

# The Dirt

## President's Message by Penny Claliborne

I hope you all had a chance to view the beautiful gardens on the Gallery of Gardens tour. It really made me stop and ponder how I could turn my landscape into "my perfect garden". And since I am starting with a clean slate I have the opportunity to make my garden into whatever I want as I put in my plantings. Each of the gardens had a distinct feel as you wandered through the property. And each garden offered so many inspiring ideas for me to consider implementing. Some of the ideas were as simple as hanging mirrors and adding more whimsical objects in my garden. Other ideas were more challenging. Like, where can I tuck a greenhouse that won't distract from the rest of the garden? One thing I have to keep in mind is that these gardens did not become the beautiful settings that they are overnight. Some of them were years in the making with many, many revisions while others were newly planted but did take some time and a lot of effort.

While my husband is very good at what he does for a living he is not very helpful when it comes to gardening. That is why he is in charge of mowing the grass, period. So the effort part is quite a task in itself for me. As I was hauling around bags of leaves the other day I thought to myself, "This is what it must feel like to be a contestant on The Biggest Loser". Instead of getting a workout by moving tires from one point to another I move bags of leaves, Black Cow, and rocks. Sure you all are laughing with this image in your mind but it's true. And some of you are saying to yourself "yeah, I too know what it must be like to be a contestant". Then there are days when I ask myself "why am I doing this?" You know – those days when the humidity makes you sweat just looking out the window contemplating what you need to tackle first. But then again I go back to the desire to have "my perfect garden".

One thing we have to keep in mind is that what makes a garden perfect for me will not necessarily make a garden perfect for you. Dianne Miller put it in perspective when she told me to design my garden with ideas and plantings that I find pleasing – no matter what others might think. And she certainly took her own advice in her garden. I think that is what made each of the gardens on tour so enchanting – they took on the personality of their owners. Although I loved each of the gardens I know that if I were to take ownership of any one of them I would change a few things about it to put in my personality.

Over the years as I have toured several Master Gardeners gardens I have observed how different each one is and how it reflects the owner. A few years ago Betsy Yeager's garden was on tour and it was such a lovely, peaceful place with artistic flair that matched her personality. Judy Stout's garden on Fowl River is certainly a reflection of her personality with the casualness and relaxed atmosphere. And Alice Marty's garden mirrors her carefree & giving personality with all the perennials occupying her garden – ready to be taken home by the next visitor.

So, now as we walk about our own gardens we need to remind ourselves that our garden is "perfect". They are perfect for each one of us according to our individuality.

May you each find perfect peace in your perfect garden.

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### Dates to remember:

- June 2—Lunch and Learn
- June 3—Board Meeting
- June 5—Member Meeting
- June 9—Farm To Table
- No July Board Meeting



## Chronicles by Nancy Adams

We are still hearing great things about the bus trip to **Jim Scott Gardens** last month. The weather was beautiful, the gardens were amazing, and the personable bus driver made it even more enjoyable. And as a bonus, the bus stopped at **Southern Home Gardens** on the way back. Alice has posted some beautiful shots of the garden on Shutterfly for you to see.

Mobile County Master Gardeners are working with growers and chefs to make the third **Farm to Table Tasting Event at 5 Rivers on June 9<sup>th</sup>** the best yet.

Reservations should be made no later than May 30<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed to help with setup, decorations, and transportation of food. Contact **Regina Gunn** for details.



**Fred Muenzmay shows Jane Trawick a fragrant geranium.**

**Barbara and Fred Muenzmay, of Eagles Roost Herb Farm, Rockford, Alabama,** gave a delightful program on **Growing and Cooking with Herbs** following the May general meeting. They shared some favorite recipes along with "tips of the trade." One tip that should interest those of us who did not know: ***You should never freeze olive oil, as bubbles can form and cause botulism.*** Also, **Basil** is good for aromatherapy, facial care, repelling insects, and improving memory. It also makes a great air freshener. Another tip: Never fertilize or over-water herbs.

**Mobile Botanical Gardens personnel** reported that the **Spring 2014 Plant Sale** had the highest turnout of volunteers in its history and was a huge success. Also, accolades were heard for this year's **Gallery of Gardens**, with a nice variety of styles and locations. Many of us went away with fresh and unique ideas for our own yards. Thanks again to the Master Gardeners who shared your knowledge, time, and hard work in these events to

### President

**Penny Claiborne** looks over a red veined sorrel.



make Mobile proud.

The **DREAM Garden** needs someone to oversee everything related to it, including finances. If you are interested, please contact **Penny Claiborne** for more information.

