

MG SPROUTS

Calhoun County Master Gardener Newsletter: Volume 21, Issue 7

July 2020



Patricia Patty receives her Diamond Gemstone award. Congratulations for your commitment

MG Calendar

- MG Board Meeting, 10:45 a.m., July 8, Cane Creek Community Gardens
- MG Business Meeting, 12 p.m., July 8, Cane Creek Community Gardens.
- Lunch and Learn, Noon-1 p.m., July 22, via Zoom
- Sprouts Deadline, July 25, 2020

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President's Message

Happy Independence Day! This is a day we celebrate being American, all of us! Our history has taught us many things – some good, some bad and in some cases, we still did not learn the lesson points. But we still have much to celebrate, with probably just as much to work towards changing. Our country is a country much different from other parts of the world but there are also many things we have in common with those other cultures as well. America has been called a melting pot; but think about that for a minute...when you put things into a melting pot, what happens? Everything heats up and joins together to become one. So why does America (being a melting pot) still hold on to our individuality, our uniqueness, our differences? It is not hard for me to admit that I probably have much more in common with someone than I have that is different – that's the way I was raised, and it is deeply embedded within me.

This commonality, melting pot concept, take intentional change but sometimes it comes about without us even realizing it. For instance, those that know me know I grew up here; I served 28 years in the Navy and came home to live my life out on the farm. I became a Master Gardener for the education; but more importantly to volunteer and help others. What I never saw coming was how it would change me. I thought other Master Gardeners were a bit crazy – you've all heard it, "that's one of my favorite plants", "that's another one of my favorite plants", or "this is one of my favorite native plants". I thought, it's just another plant; but over the past 5 years, I have become one of "those" people. I see a plant; I learn about it and I "have to have" it; then it happens again and again. I am still mainly focused on perennials with a purpose, but I am slowly beginning to appreciate flowers for just being flowers! Maybe this is a disease because it appears to be contagious.

Speaking of contagious diseases, the virus is still a major concern in our area; so, for July we will plan to hold our general meeting outside under the pavilion again. Bring a lawn chair and social distance; wear a mask if you desire; if you are feeling sick or not well, stay home; we will do everything we can to be safe and take precautions. Our July meeting was always planned for a social event with the presentation being a slide show of our group's gardens, yards, and landscapes. It should be fun and a great way to see others' hard work during these times without having to get out and about to every Master Gardeners' home grounds.

I do hope this newsletter finds everyone safe and well. If you need anything in any way, please do not hesitate to call me and let me know – we are stronger together and can always find a way to help a fellow Master Gardener even during these times when our gatherings are somewhat constrained. Call me, text me or email me and let me know how y'all are doing and that you are ok. I miss seeing everyone and it has been a while, so there is a lot to catch up on between all of us.

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I'll reiterate, our home grounds are open and looking great!! So, if you are out and about and want to see some beautiful plants that you might or might not have, check our Cane Creek! The new Sweet Tea Garden is almost complete and will be opening probably by late July.

See y'all at the Creek!



Garden Inspiration

"I must have flowers, always, and always." *Claude Monet*

MG Happenings by Sherry Blanton

July 8th at noon will be our long-awaited spring social and our monthly meeting for July. We will have watermelon, ice cream, and special awards for garden trivia. We will meet under the pavilion, with social distancing. Please bring a lawn chair and a pen/pencil. Masks are welcome if you choose to wear one. We will unveil the brag book of photographs from each other's gardens, Power Point style. Thank you to Janet Evans for composing it and thank you to everyone who supplied a photograph. We have a lot of talented gardeners and photographers in our Association. We met under the pavilion for our June MG monthly meeting; it was very pleasant there.

Stephen Faughn presented our Lunch and Learn Program for May via Zoom. Our June program was also presented via Zoom. If you missed it, there is a link on our MG Facebook page where it can be seen.

Our July Lunch and Learn will also be hosted on Zoom.

There has been a terrific selection of programs presented via Zoom aimed to help volunteers earn their continuing education units. Check Alabama Smart Yards on Facebook for links to them.

Volunteers are busy working at Cane Creek, putting the finishing touches on the "Sweet Tea" native garden. They are also keeping our color beds beautiful. If you want to be involved with these wonderful projects, contact Skeeter Sims to check times and dates. Tuesday is their usual day; however, they have also been working on some Saturdays.

The Tree Amigos program has yet to open to volunteers.

Longleaf Botanical Gardens has opened to volunteers. Please contact Hayes Jackson to get on the volunteer schedule.

We send condolences to Billy and Linda McDaniel on the passing of Billy's mother Nina and to Linda Emanuel on the passing of her mother.

The Cane Creek Bluebird Trail from Jim Wakefield

In 2014 Klaus Duncan found someone to make several bluebird boxes and recruited me to hang them at Cane Creek. He has since moved and is no longer a master gardener.

