



DIRTY DIGS



Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

February 2014

ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, ELEVATE

Next Meeting

**February 13,
2014**

Meeting Location:

First Baptist Church

@9:00 AM

Guest Article

Dear Members,

As spring is just around the corner, I thought I would share my successes and failures regarding seed starting. When I was younger I never understood why my mother loved gardening so much and as children we were always required to help her. As an adult I was too wrapped up in a full time job and raising my own children to begin to think about gardening. When Mom passed away in 2000 she had a freezer and refrigerator full of seeds; I decided to plant them. To my surprise many came up and produced vegetables and flowers. What a delight! I just knew Mom was proud.



That was the beginning of my gardening. I planted tomatoes, potatoes (on Valentine's Day just like she did), green beans, and squash. I read books from the library and shopped her many seed catalogs. What started as a small 10' x 10' garden became a 75' x 30' garden.

Several years ago I wanted to advertise on the highway, "plants for sale". Ten flats of peat cups were purchased and before you could turn around there was well over 500 seedlings. They were started in the laundry room, which had sufficient heat; but when they sprouted I didn't have the proper lighting so I moved them into my husband's unheated shop and wrapped plastic around the shelves with heat lamps as my source of light and heat. Needless to say the plants were very long, lanky, and weak. The ones I were able to save were planted. I canned so many tomatoes, salsa, and spaghetti sauce that summer I thought I would never see the end of tomatoes. I really enjoyed my success and wanted to share my produce and plants with others. There was a desire for me to sell some of them just to make enough to pay for my seeds and potting soil, pots, etc.

Wright's Nursery in Plantersville, Alabama has a nice seed starting and potting mix. I get a huge baled bag (60#) at least and fill my pots. I leave about ½ inch space from the top of the pots and water thoroughly. After they drain well I take my pinkie and make a small indentation in the center and drop my seed in each pot. Sometimes I will put 2 to 4 seeds per pot just in case some don't make it. A layer of soil is added to cover depending on the correct depth the seed is to be planted. A product called "Maxicrop"

February 2014

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

						1 <i>Tallapoosa Home Orchard Pruning Workshop- Dadeville</i>
2 	3 <i>Governor's Mansion</i>	4 <i>Demo Garden 8:30 AM</i>	5	6 <i>Prattvillage TBD</i>	7 <i>Bug Webinar (See page 14) Bd Meeting</i>	8
9	10 <i>Governor's Mansion</i>	11 <i>Demo Garden 8:30 AM</i>	12	13 <i>ACMGA Meeting At First Bap at 9am</i>	14 <i>Prattvillage TBD</i> 	15 <i>Start Planting Irish Potatoes</i>
16	17 <i>Governor's Mansion</i>	18 <i>Demo Garden 8:30 AM</i>	19	20 <i>Prattvillage TBD Arbor Day-TBD</i>	21	22
23	24 <i>Governor's Mansion</i>	25 <i>Demo Garden 8:30 AM Pruning Workshop-Gaines Smith-(see page 19)</i>	26	27 <i>Prattvillage TBD</i>	28	

Master Gardener of the Year Award for 2013



This award was voted on by all the members present at the December Meeting. Two very deserving recipients tied for this honor. Therefore, following precedents set in the past, both were given the Master Gardener of the year award. They gave their all and benefitted the Autauga County Master Gardener Association in numerous ways. Congratulations to two well deserving ladies, Nancy Waggoner (left) and Deborah Cheatum (right).

DECEMBER TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurers Report December 2013

BEGINNING BALANCE \$5,109.17

REVENUE

Dues \$320.00

REVENUE SUBTOTAL \$5,429.17

CHECKS

#687 Water \$ 14.84

#688 Library Memorial Donation (Bonnie Boyd) \$ 25.00

#689 Helen Allen (Luncheon Supplies) \$ 24.45

#690 Mallory Kelley (Frames) \$ 27.50

#691 Deborah Cheatum (Luncheon Supplies) \$ 8.76

#692 Nancy Waggoner (Luncheon Supplies) \$ 31.25

#693 Deborah Cheatum (Fair - Drop Cloths) \$ 67.28

#694 Water \$ 14.84

EXPENSES TOTAL \$ 213.92

ENDING BALANCE \$5,215.25

What's Bugging You?



Do You know the name of this critter? Is it beneficial or destructive or both?

Answer and information can be found on Page 10
Mallory Kelley's Article



Other clues:
This was covered in your intern class.



