



February 2015

Volume XXIII Issue II



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Mary Hamilton

Corresponding Secretary:

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President's Notes from Myra Lassere

Winter is a time when our garden dreams take flight. I find myself looking forward to warmer days and springtime colors. That being said, I hope everyone has prepared or begun preparations for springtime plantings. I relax more in a garden than anywhere else even though a garden requires work.

The intern classes are underway, implementation of the Spring Workshops has begun, Infoline opens and Arbor Day celebrations will soon take place throughout the county. Check the Newsletter calendar for local listings, dates and times and remember to VOLUNTEER!

Our vice president, Gary Wallace, has been busy planning some exciting field trips and interesting speakers for 2015. I encourage you to attend our monthly meetings, socialize with your fellow Master Gardeners, and enjoy their hospitality, plus you may just learn something new from the presentations.

I'm looking forward to seeing ya'll on February 12, 2015. Happy Valentine's Day and Happy Mardi Gras to all! "Laissez Le Bons Temps Rouler"



Introducing our 2015 Master Gardener Intern Class (by Joyce Mudrak)

The Mentors hosted a luncheon for the Interns on Wednesday (January 21st.) There were 16 of the 18 Interns that attended along with the Mentors, the new class volunteers, several Master Gardener and Mike McQueen. There are two husband and wife teams in the 2015 class.

The Interns introduced themselves and spoke about their gardening interests. Each Intern received a plant from their Mentor plus their class books which were a gift from BCMG. This looks like another great class!

HOT & COLD—WEATHER TRENDS IN BALDWIN AND MOBILE COUNTIES

Part 2 by Samuel H. Andrews, IV

Wow, Old Man Winter sure threw us a January curve with a deep dive into the teens. Fairhope set or tied its old record as I suspect other locals did as well. ...And yet, our coastal Alabama weather is throwing us, and our plants, another challenge with 60-40 degree -days in the time since the deep freeze.

In this article, I would like to cover is the concept of Chilling Hours, a very important thing for flowering and fruiting plant selection in our climate. In addition, it is a big reason why we have such a hard time growing the fruits and nuts that require a certain amount of chilly weather in order to prosper. Again, we are not able to grow true semi-tropical plants since we do have weather such as our recent record setting dip.

Many plants, especially favorites such as apples, pears, plums, grapes and other such deciduous fare, require many more Chilling Hours than our climate is able to provide in an average year. Alabama, Florida, Texas, Louisiana have spent a great deal of time attempting development of varieties of the colder weather fruits and nuts with limited success. Many of the cultivars on the market do perform, but not consistently or with the flavor, texture, etc. that most growers seek. (Another important factor in plant performance in any one area includes a concept called "growing degree hour" or the time a plant requires warmth at 41 ° or higher to break dormancy. Plants can get adequate chill hours, but inadequate growing degree hours to maximize performance.)

To recap a lesson from your Master Gardener Intern class, many fruits, nuts, and flowering plants require dormant buds triggered through cold temperatures. Each species and variety differs, but most require a chilling period of at least 600 hours. What is a chilling period? It is the number calculated through a count of hours between 32° and 45° Fahrenheit from October 1st to February 15th. Agriculturalists use another method less frequently taking simply the number of hours 45° or less during that same date range.

