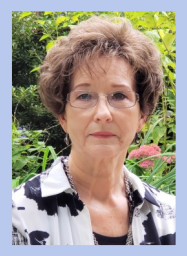




GARDEN THYMES



Janet Boothe (W06)

Last words from our current President

These past two years have literally flown by. I have never known a group of people who are so friendly and who enjoy helping others as you do. If we could only bottle your passion and sell it, we would never need to do another fund raiser!

Thank you to the Board for your guidance and your ability in finding solutions to every problem. Thanks also go to Project Chairs/Co-Chairs; you are awesome. Please continue your commitment to MGNA by supporting Carol and the new Board; they are going

to do a tremendous job!

It has been a privilege and an honor to serve as your president. Thank you! Wishing you health, happiness and gardens overflowing with flowers and vegetables.

“Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with a dream.” Josephine Nuese



Our 2023 MGNA President

Carol Weand (F18)

I want to thank Cyndi Lindblom and Barbara Stansky for the planning and execution of an outstanding Christmas party. This event was a festive platform for the presentation of awards and to introduce and install the new Board.

My heartfelt thanks to all the board members and committee members who agreed to serve in 2023 and are excited as I am to lead MGNA.

The plans and projects of MGNA would not happen without the tireless work and contributions of all the members. I appreciate everything that you do to support our organization.

My wish for 2023 is that we continue to build a dynamic active member base which we can achieve if every member and intern explores the MGNA committees and project options and finds one or more new areas to serve. If you have questions on any committee duties or specific projects, do not hesitate to contact me or the committee chairs directly.

As I look with excitement on the year to come, I find it hard to believe that I was only 8 years old when I received my first garden book from a dear aunt who then encouraged me to join a junior garden club.

Now decades later, as the president of MGNA, I feel this position is the culmination of the years dedicated to my love of plants and my desire to expand my knowledge of gardening.

I am still as excited as that 8-year-old girl to be working with so many experienced and knowledgeable gardeners and continuing to learn from them.

I know we can all continue to learn together, have fun, and expand our presence in Madison County doing great things in 2023.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Our 2023 Board
- 2022 MGNA Awards

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2023

Article and pictures by Jean Lee (W95)

New Officers and Board Members for 2023 were installed by outgoing President Janet Boothe at the December Christmas Social.

Our 2023 Officers are:

President:	Carol Weand
Vice President:	Carlita Edwards
Treasurer:	Barbara Stansky
Secretary:	Susan Beam

New Board Members:	Cathy Hales
	Deen Rice
	Owen Hofer

Rotating off the Board are Carolyn Wade and Candy Trowbridge. We thank them for their years of service to MGNA. We also are grateful for Janet Boothe who agreed to return as President after serving as President in past years. We thank her for her service.

Continuing on the Board as Directors are Walt Lindblom, Jim Mullen, and Paul Gohmann.

We thank these new Officer and Board members who have agreed to give their time, talents, skills and resources to lead this amazing organization. As members, we ask that you support them when asked to serve on committees, projects and other events/activities. MGNA has been Number One at the state level for many years and we hope to maintain that status, with your help.



OUR OFFICERS:

Susan Beam, Barbara Stansky, Carlita Edwards, Carol Weand

OUR NEW OFFICERS:

Deen Rice, Owen Hofer, Cathy Hales is not pictured



2022 MGNA Christmas Social and Silent Auction

Article by Cyndi Lindblom (F13) with Pictures by Deen Rice (14)

This year our Social theme was snowmen. It started with placemats and grew from there.

As usual our food was delicious and the auction was fun. We didn't have as many items but they were quite nice. We made around \$700 this year. Keep your eyes out for items for next year's auction.

After social hour and dinner we opened our program with officer installation and closed with awards.



Morris Elementary

Pictures and article by Carolyn Wade (W12)

What a great fall semester we have had with the students at Morris Elementary School. We meet with the students every Tuesday, rain or shine. The students have installed new pollinator beds next to the greenhouse and, after researching their options, each group plant their choice, ready for bees and butterflies to visit in the spring. Mary Ann Stasiak enthralled the children with a slideshow of her visit to Asia and followed it with a taste test for different kinds of rice. Who knew there were so many?

