Grey, Diane Rodgers, Susan Beam, Carlita Edwards, Connie Carr, Susan Parker

Bottom Left to right, Marge Mullen, Jim Mullen, Alan Markell



Diane Rodgers delivering a sample of harvest to Jack Rogers a treasured DVG crew member and friend of MGNA that volunteered for many years.



GARDEN THYMES

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2021, Carolyn Wade (W12)**

A special thanks to those submitting articles and pictures — Without you, we would have no newsletter.

Master Gardeners of North Alabama was incorporated in 1988 and is now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

The Alabama Master Gardener Program is conducted at the county level by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