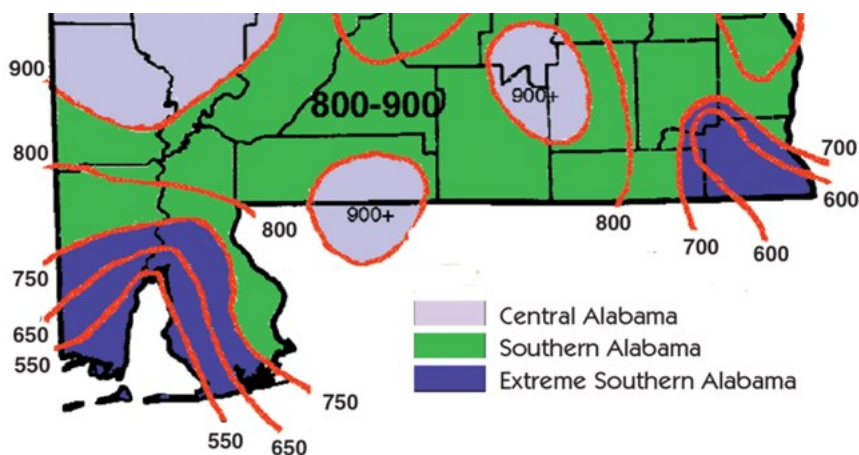
Baldwin County enjoys a fine climate for specific flowers and flowering trees. In addition, pecans, persimmon, muscadine grape, loquat, pindo palm fruits, native plums, and rabbit-eye blueberries, do well in various parts of our county. However, many other plants do not do well over time. A good warning to watch the things the "big box" stores sell.

For more information on Chilling Hours and plant selection lists, I suggest the Auburn ANR 53D that provided the graphic used in this article. In addition, please consult other research-based resources such as the University of Florida, Louisiana State University and Texas A&M Extensions.

The next segment of this series will cover growing seasons and the inevitable heat sure to come in the months ahead.

Alabama Chilling Zones for Southern Counties*

The map below indicates fruit-growing regions of southern Alabama based on fall and winter temperatures. Hours of 45°F and lower from October 1 through February 15 based on a 10-year average (Winter, 1984-85 to Winter, 1992-93)



Minutes from General Meeting January 8, 2014 by Mary V. Hamilton

President, Myra Lassere, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Myra asked for any 2015 interns that were present to stand. There were none, but learned from Pam Tucker, that they have not yet received notifications about attending club meetings. She announced that a mentor meeting will follow the general meeting.

Moe Nation announced a new program offered by the Extension Service in Baldwin County. The Alabama Master Naturalist Program certification will be offered with classes beginning in February and going through May. Registration forms are due January 22. The focus of the program will be Coastal Habitats with 25% of the classes being held in the field and the rest in the classroom. The program is much like the Master Gardener Program. All classes must be attended to be certified, however registrants can attend as many as possible and pick up the others another year. There will be classes in Geology Soils and Weather, Forest, Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds and Mammals, Coastal Waters, Wetlands and Freshwater Ecosystems, and Alabama's Cultural Landscape. Certified Naturalists will be expected to do volunteer work which will involve teaching and restoration projects. Bo Brodbeck is administering the program. Each class will have a \$35 fee and some will be more. This covers the class and lunch. Master Gardeners can take the classes for CEU's and there are also opportunities for those who get certified for advanced study. Further information will be emailed and Moe has some copies today.

Marilyn Mannhard announced the Local Food Producers Forum on Saturday February 7, 2015 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Homestead Village Ballroom in Fairhope. Speakers will include: Anita Craine of Craine Creek Farm, LLC (Loxley), Christel Cherrix Hixson of Hillcrest Farm (Lillian) and Jimmy Jones of Seasons in the Sun (Spanish Fort) and presenting an overview of locally grown food distribution will be Chase Corte of Chasing Fresh, LLC. After the speakers have made their presentations they will participate in a panel discussion about their individual operations and the part they play in the national local food production movement. There is a suggested donation of \$5.00. For more information contact Marilyn Mannhard (marilynmannhard@gmail.com, 251-978-9442).

President Myra Lassere introduced Connie Griffin and Diane Alaman who are the new BCMG hostesses. Also, if club members need to get in touch of Myra Lassere she announced and had written on the board her contact information for members to voice questions and concerns to her personally.

There was no treasurers report from the new club treasurer, Gene Sellier, however he did announce that the club dues are now past due and that he also has the membership cards for those who have paid their dues.

