
MG SPROUTS

Calhoun County Master Gardener Newsletter: Volume 22, Issue 10

January 2021



Red Bandanna Award Winners at
Cane Creek Community Gardens

MG Calendar

- MG Board Meeting, TBD.
- MG Business Meeting, TBD
- Sprouts Deadline, January 25, 2021

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President's Message

After a year like 2020, I'm not so sure wishing everyone a Happy New Year is appropriate anymore. But I do wish all Master Gardeners a Safe, Healthy and Productive New Year!! I cannot even begin to tell you things will be returning to normal because I just don't see things ever being like they were before the pandemic...We have a vaccine but it's slowly rolling out to all areas; we still have a virus that is always changing and scientists still don't know all there is to know about this particular strain. Masks are an easy and safe answer to protect yourself and show you care about the health of others. So, it's always going to be different; but we can adapt, we can change, and together we can conquer even this strange virus!!

So, it's January and it's supposed to be cold, so I don't know if we'll have a meeting or not; I am checking on some other venues that have much more room for us to spread out indoors and have much more ventilation and airspace to help lessen any dangers as we know them today. We will not have programs for the first few months of the new year, as we are still in a planning and preparations stage for the 2021 AMGA Conference in April. We will use each monthly meeting to update everyone and get everyone involved in making this conference a success! I have asked the State AMGA Board to strongly look at any possibilities of cancellation as early as possible to save us all the stress and strain in preparation right up to the last minute for it all to go away and leave us with a bunch of door prizes, silent auction items, and possible contractual debt at hotels, caterers, speakers, etc.

The Board will meet in January to also lay out our new year as CCMGs. We will be appointing a Nominating Committee, Volunteer Hours Coordinator, Awards Committee, Audit Committee, and several other necessary positions to serve in this new/conference year. The Board will also be taking any additional projects requests for service hours for Board approval.

As we start a new year of service and support, let me remind everyone now that to remain active as a lifetime, regular, or even an associate MG, you must achieve 25 approved volunteer hours of service and 10 approved Continuing Education hours (CEU). That simply breaks down to 2 hours and 5 minutes a month, it's really that simple!! So, get started and get the minimums if that's your plan and don't wait until the end of the year to try and figure out how to get your final hours! Webinars are still online for review and CEU credit, so start getting those now while the weather is cold and damp!! Start planning your spring/summer garden and start collecting all those seed and plant catalogs!! But mostly use January to get started!!!

See y'all at the Creek!

Skooter

Garden Inspiration

"I've always felt that having a garden is like having a good and loyal friend." *C. Z. Guest*

My Favorite Plant from Gary Lawson

"My favorite plant is an eggplant, *Solanum melongena*. It is about waist high making for easy harvesting. It has a small blue self-pollinating flower that produces beautiful colorful fruit. Eggplant is a prolific producer from early summer thru late fall. The fruit is delicious in a great variety of recipes. If you're into eggplants, Thailand has the largest variety of any country. The origin of the name is the first ones English speakers saw was a white fruit variety from India."



A basket of Gary's homegrown eggplant

Gary Lawson is involved in a wonderful project sponsored by the State Master Gardeners; Grow More, Give More. It is designed to offer fresh vegetables and fruit to others who may be food insecure. Food could also be offered to friends and neighbors without gardens. Gary told me there will be a formal workshop this year via Zoom for people who want more information. MGs get credit for hours if they participate in this program. (See Enter Hours page.) If you want more information, check the Alabama Master Gardeners' website.

Gary adds: "I got the poundage from the Auburn "food preservation in Alabama" booklet 1999 edition. They are certainly arrogant. They don't list eggplant. This summer I gave 6 pounds of squash, 10 pounds of eggplant, 4 pounds of corn and 2 pounds of tomatoes to some people I deliver Meals on Wheels to. Friends came by and picked 2 pounds of figs and 24 pounds of southern peas.

The guy who keeps my lawn mower and garden tiller serviced gave me some corn seed his late grandfather grew. Since the guy doesn't have garden space, I grew 17 pounds of corn for him."

Thank you, Gary and others in Calhoun County who may have participated. Please give us a shout out if you were part of this terrific program so we can recognize you in next month's Sprouts.

Gardening Giggle

"A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows." *Doug Larson*

Who is January's Mystery Gardener?

November's Mystery Gardener was Tim Kaylor. Dick Pritchett and Skeeter Sims identified him.

January's Mystery Gardener

I grew up in Coldwater. I recently moved from an area where I could grow tropical plants and citrus trees.

My favorite part of gardening is to propagate plants from cuttings and seeds. Also, I love learning from other gardeners.

Some of my other hobbies are quilting and embroidery. I also like to read.

I was a nurse for ten years and an elementary teacher for twenty-five years.

I am a current resident of Jacksonville.