Alabama Gardener's Calendar

February

Fruits and Nuts

- Planting season continues for dormant trees.
- Fertilize fruit trees.
- Apply half of the fertilizer recommended for grapes now; apply the other half soon after fruit sets.
- Continue dormant pruning and grafting. Start strawberry plantings.

Shrubs

- Planting season continues.
- Visit camellia shows to learn of hardy varieties in your area.
- Graft camellias in central and south Alabama.
- Spray all shrubs with a fungicide before new growth starts.
- Good time to prune all shrubs before new growth starts.
- Don't prune early-blooming species because flower buds will be removed.

Roses

- Prune hybrid tea roses in south Alabama; delay pruning for a few weeks in north Alabama.
- Continue planting.

Annuals and Perennials

- Replant early plantings of hardy annuals.
- Prepare beds for summer annuals.

Bulbs

- Plant cannas, amaryllis, gladiolus, and zephyranthes in south Alabama; delay planting for a few weeks in north Alabama.

Miscellaneous

- Houseplants are beginning to show signs of activity.
- Fertilize with liquid or soluble fertilizer according to manufacturer's directions.
- Remember Valentine's Day. Why not send roses or a potted plant?

Vegetable Seed

- Plant some vegetables listed for January in central Alabama plus collards, salsify, and Swiss chard.
- Add tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts to cold frames.

Vegetable Plants

- Plant cabbage, onions, lettuce, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts.



All Bugs Good and Bad

2014 Webinar Series

Please join us for this webinar series for information you can use about good and bad insects. **Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 2 p.m. Eastern.**

- February 7** If Flowers are Restaurants to Bees, Then What Are Bees to Flowers?
Dr. John Skinner
- March 7** Straight Talk About Termites
Dr. Xing Ping Hu
- April 4** Get TickSmart: 10 Things to Know, 5 Things to Do
Dr. Thomas Mather
- May 2** Are Those Itsy Bitsy Spiders Good or Bad?
Dr. Nancy Hinkle
- June 6** Fire Ant Management
Elizabeth Brown
- August 1** Minimize Mosquito Problems
Molly Keck
- September 5** Kudzu Bug Takes Over the Southeastern U.S./Brown Marmorated Stinkbug—All Bad
Dr. Michael Toews/Dr. Tracy Leskey
- October 3** Alien Invasions, Zombies Under Foot, and Billions of Decapitated Fire Ants
Dr. Sanford Porter
- November 7** Where Have All the Honey Bees Gone? Hope for the Future
Dr. John Skinner



For more information on the series and how to connect to the webinars, visit: <http://www.extension.org/pages/70120>.



Brought to you by these eXtension Communities of Practice: Imported Fire Ants, Urban IPM, Bee Health, Invasive Species, & Gardens and Landscapes.



Citations for pictures: Jim Occi, BugPics, bugwood.org; Jerry A. Payne, USDA-ARS, bugwood.org; Nadeer Youssef, TN State Univ.; USDA ARS Photo Unit, USDA-ARS, bugwood.org; David Cappaert, Michigan State University, bugwood.org; Sturgis McKeever, Georgia Southern University, bugwood.org.

Hummingbird Award for January.



President Rose McCauley, on the left, presents the Hummingbird Award for January to Billie Willis. Billie has been very active in our organization especially presenting wonderful devotions prior to our ACMGA monthly meetings. There is no one else that is more deserving. Lets give Billie a big hand.





By Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent
Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests

Do your Magnolia Trees have Dying Branches?

As the Auburn Entomologist, Dr. Charles Ray says “It’s almost an epidemic in central Alabama this year.” What is he referring to? *Xylosandrus compactus*, the black twig borer, a type of ambrosia beetle that infests a wide variety of hardwood trees and shrubs. This fall and winter the calls have been flooding in all over central Alabama, mostly about magnolia trees with dying branches scattered all over the tree.

The beetles only attack branches and twigs about ½” in diameter or less. They bore into the branch and begin to excavate a gallery that is inoculated with a fungus. Then the beetles lay eggs and its larvae feed on the fungus. As a result, the twig or branch dies above the gallery which results in dead tips of branches scattered around the plant. One other noticing characteristic is most material attacked is within 10 feet of ground level, some insects do infest material near tree tops, but not commonly.

If possible, you can prune out the dead branches one foot below where you are seeing the dead tissue and remove the branches from your property or burn them. According to Dr. Ray “Actual effect on the number of beetles next year that pruning would have could be minimal on a regional basis, but there might be some satisfaction in destruction of those insects infesting your magnolia.”