A change has been made to the search engine on the **Phone Line**. Ask Diane Anthony about the new look when calling to take a two-hour shift. Slots are still available throughout the summer.

There will be a **Seafood, Science, and Celebrity** event at the **Dauphin Island Estuarium** in the fall, and Mobile County Master Gardeners have been invited to participate. Stay tuned for more information in coming months.

**Brenda Bolton** is gathering program ideas for next year's general meetings. Please send suggestions to her at [brendabolton310@gmail.com](mailto:brendabolton310@gmail.com).

*It's summertime! Enjoy your gardens, but remember the bonnets and sunscreen.*

## Master Gardener of the Month– May 2014

By Brenda Bolton

**Penny Smith** has a quick smile and an infectious laugh that is immediately identifiable across a crowded room. In fact, that musical laugh is just behind her voice, always ready to spill out and fill the space around her. That is almost enough in itself to recommend her as Master Gardener of the Month, but in fact, the committee selected Penny as this month's Master Gardener of the Month for her miraculous remake of the Jr. Master Gardener gardens for our Seminar this year.

The story behind Penny and the Jr. Master Gardener program and demo gardens merits some time, but first let me introduce her to those of you who may not know Penny Smith.

Penny is a native Mobilian who took a short vacation to Michigan for a few years as a child before returning at 14 to make her life here. Penny is married to husband Michael and is Mom to four wonderful children and two grandchildren, the youngest of whom just arrived this month! I happen to know how wonderful Penny's children are because I was their high school assistant principal, and from experience I can attest to their wonderful-ness, a trait that can no doubt be attributed to their Mom. I had the further pleasure of welcoming her daughter Lydia back to my old school as a teacher. Penny is a great Mom with great kids, says their old high school assistant principal.

Penny credits the summers spent in Mississippi with her Grandmother Lee, who always had a vegetable garden that fed the family, with her own life returning to the soil. Penny tells the story that before she was a master gardener she had azaleas planted as foundation plants, and every year as they outgrew their boundary, she would dig them up and move them another foot away from the house...so now she knows how far away from the house to plant foundation plants!

She became a certified master gardener in 2000 and was selected to serve on the Board shortly after in 2001. In a Board discussion one day, she posed a question about why the grounds at ACES were not landscaped or more developed. The answer was "You're in charge of that now." [There's a lesson in there somewhere...] And so she began the process of planning areas on the grounds on which to establish gardens and working with volunteers who chaired each section. The grounds began with an Herb, Butterfly, Shade, and Native plants garden on the north side and a formal garden on the west end of the building. Later, the Cottage Garden emerged when the maintenance man, Brian, asked if she would plant some flowers in front of the maintenance building. The fruit and vegetable garden was originally conceived as a residential dooryard garden to show homeowners how they could incorporate fruits, vegetables, and berries into a home landscape, and was designed by James Miles, Tom Daugherty, and Penny. Their first order of business was soil amendment, which Penny says took about a year to accomplish! The Greenery Sale originated as a source of funding for the Demo Garden – JoAnne Ortmann's idea, who was one of the garden chairs.

Also in 2001, Penny found her niche in Master Gardeners when she completed the Texas A&M Training in Birmingham on the Jr. Master Gardener Program. We all know the great job she does working with the Jr. Master Gardeners, a group that ranges from 10 to 30 at any time. With a grant for a Jr. MG club, Penny established the raised beds that she brings students to every Wednesday to teach gardening concepts such as green manure, cover crops, seed saving, or crop rotation. The students raise, harvest, and eat their own food because one of the program goals is learning to eat healthy, whole foods.

Penny's official "part time" job is working for John Olive at the Auburn Research Extension facility, where she is involved in routine maintenance as well as propagation and assisting with data collection for pathology testing of plants.

I asked Penny to share with us what her she would like to see happen in the Master Gardener program and after only the briefest pause she said, "More participation in the demo gardens." She went on to say she often goes to the Trial Gardens maintained in a partnership between the local extension research center and Master Gardeners in Poplarville, Mississippi, and would love to see some of those concepts implemented here, such as doing some true experimental gardening that involves trials, comparisons, and data gathering as part of the master gardener education program.

I suspect if any one of us were to venture a question about the demo gardens today, Penny Smith (who learned her lessons well) would jump at the chance to say, "You're in charge of that now!" And I also suspect that few of us, given that same challenge, would meet it with as much enthusiasm and effort as Penny Smith did.

Congratulations to Penny for being selected Master Gardener of the Month, and for all of her many contributions to the Master Gardener Program!