Every February I clean out the boxes and make them ready for birds to nest. Over the years we have lost two or three and this year I decided to put in some new boxes because they have been used by birds almost every year.

When I asked the Board for some new boxes, there was some reluctance to buy any new boxes. I forgot about the request until last week when my friend Billy McDaniel told me he had some new boxes if I wanted to use them at Cane Creek. I jumped at the offer and on Saturday, June 13th, I met Billy at the Coke Williams memorial shed where he had five beautiful new bird boxes & all the hardware to put them up.

That morning I put up four new boxes, taking down one that was damaged, using a site where a box had disappeared, and two new locations. If you look, there are bird boxes from the fence behind the community garden boxes up front to the cleared area past the bridge near the back of our property. Two of the old boxes have birds in them now, late in the baby bird season. Next Spring, we should have an even better residency rate. Thank you, Billy McDaniel.

Cane Creek update from Skeeter Sims

- Grounds are looking great!! Thanks to Stephen for mowing, watering crews for watering, and everyone for the hard work on Tuesdays and Saturdays during June. Every week there is plenty of weeds to pull, plants to deadhead, and standard maintenance to be done, so y'all keep coming!!

- Sweet Tea Garden is nearing completion. Thanks to all who have donated, planted, and tended the native plant beds. Thanks to all the manual laborers that

cleared the path, put down landscape cloth, hauled and placed rocks and continue to work to get this special project complete. We have only a few more things to accomplish but naturally they are the big ones, so be on the look-out for an ALL HANDS email when we get ready in July to complete the pathway, build the end box, and finish off the porch backdrop wall.

- Mark your calendars now for September!! Fall Fest preparations will be our priority as that is the only way we can continue to pay for all the maintenance and improvements to our home ground



Recipe of the month from Donna Tillison: Chocolate Chip Pie

Ingredients:

2 eggs
1/2 C all-purpose flour
1/2 C granulated sugar
1/2 C packed brown sugar
3/4 C softened butter
3/4 C chocolate chips
3/4 C pecans
3/4 C shredded coconut
1 unbaked deep dish pie crust

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325* Beat eggs in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Add the flour and both sugars to the bowl and mix until combined. Add softened butter and mix. Stir in chocolate chips, nuts and coconut until evenly mixed. Spoon batter into crust.
Bake for 50 to 60 minutes or until a sharp knife inserted, comes out clean. Cool for about 30 minutes on a wire rack. Can be served warm with vanilla ice cream

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

July Gardening Tips

Watering becomes the most important garden task in July's heat. Trying to dispose of black lubber grasshoppers takes our time. Use a flat shovel or the bottom of a shoe to get rid of them. These menaces have no predators but human (many MGs tell me they are experts in cutting off their heads). Japanese beetles may be around. The best method to handle them is manually. Pick them off your plants and drop them in bucket of soapy water. If you decide to use a beetle trap, place it away from your garden to prevent attracting the beetles to your flowers.

Keep a keen eye out for diseases in the garden to handle the problem before it ruins a vegetable crop or a plant.

Keep bird feeders stocked and bird baths filled with fresh water. Hummingbirds enjoy visiting a feeder especially for them and are fun to watch.

Excess standing water in saucers, or other water holding objects are invitations to mosquitoes; empty out unnecessary ones and clean your bird baths every day

Mystery Gardener

June's mystery gardener for is Margaret Copeland. Patricia Patty, Sarah Ballard, and Linda Wakefield identified her.

Who is July's Mystery Gardener?

I was born in California, moved around with my family, and grew up here in Anniston.

Perhaps my main pleasure is making order out of chaos in a garden - although I certainly have mixed results. Primarily, I enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, shooting and camping.

I moved away from Anniston 40 years ago, joined the Army for 28 years (Private to Lieutenant Colonel) , and spent the last decade or so as a Military Advisor to foreign Ministries of Defense (Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, and the Philippines). Last year I finally retired and moved back home.

My spouse and I live in the Deerfield Farm subdivision in Golden Springs.

If you recognize who the gardener is, please let Sherry know.



Gene Lockette picking up the rocks to make the path at CCCG.



Dick Pritchett with his mask on at the June MG meeting



MG secretary Judy Shew taking minutes at the June MG meeting.



Skeeter presents the state award for Sprouts to Sherry Blanton on behalf of our MG Association

Garden Humor

The best way to garden is to put on a wide-brimmed straw hat and some old clothes. And with a hoe in one hand and a cold drink in the other, tell somebody else where to dig."
 - Texas Bix Bender, *Don't Throw in the Trowel*



Members receive their badges for service hours (and social distance)



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Vice President:	Linda Wakefield
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