If you would like to join us, we meet with the kids every Tuesday at 11:45 for about an hour. Next up – propagating plants for our spring plant sale at the school.

Thanks to all the great volunteers who help with the class. Without them, we wouldn't be able to introduce these kids to gardening and so much more.

Carolyn

Each spring the class plants Tennessee spinning gourds for the next class. The students painted gourds and dried okra (thanks Carlita Edwards) as Christmas ornaments. I'm not sure what ended up with more paint on them – the gourds, the kids or the desks. It was a fun event and I know the kids enjoyed it.

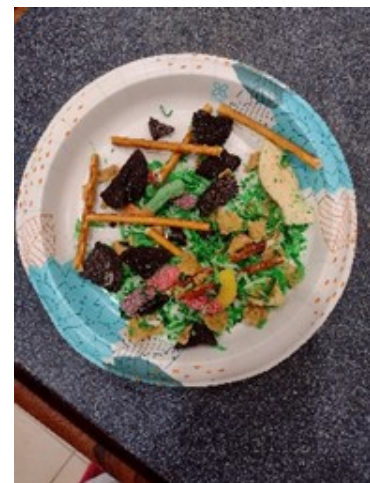
We ended the semester with a talk on compost and each group making a small compost bin. Normal items were added, then we added a few 'regular trash' items to see what would happen to them – dimes, straws, rocks. The compost bins were placed on the shelf and will be opened in May to see what happened. I made one with the same ingredients, but mine will be rotated or shaken each week to see if there is a difference in decomposition. To finish the class, everyone enjoyed some compost to eat. Never had edible compost? Send me a note and I'll send you the recipe.



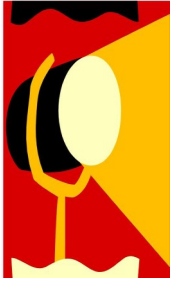
Gourds



Pollinator beds



Edible Compost



Ameree Young (F13) Field Trips Chairman

Being a wife, mother and grandmother is my most fulfilling and rewarding role, but becoming a master gardener helped me find a new purpose after experiencing empty nest syndrome. Soon after leaving the work world in 2012, I registered to take the MG classes and have been volunteering in different ways ever since.

I first volunteered in the Adult Day Care Horticultural Therapy program at the Senior Center with a great group of MG volunteers. I enjoyed planning activities and interacting with the program participants. That was my main focus for nearly eight years until the pandemic ended the program. I also did Habitat for Humanity landscaping which was another wonderful way to be involved in the community. From planning and designing to implementing landscape designs, I worked with MG volunteers.

I now volunteer with the Morris Outdoor Classroom. I enjoy interacting with the students and helping them learn about plants and ways to grow and take care of them. Another role I have is MGNA Day Trip and Home Garden Tour Coordinator.

My hobbies include cooking, baking and working in my own yard to keep the plants healthy through a regimen of fertilizing, pulling weeds and keeping the plants watered. Many plants in my yard have been moved at least once since I like to see where they will thrive best as the shade changes with maturing trees.

There have been many master gardeners in the MGNA who have been an inspiration for me and have helped me to see what it truly means to have a servant's heart for volunteering and how it makes a difference for others in the community.

... many master gardeners ... have helped me to see what it truly means to have a servant's heart for volunteering ...

TOUR OF HUDSONALPHA GREENHOUSE

Article by Cathy Hales (W05) and most pictures unless otherwise specified

Forty one Master Gardeners toured HudsonAlpha's new greenhouse and lab building on Oct. 14. The scientists are sequencing or preparing to sequence genomes from dahlias, peanuts, sunflowers, corn, barley, and Vernon Bush's azaleas.

The scientists are isolating the genes to help understand the role of plant genes, improve crops for sustainable agriculture, accelerate biofuel development, and support biodiversity. Humans get 23 genes from each parent, but plants can get up to four sets of 23 genes from each parent. This lets one set of genes develop traits such as growing taller, absorbing carbon, or providing its own fertilizer. The greenhouse has \$1 million worth of lights. The lights, humidity, air conditioning, and heating are automated and can be controlled from the scientists' cell phones. Their plant growing starts with steam-sterilizing soil in a cart. Seeds are stored at 4 degrees Celsius for 10 years, although some seeds can last 30 years.