**Penny Smith**

## Lunch and Learn



A "First Mondays" program presented by Mobile County Master Gardeners, a program of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System

**Monday, June 2, 2014**

**Noon to 1 pm**

**Where:** Jon Archer Center, 1070 Schillinger Road N., Mobile, AL 36608

Bring a friend and a lunch. Free. Drinks are provided.

**For more information:** 251-574-8445 or [www.aces.edu/Mobile/mg](http://www.aces.edu/Mobile/mg)

**Presenter:** C.P. Winters, President of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Daylily Society



**Bill and C.P. Winter**

**Topic: "Daylilies"**

C.P. Winters began to develop an official daylily display garden in 2004. Today CP's garden is known as God's Glory Garden and is located on an acre of land at her home in Hurley. There are approximately 1000 different cultivars in this garden. During the peak blooming season of late April, May, and June, CP hosts groups who get a first hand look at this operation. Her daylily garden received official recognition in 2009 by the American Hemerocallis Society. The purpose of the garden is to educate the public about the beautiful daylily - the wide variety of flowers and the care of these flowers.

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## Mobile County Master Gardener Public Education Event

Presenter: Maggie Lacey

Windmill Market, Fairhope

When: Thursday, June 5, 2014, 9:30 – 11:00 am

Where: Jon Archer Center, 1070 Schillinger Road, N. Mobile

Admission: Free

**Topic: "CSAs, Straight from Alabama Farms to your Table"**



Maggie Lacey is the manager of Windmill Market located in Fairhope, Alabama. As the buyer for the grocery store in the Market, Maggie works with over 50 different local farmers to help bring fresh and local items to your table. Maggie will talk about CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) also known as Produce Clubs. A CSA subscription for three months provides a healthy box of food sourced from Baldwin and Mobile County Farms each week. Boxes can include a dairy/bread option as well, so come meet Maggie and learn how you can become a locavore.  
(a person who makes an effort to eat food that is grown, raised, or produced locally)



**When:** Monday, June 9, 2014, 6-8 p.m.

**Where:** 5 Rivers Delta Hall, 30945 Five Rivers Blvd., Spanish Fort, AL 36523

**Reservations Requested by May 30, 2014 - \$65 per person**

Please make checks payable to Mobile County Master Gardeners

12915 Dauphin Island Parkway, Coden, AL 36523

**For more information:**

Call: 251-574-8445

Email: [jda0002@aces.edu](mailto:jda0002@aces.edu)  
[www.aces.edu/Mobile/mg](http://www.aces.edu/Mobile/mg)



By **David Holloway** | [dholloway@al.com](mailto:dholloway@al.com)  
 Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

MOBILE, Alabama – Plans are underway for the annual Farm-to-Table dinner hosted by the Mobile County Master Gardeners and once again the aim is to pair locally sourced produce, meats and seafood with local chefs to a an tasty evening of food and fun.

This year's tasting will be **6-8 p.m. June 9** at the 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort.

The list of chefs and local producers who will be on hand for the evening reads like a who's-who of Coastal Alabama's top food providers. Georgia Roussos Catering, Bistro Escoffier, The Italian Fisherman, The Bean & Bistro, Chef Rob and Co., Derailed Diner, The House Restaurant and Bar, Bay Gourmet Catering, Eat Peacefully, The Little Cake Shop, Serda's Coffee Co., True Midtown Kitchen, Union and Pinzone's Italian Downtown will be there offering up tasty samplings of their wares.

The producers and growers include Chasing Fresh from Fairhope, Dana's Seafood from Bayou LaBatre, Farm Fresh Market in Theodore, Henrietta's Dairy in Mobile, Jeta Farms from Elberta, Ken Buck Farms in Irvington, Local Appetite Growers in Fairhope, Oak Hill Farm in Grand Bay, Organized Seafood Association of Alabama in Bayou LaBatre, Powell Blueberry Farm in Citronelle, Session's Farm in Grand Bay, Southern Fish and Oyster in Mobile and Sweet Home Organics from Leroy.

The menu is strictly chef's choice and some of the entrees include goat cheese-stuffed dates with onion jam and dehydrated blueberries, a baguette with Southwestern-style pimento cheese, pickled shrimp



Heirloom Tomatoes

## Farm to Table continued from page 5

served with a peach jalapeno jam prepared by the folks at Red or White.

John Weichman of The Italian Fisherman will prepare squash and zucchini cakes and bruschetta; The House Restaurant and Bar will prepare fried green tomatoes with herbed goat cheese and a shrimp remoulade; Georgia Roussos is planning to cook a whole roasted pig that she will serve as sliders and wraps; Eat Peacefully will serve a rustic gazpacho with garlic croutons.