The President's Busy Bee Award was given to Past President, Gene Sellier, who has spent many hours working for the BCMG organization in the capacity of president for two years, he is an instructor with the speaker's bureau, has talked on topics at the Tuesday with Master Gardeners Spring meetings. He was a major volunteer for the conference last Spring and has taught Eastern Shore Institute of Lifelong Learning.

Dooley Berry has an article in the Mobile Bay Magazine on Camellias this month. If you do not take a copy, it can be found in doctors' offices, hospitals and libraries.

President, Myra Lassere reminded members how important it is to turn in hours and pay dues. It is one of the factors in calculating Mike's salary. There were 152 members on record in 2014 and only 87 of that number turned in hours.

The meeting was turned over to John Fitzhugh to introduce the speaker, Jim Gaines who spoke on Camellias.

Pam Tucker announced that the new class of Interns has 18 enrolled and most are from Fairhope this year. The luncheon will be on February 18th.

Darlene Anderson received a star for 100 hours.

Garden of Eatin' by Susie Wallace



Master Gardener Susie Wallace says the Garden of Eatin' at Jubilee Shores Methodist Church has some garden plots available for individual gardeners to rent for the season for \$25.

There is also a need for volunteers to help tend the larger plot that provides vegetables for local food pantries.

Mobile Bay Green Drinks

Tuesday, February 11, is the date for the monthly Mobile Bay Green Drinks at the Fairhope Brewery in Fairhope. From 5 to 7 pm people mingle with others interested in environmental issues and sustainable living practices. Come join us.



AMGA 25th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

hosted by Blount and Cullman Counties
March 23-25, 2015

ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION



Registration for the 2015 Conference is OPEN. Visit the Conference Website at: www.amgaconference.org

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 Garde 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.

THE GARDEN NOTEBOOK By Diane Alaman, Master Gardener

My fellow Master Gardener, friend and neighbor, Catherine Tiblier, introduced me to a form of fertilizer that I had never heard of before. It is ecological and socially responsible product. A liquid plant food, natural, all organic and made from waste. Too good to be true? This discovery started as a project for Catherine's Master Gardener Project. She did some research, ordered some worms, built a habitat for them and watched her experiment grow. The worms survived torrential rains and lots of liquid fertilizer was produced from their waste. Covered in a blanket of newspapers and lodged in plastic boxes on the patio the worms thrived. Viewing Catherine's garden this week, I am convinced that this is a great way to grow healthy, beautiful plants.

After some research, (you can find anything on the Internet) I discovered that in 2001 two Princeton University students, Tom Szaky and Jon Beyer, came up with the liquid fertilizer idea.

They fed rubbish to worms and sold the result in used pop bottles. They have since started Terracycle Plant Food Company. The worm fertilizer is the core of their success as they branch out into new organic gardening ideas.

Gardening is so much fun as there is always something new to learn and the friendships made with other gardeners is very special.

A word of caution: After last year's peach production, peach tree limbs, heavy with fruit must be thinned or supported. If you fail to do so the limb may snap and your vision of peach jam will just be a fading dream. Experience can be a cruel teacher. I have faith that this year will produce another good yield of peaches.

Long Leaf Pine Forest and Arboretum

Celebrate the Volunteers!



The Weeks Bay Long Leaf Pine, Arboretum and Plant Sales areas were again the scene of important activities during this past fall. Jim Greer, Julian Walthall and a wonderful group of volunteers worked on three major projects.

In the Arboretum as well as in the Plant Sale area, flower beds and irrigation were put in, along with a wonderful monument constructed by Carl Floyd. The Long Leaf Pine “forest” was cleaned to a point where we can see that the seedlings are now entering their candle stage. Another work session is coming up in late March to “lop and herbicide” a lot of the larger growth of unwanted shrubs and trees to give our long leaf pine seedlings a chance to see some sunlight. Please volunteer your time to this valuable effort.



Pecan Kisses Recipe

by Peggy Loefstedt

Here's a recipe that several MGs requested. The meringues disappeared at the January Meeting. Yummy, they freeze well and would be great for Valentine's perhaps with a little pink food coloring added.

