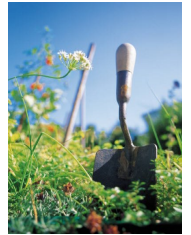




DIRTY DIGS



Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

March 2015

ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, ELEVATE

Next Meeting

March 12, 2015

Meeting Location:

First Baptist
Church

@6:00PM

Guest Article: Submitted, by Anthony Yarbrough



The Label is the Law

It may not feel like Spring right now as you are reading this; however, warmer weather will soon be here and I know many are already planning their yard/garden work for this growing season. I know I am preaching to the choir on this subject, but it is a good reminder not just for everyone but especially for me. The amount of money I have spent on plant failures could feed the world.

Yes, **FOLLOW THE LABEL INSTRUCTIONS AS WRITTEN**. If a cyprus label shows that it will grow 20 feet tall and 10 feet wide believe it. I now have to move about 15 shrub plants because I didn't visualize how big these plants get. When you are planting any shrubs. A measuring tape is a must tool so that you can properly space all plants. Speaking of spacing, if the in-

structions tell you to plant seeds 6 inches apart, believe it. Many times my vegetables were small or didn't produce much because I thought I knew better and planted too close together.






Other things to consider: plant shade plants in the shade and full sun plants in the sun. If it says partial shade, it usually means morning sun and afternoon shade.

Well drained soil means don't plant in soil that stays mostly wet. Many plants don't like wet feet. If it says plant after last frost then cold weather will kill it.

Lastly, if you use chemicals, you absolutely follow all of the label instructions. Using more than the recommended amount is always wrong. More is not better. Don't waste money like I have done.

March 2015

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1	2 Governor's Mansion 9-11	3 Demo Garden <u>8:00 AM</u>	4	5 Prattville <u>9:00 AM</u> Lunch and learn—noon	6 ACMGA Board Meeting	7 Lose 1 hr of sleep tonight — set clock forward and change smoke detector battery 
8 Daylight savings time begins 	9 Governor's Mansion 9-11	10 Demo Garden <u>8:00 AM</u>	11	12 Prattville <u>9:00 AM</u> ACMGA Meeting 6PM	13	14 National Pi Day (3.14)
15 Ides of March 	16 Governor's Mansion 9-11	17 Demo Garden <u>8:00 AM</u> St Patrick's Day 	18	19 Prattville <u>9:00 AM</u>	20 First Day of Spring begins at 5:45 PM 	21
22	23 Governor's Mansion 9-11 AMGA Conference—Cullman, Al -	24 Demo Garden <u>8:00 AM</u> AMGA Conference—Cullman, Al	25 AMGA Conference—Cullman, Al	26 Prattville <u>9:00 AM</u>	27	28
29	30 Governor's Mansion 9-11	31 Demo Garden <u>8:00 AM</u>				

April 2015

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 	2 <i>Prattvillage</i> <u>9:00 AM</u> <i>Holy Thursday</i> <i>Lunch and learn—noon</i>	3 <i>ACMGA Board Meeting</i> <u>Good Friday</u>	4 <u>Passover</u>
	6 <i>Governor's Mansion 9-11</i>	7 <i>Demo Garden</i> <u>8:00 AM</u>	8	9 <i>ACMGA meeting 9 AM</i> <i>Work day at Prattvillage—</i> <i>Lunch at Fat Boys</i>	10	11 <i>Lanark Flora and Fauna Art Day</i>
12	13 <i>Governor's Mansion 9-11</i>	14 <i>Demo Garden</i> <u>8:00 AM</u>	15	16 <i>Prattvillage</i> <u>9:00 AM</u>	17	18
19	20 <i>Governor's Mansion 9-11</i>	21 <i>Demo Garden</i> <u>8:00 AM</u>	22	23 <i>Prattvillage</i> <u>9:00 AM</u>	24 <i>Plant Sale Set up day</i>	25 <i>Plant Sale</i>
<i>Plant Sale Work Week</i>						
26	27 <i>Governor's Mansion 9-11</i>	28 <i>Demo Garden</i> <u>8:00 AM</u>	29	30 <i>Prattvillage</i> <u>9:00 AM</u>		

What's Bugging You



Can You Identify the above insect?

Beneficial or Destructive

(Answer on the bottom of the Next Page)



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

Azaleas, a Staple for every Southern Garden

Azaleas are a staple plant for the southern landscape with many different varieties and types. The first southern hybrid azaleas were planted in Charleston, South Carolina in 1848. Today, azaleas can be found in each climatic region in the Eastern half of the United States and also in most of the Pacific Coast region. In this area of the south we have deciduous and evergreen varieties of azaleas. The native deciduous azaleas lose their leaves in the winter, but have very beautiful clusters of honeysuckle like flowers in early spring adding great flower texture to the landscape. More commonly seen in the landscapes are the evergreen azaleas that are available in many different varieties.