There is no chemical treatment for the beetles once they are inside the wood and systemic insecticides DO NOT WORK. There are some preventative measures that can be employed next spring to reduce infestation of additional plant material, but that can be difficult. See the link below for more information on the beetle and preventative measures that can be taken.

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/trees/note111/note111.html>

Source: Dr. Charles Ray, Auburn University, Extension Entomologist.



2014 Alabama Master Gardener Conference

April 28-30 2014 in Daphne, AL

hosted by Baldwin Master Gardeners

<http://alabamamg.org/AMGAConference.html>

Baldwin County Master Gardeners take great pleasure in inviting you all to participate in a JUBILEE, gardening style!

A JUBILEE is a relatively rare occurrence happening when the oxygen level on the bottom of the bay's water closest to mainly the Eastern Shore gets depleted due to a combination of conditions. Those conditions cause the "bottom feeders" like flounder, crabs, and eels but sometimes shrimp and catfish to go into a comatose-like state heading for the shore line where astute Eastern Shore dwellers are ready with gigs, buckets, bare hands - anything to catch them before the conditions change and the fish and crustaceans recover putting up the fight of their lives to get away from the shore and those humans!

This type of "fishing/crabbing" becomes a celebration - a JUBILEE

**Reprinted from
the AMGA website**



*Autauga County Extension Office
2226 Highway 14 West, Suite E
Autaugaville, AL 36003
Telephone: (334) 361-7273
Fax: (334) 361-7275*

January 9, 2014

Memo to All ACES Volunteers

Master Gardeners Volunteers,

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System appreciates very much your commitment to our organization and the programs with which you volunteer. Whether you are a Master Gardener, 4-H volunteer, or serve with another of our programs, you enable us to reach more Alabamians with Extension programming.

In 2012, more than 5,000 volunteers worked almost 300,000 hours in a wide variety of Extension programs. When converted to a dollar amount, that means our volunteers made a contribution of more than \$6.5 million to Extension programs.

Just as Extension programs have changed with technology, communications and news media have changed as well. As news media work on Extension-related stories, it is much easier for them to find and contact volunteers directly thanks to social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

It's important that you, as a volunteer representative of the Alabama Cooperative System, understand your role when contacted by media regarding the ACES and its programs. If you are contacted by the media or others about ACES programs, you should direct those requests to the appropriate ACES staff. For 4-H volunteers, that would be the Regional 4-H Youth Development Agent with whom you work or your County Extension Coordinator. For Master Gardeners, the contact would be with the Home Grounds, Gardens, and Home Pest Regional Extension Agent that works with your group, or your County Extension Coordinator.

It is important that volunteers do not represent Extension programs directly to the media without the involvement and approval of the ACES staff members that are assigned to work with you.

By following these procedures, you help ACES ensure that the person best-suited to address the issue is made available to the media.

ACES appreciates your willingness to follow our simple media guidelines. Thank you again for your valuable commitment and hard work!

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mallory Kelley in black ink.

Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent

Handwritten signature of Yvonne Bowens - Thomas in black ink.

Yvonne Bowens - Thomas
County Extension Coordinator

Important Announcements

From Pam Olson: Here's your monthly reminder to bring items for the "Cultivating Our Community" project with you to the next meeting. Pam Olson usually collects them. If she's not at the meeting, Nancy Waggoner steps in. This is our sister project to the Prattville-Autauga Demonstration Garden. Produce from the garden supplies fresh vegetables to AICC, Autauga Interfaith Care Center – our county's food bank. But people who need a temporary helping hand have many needs in addition to food. Cleaning products, both personal and for the home, can take a big bite out of one's wallet yet are essential for one's dignity. We, as individual members, help supply the non-food items. AICC is in constant need of: **toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, dish detergent, laundry detergent, and household cleaners.** Smaller-sized store brand cleaning products are better because your dollars put products into more bags at the center. Sample sizes of any of the items are okay, too. Anything is appreciated! As with all our MG projects, participation is optional.

Governor's Mansion—We are working at the Governor's Mansion every Monday morning. If you would like to join us, please let Rose McCauley know during the week prior so that your name can be sent in for a security check. At this time, she will let you know where and when to meet to carpool into Montgomery.

PALS Beautification Award

Anytime you see a yard that you would like to nominate for this award and do not have a nomination form, please get the information to me, Rose McCauley, by regular mail, email or drop it by my home. Include the following -

Your name and contact information

Category - Private House, Business, School, Government

Nominee's Name (if you have it)

Nominee's Address

Nominee's Phone Number (if you have it)

Directions

Reasons for Nomination

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Rose McCauley

Plant Sale

Plant Sale is schedule for April 26. Please start gathering and potting plants for the sale. It will be here before we know it.