In addition to the food, wine, dessert and live music will be offered.

Tickets for the event are only \$65 a person. Last year's event sold out so act quickly; the **deadline for making reservations is May 30.**

For information or to make reservations, call 251-574-8445 or email [jda0002@aces.edu](mailto:jda0002@aces.edu) online at [www.aces.edu/Mobile/mg](http://www.aces.edu/Mobile/mg).

They ask that you make checks payable to Mobile County Master Gardeners and mail them to Farm to Table, 12915 Dauphin Island Parkway, Coden AI, 36523.

Mobile County Master Gardeners, a program of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, are

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## Moon Gardens by Heleigh Bostwick



Photo source: [www.wkfblog.com](http://www.wkfblog.com)

An evening garden also known as a moon garden is exactly what it sounds like—a garden that you can enjoy in the evening, after a long day at the office, during dinner with friends, or for a little romance under the glow of the moon. Chances are, you're too busy to enjoy your garden during the day. If so, why not think about designing an evening garden.

1. Location -When choosing a location think about where the moon shines on the yard or where the light comes from at night if you have streetlights. In order to enjoy your garden by the "light of the moon" you should locate it in an area that's not shaded by large trees or overhanging shrubs and vines. Avoid windy areas as well.

2. Fragrance— For me, flower or foliage fragrance is probably the most important feature of an evening garden. That's because your primary sense at night is probably going to be smell. Flowers like nicotiana (flowering tobacco) and trumpet lilies are good choices, as is the moonflower of course (pictured above). Rosemary and thyme are great choices as well because of their fragrant leaves.

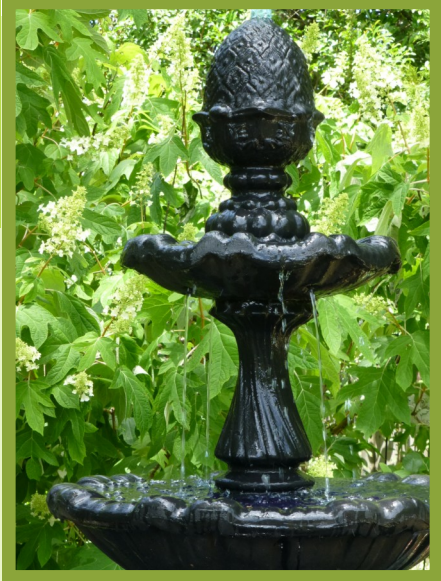
3. "Glow" Factor - Flowers— In an evening garden, the "glow" factor is important and white flowers often dominate the color scheme in evening gardens. Flowers in pale shades of pink, blue, purple, and yellow are good options as well.

4. "Glow" Factor - Foliage Choosing plants with light colored or even variegated foliage (hostas for instance) makes it easier to see them by the light of the moon (or streetlights if that's the case). Examples of silvery light colored foliage plants include artemesia, dusty miller, and snow-in-summer, which also has white flowers. Additionally, dark green foliage with white flowers can make the flowers glow even more.

5. Bloom Time -Obviously flowers that bloom at dusk or at night (like the moonflowers pictured above) are a good choice for an evening garden, but so are quite a few other flowers. The main criterion is that they do not close up at night like daylilies for example.

Recommended reading: Planning & Planting a Moon Garden by Marcella Shaffer, The Evening Garden: Flowers and Fragrance from Dusk Till Dawn by Peter Loewer.

# Garden of Master Gardener *Dianne Miller* Gallery of Gardens Tour 2014



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2nd vice President	Brenda Bolton '12
Recording Secretary	Nan Costello '10
Corresponding Secretary	Beth Walmsley '11
Treasurer	Susan Morrison '07

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Greer Wilhelm '10	2014
Jackie Jenkins '11	2015
Joe Pippin '11	2015
Mary Ann Days '11	2016
Carol Eskridge '12	2016
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Volunteer Activity Coordinator	Elisa Baldwin '06
Volunteer Hours Coordinator	Jo Hayes '99, Genie Schneider '12
2013 Class Representatives	Kathy Sanders and Jan Tanner
ACES Advisor	Ellen Huckabay

**Mission Statement:**

*The Alabama Master Gardener Volunteer Program is an educational outreach program provided and administered by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.*

Alice Marty will publish the Dirt on the 25th of each month. Articles for inclusion must be received by the 15th of the month and may be submitted to Alice Marty [MCdirt@comcast.net](mailto:MCdirt@comcast.net) or the Extension Office.

Issued by

Ellen Huckabay

Regional Extension Agent



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