If you are thinking of adding azaleas to your landscape both the native deciduous and evergreen are a great choice for areas with filtered shade. Very heavy shade throughout the day may reduce flower production and result in weak growth. Azaleas require an acid soil pH (4.5-5.5) to grow properly. Check the soil pH of your site before you plant azaleas and fertilize according to your soil test results in early spring and again mid summer.

In Alabama many azaleas begin to set flower buds in July. Therefore, pruning after early July may reduce the next year's flower production. The best time to prune is soon after the flowering period in the spring. Cut limbs that have grown out of the main body of the plant. Do not shear unless your intention is to create a formal hedge as shearing destroys the natural form of the plant and the even distribution of flowers.

Azaleas often become too large for the area they occupy, especially when they are used as foundation plants around a home. If this happens, azaleas can be renewal pruned. This means the plants will grow back when cut severally (12-18 inches) from the ground. The plants will respond best if this is done in early spring, but keep in mind there will be no flowers for that year.

Spider mites are serious pests of many ornamentals such as roses, boxwoods, and azaleas. Adult spider mites vary in size and color, but red is the most common. .

Spider mites puncture the tissues of leaves and flowers with needle-like mouthparts and suck juices from the plant. This destroys the chlorophyll around the puncture giving the leaves and flowers a speckled yellow appearance. As mites multiply, entire leaves become discolored and distorted, and they may drop off. These pests are very small and feed mainly on the underside of leaves. They often go unnoticed until plant damage is obvious and usually are active when it is hot and dry in late summer and early fall.

Azalea lace bugs are small insects with black bodies and lace-like wings. They feed on the underside of leaves. The upper leaf surface opposite the feeding areas becomes speckled, and the leaf looks light or bleached and eventually turns brown. Lace bugs produce large amounts of a black, sticky substance on the underside of leaves, this is an obvious symptom of this insect.



Chemical control gives best results when used in the spring to control the spider mites and the first and second generations of Azalea lace bug. Products such as; insecticidal soap, horticultural oil, neem oil, and most synthetic insecticides will provide control and often times multiple applications are necessary. For optimal coverage be sure to direct the spray to the undersides of the leaves. Using a recommended systemic insecticide drench in spring could prove to be a season long remedy. Always maintaining a healthy plant with sufficient water and nutrients and planting in a shadier area would be a good cultural practice to deter these damaging pests.

If you have questions about your azaleas or any other garden related topic, our Master Gardener Helpline is open!

March through August the Alabama Cooperative Extension System offers a Gardening Helpline for the general public each Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. This helpline is operated by Master Gardener Volunteers who use research based information to best answer all of your gardening questions.

If you've got home garden questions, we've got answers!
Call 1-877-252-GROW (4769)

Interested in learning more about seasonal gardening topics? Please join us for the FREE Master Gardener Lunch and Learn Program in your area EVERY MONTH from 12:00-1:00, Bring a Sack Lunch, Drinks Provided:

This month's topics and locations:

Montgomery: The 1st Wednesday of EVERY month, Armory Learning Arts Center on Madison Ave. For more information: (334)270-4133

Topic: Growing Backyard Tomatoes

Wetumpka: The 2nd Tuesday of EVERY month, Elmore Co. Extension Office, 340 Queen Ann Road For more information: (334)567-6301

Topic: Fantastic Ferns

Prattville: The 1st Thursday of EVERY month, Christ Lutheran Church, 2175 Cobbs Ford Road For more information: (334)361-7273

Topic: Multiplying your Plants



Hummingbird Award for February



The Hummingbird Award for the month of February went to Pam Olson (Pictured on the left). She has done an outstanding job in being the volunteer hours co-coordinating as well as being the advisory council representative. She has made sure that those in the Reach for the Stars Program have been given their appropriate award for the appropriate time period. Hats off to Pam for a job well done.



Alabama Gardener's Calendar

March

Fruits and Nuts

- Continue strawberry and grape plantings.
- Bud apples and peaches.
- Start planting blackberries. Remember, if weather conditions prevent prompt planting, heel the plants in by placing the root system in a trench and covering the soil.

Shrubs

- Fertilize shrubs (except azaleas and camellias) according to a soil test.
- Late plantings may be made, particularly if they are container-grown.
- Watch shrubs for harmful insects.

Lawns

- Plant bermuda, zoysia, and centipede in south Alabama.
- Seed bluegrass and grass mixtures in north Alabama.
- Fertilize established lawns.