Remember: Anytime you take pictures to be used in any MG or ACES publications, you must have signed permission from those in the picture. Forms can be obtained from the ACES office.



All Bugs Good and Bad 2014 Webinar Series



Photo credit: Jerry A. Payne, USDA-ARS, bugwood.org

February 7, 2014
2:00 PM EST

If Flowers are Restaurants
to Bees, Then What Are
Bees to Flowers?

Dr. John Skinner

Please join us for this webinar series for information you can use about good and bad insects. Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 2:00 PM EST.

Learn how bees help flowers and therefore help feed the world. Find out what you can do to help encourage these valuable pollinators. This webinar will be presented by Dr. John Skinner, a Professor in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology at the University of Tennessee. Moderated by Danielle Carroll, Regional Extension Agent, Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

For more information on the series and how to connect to the webinars, visit: <http://www.extension.org/pages/70120>.



Brought to you by these eXtension
Communities of Practice: Imported Fire Ants,
Urban IPM, Bee Health, Invasive Species, Gardens and Landscapes &
Disasters.





Classic Pluggers
Winter Fun!
thanks to
Earl Fisher
Prattville,
Alabama

Email: pluggermail@aol.com

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Brookins Art, LLC

1/20

BROOKINS

A plugger lifts his winter blues with thoughts of spring green.

This is so true! Thanks Pam Olson for this submission to the Newsletter.



HELP THE AMGA SCHOLARSHIP FUND GROW

BUY A MASTER GARDENER AUTO TAG --- \$20

These look great not only on the front of your vehicle but also as garden art on fences or walls.

And they aren't just for Master Gardeners but for anyone who wants to endorse our mission of volunteering, so buy one for a friend or relative. You're helping yourself when you do!

\$10 stays in the MG program and supports workshops and other projects.

\$10 supports the AMGA Scholarship Endowment Fund for worthy Auburn University horticulture students. Last year, two \$1500 undergraduate scholarships were awarded. As the fund grows, graduate level scholarships will be added.

It's an easy way to donate to a GREAT cause and get a beautiful tag in the bargain!

Contact Pam Olson to purchase tags.



Forget-me-nots

by Pam Olson

Counting Contacts

Our new president, Rose, has asked me to write a piece each month explaining some aspect of reporting hours accurately. As Volunteer Hours Coordinator, I've received lots of clarifications from ACES over the years. I did a series for *Dirty Digs* in '09, and our members seemed to appreciate the info. I call the articles "Forget-me-nots," because they cover guidelines not to be forgotten when logging volunteer and educational hours for Extension. I hope whether you're a newbie or a seasoned MG you'll read each piece, just in case there's some point you may have missed along the way. I'll try to keep them fairly short. Even I realize this isn't the most (yawn) interesting topic. Some info will be specific to online recording, but the principles are the same for paper reports.

This first one is about counting contacts. Contacts translate into how effectively MG's are reaching members of the public. Extension is clear on who is and who isn't a contact, but unfortunately the online report screen for entering data contains wording that can be confusing. Just remember that a contact is always someone you GIVE information to or do something for. It isn't someone you RECEIVE information with. The confusion comes in interpreting the note below the *Number of Contacts* box on the *Enter New Hours* screen that reads, "How many people were helped or attended the event?" The "helped" part is straight forward; we'll get to that in a minute. But what about "attended the event"? It refers to the number of people who attended a formal class you taught. It doesn't mean how many people attended the same program you attended. Think about our *Lunch and Learn* programs. Carolyn Gray taught one on herbs. She counts everyone who "attended the event" as a contact because she was the instructor in a formal class setting. "Contacts" and "Number of Attendees" are synonymous terms.

Now let's get back to the "helped" part. Helping is reaching out in the name of Extension. We can accomplish this only when we're volunteering, not when we're attending an educational program/CEU. We do it by sharing research-based information, writing in non-MG publications, speaking on the radio, distributing printed material, assisting at a workshop or youth program, giving garden tours, working the Helpline, any volunteer activity that makes contact with people who AREN'T Master Gardeners.

There's one exception, though, when Extension DOES let you count a fellow MG as a contact – when that MG is enrolled in a class you're teaching. Think of Carolyn's class on herbs. She may count every member of the class – both MG's and non-MG's because it was a formal class.