I will be happy to share the recipe with anyone who wants it.

Found the recipe an old Alabama Pecan Association cookbook I bought at the 181 flea market in November.

So easy, and so good. Enjoy...

Peggy Loefstedt

PECAN KISSES

2 large egg whites

3/4 cup light brown sugar... packed firmly

1/2 tsp vanilla

2 cups pecan halves or broken pieces

Beat egg whites to form soft peaks. Gradually beat in brown sugar and vanilla...

DO NOT UNDER BEAT.

Fold in pecans, coating well with egg-sugar mixture.

Drop by teaspoon on greased (or non-greased foil lined) cookie sheet about 1" apart.

Bake 1/2 hour at 250 degrees. Turn off oven: let stand 1/2 hour in closed oven...

DO NOT OPEN OVEN DOOR DURING HOUR OF COOKING...

When cool, store in airtight container. These freeze well... Makes about 55

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 3	History of Marietta Johnson School, Giddens Aud. 6 pm
February 5	BCMG Board Meeting, Foley Library, 9:30 am
February 12	BCMG General Meeting at 104, Hospitality 9:30 am
February 17	1st Mardi Gras Parade. Dauphin Island 1 pm
February 20	Grass Roots Article Submission deadline
February 28	Arbor Day
March 2	Tuesday Evenings with MG begins 6 pm at 104
March 5	BCMG Board Meeting at Bryant Bank, 9:30 am
March 12	MCMG General Meeting at 104, 10 am
March 20	Grass Roots Article Submission deadline

A Kind Donation “to the cause...”

Gene Sellier, our Treasurer, brought our attention to a note included in a donation from David Armstrong: “I am donating this money as thanks for the Seminole Pumpkin seeds given to me during the Baldwin County Master Gardeners winter/spring workshops. I sold 52 Seminole Pumpkins @ \$11 each and am donating 1/2 to my church and 1/2 to the Master Gardeners as attached. (\$26.00) Thanks! Dave Armstrong”

February 12 General Meeting at 104 : Speaker Topic: 'Hardscapes',
Presented by Shayne Godwin and Camilla Latady of Sexton Lawn & Landscape

Shayne Godwin – Sexton Lawn & Landscape, Operations Manager, has over 20 years experience and leads the Sexton team on all landscape, hardscape, drainage, lighting and irrigation projects. He is certified through the National Masonry and Concrete Association. He has experience with virtually every type of landscape construction imaginable. He has contributed to the landscape at various commercial properties, sports complex, property owner associations, and residential properties. He contributes his time and expertise within his community to help others in need with various landscape projects.

Camilla Latady – Sexton Lawn & Landscape, Landscape Architect, began designing for Sexton Lawn & Landscape in September 2010. With about 20 years of experience in landscape design and architecture, she's created landscapes for nearly every type of property imaginable, including institutional campuses, public parks, commercial developments, residential subdivisions, and streetscapes revitalizations – just to name a few. Camilla earned her bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Mississippi State University. She is licensed in Alabama and Mississippi to practice landscape architecture, and she served as president to the American Society of Landscape Architects in Alabama. True to her character, she donates her time and talents to her community on a regular basis.



Grass Roots is compiled and edited by Barb Mühl Comstock. The publisher is Sandra Walton at the Baldwin County ACES office in Bay Minette. The newsletter is available before the monthly general meeting on our website:
www.baldwincountymastergardeners.com.

Submission of articles, items of interest, photos of BCMG events, garden tips, garden jokes, etc. are greatly encouraged and appreciated. Send to grassrootsnews@gmail.com



Baldwin County Master Gardeners
% Baldwin County Extension Office
302-A Byrne Street
Bay Minette, AL 36506
Attn: Sandra Walton

Next meeting:

February 12, 2015 Location: 104
Hospitality 9:30 am

If your contact information changes,
please contact Jane Wright.
251-965-3003 or
Janwri98731@gmail.com or bcmgin-fo12@gmail.com