Approximately half of all the 350 plant genomes sequenced worldwide were done at HudsonAlpha. A lab at 601 Genome Way allows scientists to have both access to complex plant genomes and the ability to examine genetic differences across thousands of plant varieties. High-performance computing allows scientists to analyze and integrate enormous amounts of data. They hope discoveries in crops and new scientific methods will change the way we grow and use plants. The lab is considered the most expensive room in Huntsville, outside the Arsenal. Sequencing the first human genome cost \$1.3 billion, but now it can be done for \$1,500.

Their work speeds discovery through improved breeding processes building upon what farmers have done for centuries. These new tools have the power to significantly impact the agricultural community through plants and crops that thrive on marginal lands or poor soil conditions, grow in winter months without disrupting current growing seasons, and require fewer inputs such as water and fertilizer.

HudsonAlpha was started in 2008 with the mission to improve health and well-being for all people. The Herb and Terry Lewis educational garden is planned to be placed in front of the greenhouse. It will have an original cotton plant and a modern cotton plant as well as show the history of other plants they research.

Sequencing the first human genome cost \$1.3 billion, but now it can be done for \$1,500.



Our 41 attendees

Photo by Amber Myrick

Tour continued on next page

HUDSON ALPHA TOUR continued . . .



Peanuts in several stages of growth. The scientists are hoping to grow plants that will thrive with less care and produce no toxins. Peanuts produced in the USA are safe to eat, elsewhere in the world not so much.



This is considered the most expensive room in Huntsville outside the Arsenal. The counters sequence the genomes of plants and humans.

THE DEMONSTRATION VEGETABLE GARDEN

Article and Photos by Susan Parker (F17)

The DVG participated in the *Grow More Give More Seed Trials*. Here are the results of the Basil trial. The Rutgers Devotional and Prospera Compact basil were transplanted in July under the tomatoes as companions. Both varieties held up well until frost with no sign of downy mildew or other diseases. The basil was trimmed and harvested once there was enough foliage. The Rutgers Devotional was taller, The Prospera Compact was tight. Both had excellent color and should be placed on your list for next spring.

The DVG beds have been seeded with radish, parsnips, lettuce, and mustard. Transplants from the HBG greenhouse Bok Choy, Kohlrabi, and Minuet Chinese Cabbage have been planted. The transplants are covered with a harvest row cover or frost cloth to keep out the cabbage worm moths. Daikon Radish has been planted in an inground bed to allow the roots to penetrate the hard pan produced by repeated tilling. Keeping beds planted will reduce weeding through the winter.

In September, the fall intern class toured the DVG and were presented information regarding the ACES *Grow More Give More* program, viewed garden equipment donated by the RC&D Council and participated in a transplant/seeding activity. Carlita Edwards and Diane Rodgers assisted in preparing and dismantling the equipment.

The year-to-date donation total as of December 22 was 1,329.27 pounds.

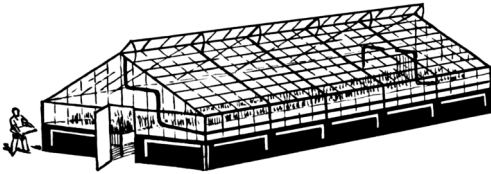


Partial DVG Crew Tina Cechovic, Marge Mullen, Susan Parker, Susan Beam, Diane Rodgers, and Jim Mullen.



The donation totaled 1329.27 pounds.

TALES FROM THE GREENHOUSE



Article and photos by Carol Umstaedter (W05)

In Corroboration with Josie Asquith (1984),

Master Gardener Greenhouse Manager

Our Crew! With 19 regular volunteers, the MGNA Greenhouse crew has been super busy this fall. So busy, we need more folks who want to learn about propagation and plant care.

MGNA Fall Intern Visit. In November, the MGNA Fall Interns all crammed into our little greenhouse for hands-on lessons on division using leaf and stem cuttings. Josie Asquith also gave them a tour of the arrangement of plants by type, light requirements, and hardiness. After quizzing Josie on all kinds of plant care questions, the students left with canna rhizomes, begonia leaves, and hopefully a thirst for helping out at the greenhouse.