Roses

- Watch new growth for aphids.
- Begin a spray or dust program.
- Begin fertilizing.

Annuals and Perennials

- Tender annuals may be planted in south Alabama
- Check garden centers for bedding plants.

Bulbs

- Plant gladiolus every 2 or 3 weeks if a long blooming season is desired.
- Plant tuberous begonias in pots. Plant dahlias.

Miscellaneous

- Check and repair sprayers, dusters, and lawn mowers.
- Control lawn weeds with chemicals.
- Delay pruning of fruiting shrubs such as cotoneasters, pyracanthas, and hollies until after flowering.

Vegetable Seed

- Plant hardy crops recommended for January and February.
- After danger of frost is past, plant tender vegetables.

Vegetable Plants

- Plant cabbage, onions, lettuce, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts in north Alabama; plant tomatoes and peppers in lower south Alabama.

February Meeting Speaker

Ken Moore, a Central Alabama Master Gardener and beekeeper, gave the program at our February monthly meeting. He spoke on all aspects of beekeeping and gave good information to anyone wishing to become a beekeeper.



REPORT FROM AMGA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

February 3, 2015

The points below are those of more concern to our local association.

If you'd like a copy of the secretary's minutes, contact me.

Please read with care the sections in bold type.

AMGA conference roundtable discussion topics: 1) New Members Forum, 2) Publicity Options for Your Organization.

For members attending state conference next month: Please read proposed changes to the state bylaws published in winter *Garden Pathways* and be prepared to vote on them at the annual business meeting.

Jane Trawick, AMGA Awards Chair, reiterated that the *Reach for the Stars* program is reserved for MG's who pay state dues. Dues payment to a local association isn't a requirement. She also clarified that the program is also reserved for Alabama residents, so if a member moves out of state and later returns, hours earned while not a state resident don't qualify. If a member becomes inactive and later rejoins, service hours during the inactive period don't qualify.

Beginning in 2009, CEU hours were combined with volunteer hours for *Reach for the Stars* totals. (We've been doing this.) However, **CEU hours before 2009 may be added retroactively. (If you have figures from those years, please contact me and I'll add them to your numbers on our spreadsheet.)**

Kathie Bass will compile a list of speakers and field trips submitted by AC reps to be distributed statewide. A good source of ideas has always been "Happenings Around Alabama," the county update section of *Garden Pathways*.

2016 conference – May 12-14, Dothan.

2017 conference – May 1-3, Huntsville.

Plant Sale at Birmingham Botanical Gardens – April 9-12.

Next AC meeting is May 5 (the date of our Jim Scott Garden tour) at 10:00 in either Clanton or Jemison. Please contact Rose McCauley; Paula Seamon, Alternate AC Rep.; or me if you'd like to attend. Guests are always welcome. – Submitted by Pam Olson, AC Rep., February 12, 2015

Reach for the Stars Awards presented at the February Meeting

(Hours earned by certified members for 2014- 7,266)

Bronze star, 100 hr.:

Glenn Nichols, JC Schofield , Carla Schuerman, Jerry Starnes

Silver star, 300 hr.:

Glenda Armstrong, Linda Parrish, Tina Reed, Gaines Smith, Debbie Watkins, Kathryn Whaley

Gold star, 500 hr.:

Elsie Jones, Lynn Yarbrough

Gold badge, 1,000 hr.: (Awarded at the AMGA Conference)

Carolyn Gray, Rose McCauley Paula Seamon, Nancy Waggoner

Platinum badge, 2,000: (Awarded at the AMGA Conference)

Deborah Cheatum, Pam Olson Anthony Yarbrough

Emerald advanced star, 6,000 hr.:

Debbie Boutelier (Awarded at the AMGA Conference)

Jean Lee Lifetime Hours:

Debbie Boutelier

Top Hours for the Year:

Rose McCauley



Jerry Starnes



Tina Reed, Linda Parrish, Glenda Armstrong, Kathryn Whaley



Elsie Jones, Lynn Yarbrough

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: **adult toothbrushes, 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.

Pam Olson reported that last year we donated 145 pounds of personal care and cleaning products (and most of the personal care items don't weigh very much) in addition to almost 20 cosmetic bags to be used in gift baskets for ladies, a school backpack, and a set of sheets,

2014 was our best year ever.

We started off 2015 with a bang -- 17 pounds brought to the Jan. meeting.