If you give gardening advice to someone who isn't a Master Gardener, count that person as a contact and log the time as "Home garden consult." But if you give me advice informally, I'm not a contact because I'm a Master Gardener and you're not teaching me in a class. When we work together in our project gardens, we don't count one another as contacts. But if a non-MG walks up and asks questions, count the person as a contact.

That's enough for now. Next month I'll cover guidelines on how many contacts to report when reaching out through news media.

I hope this new series proves to be helpful. Your feedback will be very useful in improving it from month to month. Questions or comments? Email or call me: polsonhome@charter.net, 361-7030.

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

Membership Form

Annual County membership dues for 2014 are \$10. State dues, which entitle you to State membership and **Garden Pathways** newsletter as well as receive state awards such as, "Reach for the Stars." State dues are \$10 and optional. Please complete this form and return it to our Treasurer, Tina Reed, by September 13, 2013.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

EMAIL _____

(only give email address if you wish to receive info via email)

If any of your information has changed please check here.

COUNTY OF TRAINING _____ YEAR OF GRADUATION _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:

	Local Dues	State
Dues		
__ Active Member Local & State (includes graduation interns)	\$10	\$10
__ Active Member Local Only (includes graduation interns)	\$10	\$0
__ Active Member w/current State Lifetime	\$10	\$0
__ Active Member w/new State Lifetime	\$10	\$100

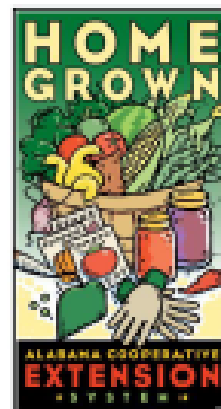
Please make checks payable to ACMGA and mail or give to:

Tina Reed
1936 Tara Dr.
Prattville AL 36066

Backyard Fruit Pruning Workshop

Hosted by the
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Tuesday, February 25, 2014
Gaines Smith's Orchard
2228 County Road 40 West
Billingsley, Alabama
 (Directions Below)
9:00 am to 11:00 am



LEARN HOW TO PRUNE MUSCADINES, BLUEBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES, CITRUS, APPLES, PEACHES AND EVEN KIWI



To sign-up or for more information, contact the Autauga County Extension office at 334-361-7273. Registration fee is \$5 per person. Pre-Registration and Payment is required by Friday, Feb 21st.

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Name(s): _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ Zip Code: _____ County: _____
 Phone #: _____ E-mail address: _____
 _____ # of Participants X \$5 = Total Amount Enclosed: _____



Return Pre-Registration Form and Payment by Friday, February 21, 2014 to:
 Make check payable to: Alabama Cooperative Extension System
 Autauga County Extension Office
 2226 HWY 14 W, Suite E
 Autaugaville, AL 36003

Directions: From Prattville, travel west on US 82. Just past mile marker 128, turn left onto C R 40 and travel approximately 7 miles to 2228. Turn right onto gravel drive, then travel 1/4 mile to orchard.

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association
JOIN US FOR LUNCH & LEARN 2014!
THE 1ST TUESDAY
12:00-1:00 P.M.

- MARCH 4TH VEGETABLE GARDENING**
APRIL 1TH CONTAINER GARDENING
MAY 6ND CREATING AN EDIBLE LANDSCAPE
JUNE 3RD FERNS

St. Joseph Catholic Church, Prattville

FREE PROGRAM

BRING A SACK LUNCH

DRINKS PROVIDED

For more information contact the Autauga County Extension Office. (334) 361-7273

<http://www.aces.edu/counties/Autauga/>



Editor's Corner

Old Wives' Tales

When all of us received helpline training, we were instructed to give out information that was only researched base from trusted sources such as the web site www.ACES.EDU, Master Gardener printed materials, or information from trusted universities. Legendary remedies passed down through generations and given to us by our grandmothers is a no no unless that information has been scientifically proven. This is not only good advice when operating the helpline but also any time we give out information to the public.

Such wives' tales may include but not limited to the following examples:

- Pouring dry grits on fire ant mounds will kill the ants because the grits will swell when they eat. (false)
- A layer of gravel on the bottom of pots will help it drain faster. Not if soil above it is compacted.
- Planting on Good Friday will assure plants sprout in three days. Nah!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Watering in the middle of the day will scorch leaves. On the contrary, it cools.
- Coffee grounds will kill slugs. Nope, but it might give them a pick me up in the morning.
- Pea and bean roots left in the soil will improve it by adding nitrogen. Actually most of the nitrogen is concentrated in the pods.

Always use credible sources. Grandma is well loved but your county agent knows best.

God Bless till next time!!



Anthony Yarbrough,
Editor