Recipe of the month from Landon Rivers: Black Bean Soup and Shrimp

Olive oil spray
¾ pound peeled shrimp
1 cup frozen chopped onion
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 cups rinsed and drained canned black beans
1 cup drained diced tomatoes
2 cups chicken broth
¼ cup long-grain white rice
1 teaspoon ground cumin

Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Several drops hot pepper sauce
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro (optional)

Chop onion and place in freezer ahead if time. Peel the shrimp. Heat a large saucepan over medium-high heat and spray with olive oil spray. Add shrimp and sauté 2 minutes, turning after 1 minute, or until they turn pink. Remove to a plate. Add the onion and sauté 2 minutes. Add the garlic and continue to cook 1 minute. Add the black beans, tomatoes, chicken broth and rice. Bring to a boil and cook 10 minutes or until rice is cooked through. Add cumin, salt and black pepper to taste. Return shrimp to soup for a few seconds to warm through. Add hot pepper sauce or place on the table for each person to add. Serve in large soup bowls and, if using cilantro, sprinkle on top.

If you have a recipe to share, please submit it to Sherry.

MG Happenings by Sherry Blanton

Hopefully, you are all healthy and staying safe during this difficult time and able to make a new normal as we wait out the end of this virus.

Regarding photos from the November meeting, there have been questions since they appeared on Facebook. We wear masks at Cane Creek and maintain a safe social distance. In the photos of our new Master Gardeners, many are without masks. I asked the folks what they were comfortable doing and most removed their masks. It took not more than three or four minutes to snap their pictures. Our Red Bandanna winners were also fine with taking off their masks.

Congratulation to the eighteen interns who have now been certified as Master Gardeners. They are all making a difference in our community. Please note that Gene Lockette and Jimmy Nail were not pictured.

A huge shout out to our 2020 Red Bandanna winners: Lyn, Dick, Sarah, Carolyn, and Diana. This award has been given for years to MGs who have provided exemplary service to our organization. Not pictured was Diana.

Please read Linda McDaniel's weekly e-mail as she keeps us current on our latest information such as volunteer activities and meetings. She will let you know the plans for our January monthly meeting.

Tree Amigos has closed to volunteers until the end of January. I am not sure of the status at Longleaf Botanical Gardens, but you can check with Hayes to see what is happening there. Cane Creek volunteers work every Tuesday, weather permitting.

There will be 10 interns for the 2021 training class. They will be meeting on Thursday at the Calhoun County Extension Office; the class will be a hybrid – part online and part in person. We will look forward to meeting them.

Please welcome Doris Baucom as a regular contributor to Sprouts. Doris is a spectacular photographer, birder and gardener. We will spotlight her beautiful photographs each month.

Continue to earn CEU hours online. There are some informative resources available. Hayes' garden tours (Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama A&M University) are a delight. If you have not watched the visit to Herb Lewis's garden, it is a joy.

I have seen excellent videos from the North Fulton County Master Gardeners who are associated with the University of Georgia. Be sure to catch the videos on Alabama Smart Yards, Longleaf Botanical Gardens, and Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama A&M University sites. The Public Library of Anniston posts the videos of my library programs on its YouTube page. They are eligible for CEUs.

Sherry

January Gardening Tip

Seed catalogs will be soon filling our mailboxes; order yours early for the best collection. A cutting garden of a variety of beautiful summer flowers makes a good warm weather addition to our landscapes. The time to plan is now.

Certify Your Habitat to Help Wildlife!

Wildlife habitat gardens are a haven for local birds, butterflies, and other wildlife. Tell us how your yard or garden provides habitat and the National Wildlife Federation will recognize it as a Certified Wildlife Habitat®.

Once certified, you can share your accomplishment and commitment to helping wildlife with your whole neighborhood by purchasing and posting an exclusive Certified Wildlife Habitat® sign.

The secure \$20 application processing fee and sign purchase directly support the National Wildlife Federation's programs to protect wildlife and its habitat. Creating a wildlife habitat garden to attract birds, butterflies, and other neighborhood wildlife is fun, rewarding, and makes a big difference. It's easier than

you might think. Here is what your wildlife garden should include:

Food: Native plants provide food eaten by a variety of wildlife. Feeders can supplement natural food sources.
Water: All animals need water to survive, and some need it for bathing or breeding as well.

Cover: Wildlife need places to take shelter from bad weather and places to hide from predators or hunt for prey.

Places to Raise Young: Wildlife need resources to reproduce, and to protect and nourish their young.
Sustainable Practices: Maintain your yard or garden in natural ways to ensure soil, air, and water stay healthy and clean.

Check the web site at National Wildlife Federation to certify your garden.



Tom Gilbert makes a special presentation to Billy McDaniel from Tom and his wife Teri for Billy's tremendous leadership at CCCG.



2020 Certified Master Gardeners



Skeeter presents members of the Cane Crew Volunteer Crew with a brown bandanna for their work at the Gardens.



Camellias provide winter color

Calhoun County Master Gardener Officers

President: Skeeter Sims
Vice President: Linda Wakefield
Secretary: Judy Shew
Treasurer: Myra Gann
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Sprouts is published by:

Master Gardeners of Calhoun County

Editor: Paula Barnett-Ellis
Copyeditor/Proofreader: Sherry Blanton
Advisor: Dr. David H. West, County Extension Coordinator
Advisor: Mr. Hayes Jackson, Urban Regional Extension Agent
Advisor: Ms. Dani Carroll, Regional Extension Agent