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

Governor's Mansion

If you are looking for a rewarding gardening project, please consider joining us for workdays at the Governor's Mansion. We meet every Monday 8:00-11:00 a.m. during the summer months to beat the heat, and--with all the beautiful blooming plants--it is a lovely place to work. Add to that the pleasant company of your fellow laborers, and I believe you'll find it a truly enjoyable way to earn volunteer hours. Please call Jane McCarthy (334-221-9936) by noon the Friday prior to any workday to be put on the list for access to the grounds. Bring your favorite tools.



Arbor Day

On February 23rd, members of the Autauga County Master Gardener's Association participated in Prattville's Arbor Day observance by handing out tree seedlings to the public. Several high school classes visited to learn about trees and to receive seedlings. Mrs. Russell's food and nutrition classes (FCCLA) and Mr. Ford's FFA-Agribusines classes seem to enjoy their experience. Pam Olson, our seasoned Master Gardener, gave a talk on planting, pruning and care of trees. A representative from the Mayor's Office, presented a proclamation designating February 23, 2015 as Arbor Day for the City. Below are some of the pictures of the day.





2015 All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series



Fire Ant Management Using Baits

March 6, 2015
2:00 PM EST

Dr. Lawrence "Fudd" Graham

Learn how to make the biology of fire ants work for you not against you. Dr. Lawrence "Fudd" Graham from Auburn University will discuss fire ant baits and other control methods. He will also provide information on the *Pseudacteon* phorid flies, natural enemies of fire ants. The moderators will be extension agents Charles Pinkston, Bethany O'Rear and Vicky Bertagnolli-Heller.

Go to learn.extension.org/events/1852 for information on how to connect to this webinar.



The All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series provides practical information you can use. Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 2:00 PM Eastern time. For more information on the series visit: extension.org/pages/72197.



Citations for pictures in the top banner: 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. Main image: courtesy Fudd Graham.



Linda Griebel, Central Alabama Master Gardener, was the speaker for ACMGA Lunch and Learn on February 5, 2015. The topic she presented Monthly Gardening Tasks at a Glance. There were over 30 people in attendance and this presentation was received well by all attendees.



Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

JOIN US FOR LUNCH & LEARN 2015



THE 1ST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

12:00-1:00 P.M.

FREE PROGRAMS

Christ Lutheran Church, 2175 Cobbs Ford Road, Prattville 36066

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| FEBRUARY 5 | MONTHLY GARDEN TASKS AT A GLANCE |
| MARCH 5 | MULTIPLYING YOUR PLANTS |
| APRIL 2 | BACKYARD TOMATOES |
| MAY 7 | HYDRANGEAS |
| JUNE 4 | TREE ID |
| JULY 2 | YEAR ROUND COLOR |
| AUGUST 6 | BULBS |
| SEPTEMBER 3 | GARDEN DESIGN |
| OCTOBER 1 | CACTI AND OTHER SUCCULENTS |
| NOVEMBER 5 | HOLIDAY DECORATING |



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

BRING A SACK LUNCH. DRINKS PROVIDED.



ALABAMA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

25th

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Gardening... Wow!!



March 23rd—25th, 2015

Cullman Civic Center

510 5th St. SW, Cullman, AL

Hosted by Blount and Cullman County

Master Gardeners

WOW! The Alabama Master Gardeners Conference is *early* this year! But that gives us plenty of time to celebrate the 25th Conference of our organization, not to mention time to implement all that we will learn from the **outstanding slate of speakers and workshops** we have lined up for this conference. We hope you will join us as we host "Gardening...WOW!" on March 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 2015 at the Cullman Civic Center in Cullman, Alabama.

The conference will begin with a terrarium workshop on Monday afternoon given by internationally renowned Tovah Martin, followed by a smoked chicken and fish fry dinner. Monday night. In addition, Blount and Cullman Counties have some amazing sights to see. Some are well known, like the Ava Maria Grotto in Cullman and the Covered Bridges of Blount County, and some are local treasures just waiting for you to discover, like the Palisades Park in Oneonta and the CCMG Demonstration Garden in downtown Cullman. We have several more features within a two-mile radius of the Civic Center that you can easily explore if you come early or stay later.

Conference registration is open to the public, so invite your gardening buddies and come discover new ways to put the WOW! in gardening.

REGISTRATION: Form available online @ www.amgaconference.org

Future Events Schedule

Lanark Flora and Fauna Art Show—April 11, 2015

ACMGA Pant Sale—April 25, 2015

Jim Scott Tour in May and Youngs Plant Farm tour in June

Alabama Master Gardener's Conference in Cullman March 23-25, 2015



Master Gardeners having fun after the Meeting. Special thanks to the Autauga County Extension Office for making this possible.



Anthony Yarbrough, Editor
Email: ayarb@knology.net