Josie showing the Interns how to fill a pot



The Interns listening intently to Josie

Greenhouse Notes:

Succulents Taking Over? Are your succulents being impolite by forgetting the size of their container and trying to take over? Here's how to cut them down to size. Using very sharp pruners, cut about 2 inches off each end or reduce to a size that doesn't look unruly. Lay those cuttings in a tray to allow the ends to dry out for a day or so. This allows the cells to provide a protective layer—kind of like a skin scab—so it won't rot in damp soil. Place in a small pot or seedling tray. Water when the soil is dry, but not desert-like. Then water deeply. Once you see new growth emerging from the stem, the plant is ready to transplant.



Advisory Council Meeting, November 1, 2022

By Cyndi Lindblom (F13)

- The 2023 State Conference will be in Tuscaloosa on the campus of UA, April 3 - 5. Registration will be online only. More info coming soon
- 2024 State conference will be Baldwin County April 22 – 24 in Daphne.
- 2025 state Conference - -no location as yet. Counties can volunteer or there will be arm twisting going on.
- The State Leadership meeting will be held on ZOOM.

Transformation Garden in Auburn is taking shape, The AMGA owns the naming rights of the garden. MGs, need to come up with \$400,000 in the next 4 years.

Speakers Bureau – The state level AMGA speaker bureau is gathering more speakers.. If you are asked to speak on a subject in South Alabama you can say no. Your expenses will be paid though if you choose to do it..

Jan. 31 is the deadline for applying for funding for projects.

Need input on volunteer hour reporting. Lyn Webb called and asked the MGs their thought on why we report so much on Special Projects...answer...."don't know where else to put it"

Keep in mind when reporting hours:

1. Will it benefit the community
2. Is it associated with our purpose
3. Is it related to gardening or to MG

NOVEMBER'S PUMPCULENT WORKSHOP

Pictures by Janet Boothe (W06)

This workshop consisted of taking a pumpkin and adding succulents to it to make a unique table setting.



INTERNS RECEIVE THEIR CERTIFICATION

Pictures by Deen Rice



Madison County Extension Agent, Rhonda Britton passed out the certificates to the interns



Rhonda with outgoing MGNA president, Janet Boothe

MGNA President presents a nominal gift to Community Fellowship Baptist Church for being so generous to MGNA with the use of their facility



Walt Lindblom (F13) accepts the gift for his church.

Jane R. Parks Memorial Grant

By Janet Boothe (W06) with Pictures By Deen Rice (F14)

The Jane R. Parks Memorial Grant was established in 2012 as a memorial to a mother and a MGNA member. This grant supports educational horticultural projects in Madison County.

The 2022 recipients of the grant were:

Boys & Girls Clubs of North Alabama: Has been serving the children of Northern Alabama for over 80 years. Their project is to upgrade an existing garden with a sensory garden. Each sensory garden will include a collection of plants that appeal to one or more of the five senses; sight, smell, sound, taste and touch.

Huntsville Madison County Public Library: Their plans are to grow vegetables in grow bags, add a rain barrel, and a rain gauge in the Children’s Garden.

Jones Valley Elementary School PTA: Their goal is to take four unused garden boxes and incorporate them into a year-round educational garden. Two boxes will have pollinator plants, and two will contain vegetable plants.

Mt. Carmel Elementary School: Their grant money will be used for purchasing plants known to attract bees and butterflies, bird houses that appeal to Bluebirds and installing more pond features.

Donations to the Jane R. Parks Memorial Grant are deeply appreciated and are tax deductible.

Grant committee members: Janet Boothe, Sue Bish, Suzanne Kirkhuff



Boys and Girl Clubs: Angela O’Neil and Harold Turner



Jones Valley PTA: Kari Uitto



Madison Public Library: Carolyn Reagle (picture by Jean Lee)



Mt Carmel Elementary: Dr. Suellen Epps

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Lifetime Achievement Award
Josie Asquith (1984)

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Master Gardener of the Year
and
Project of the Year Award
Cindy Lindblom (F13)



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Intern of the Year Award
Karen Kirk-Williams (F21)
(not present)

New Initiative Award
Barbara Stansky (W17)

Photos by Jean Lee and Deen Rice



GARDEN THYMES



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Thank you to our members who submitted articles and pictures and special thanks to our proofreaders. We would have no newsletter without you.

Editor

The Alabama Master Gardener Program is conducted at the county level by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

