

The Dirt

Inside this issue:

Chronicles	2
MGOM	3
Lunch and Learn New Certified Master Gardeners	4
Member Meeting Time To Pay Dues	5
Seminars New Class Photos	6
Social Media Herb Day	7
Mission Statement Officers and Board	8

Dates to remember:

- Aug. 23 Scholarship Reception-Auburn
- Aug. 27-Docent Training MBG
- Sept. 2 Board Meeting
- Sept. 4 Member Meeting
- Sept. 8 Lunch and Learn
- Friday, Sept. 13 Fall Planting Dream Garden
- Sept. 20 Herb Day

President’s Message by Penny Claiborne

Dear Master Gardeners,

This month ushers in the fall equinox. And with that come some of the prettiest wildflowers. As I have lived in different areas of the south I have fallen in love with these flowers that seem to pop up out of the most unlikely places. What intrigues me most is how these lovely specimens can survive the harshest weather in all seasons of the year. When the cold winter kills most of our shrubbery and the hot summer cooks the plants that replaced them, wildflowers seem to laugh at us. Maybe that is why I have always loved wildflowers.

When we lived in Atlanta Joe-Pye Weed was a favorite of mine. It seemed to always be peeking out from behind the brush with its soft pink flower heads towering above everything around it. When I spot it here in the Mobile area it reminds me of the mountains and the cabin we owned in Blairsville, GA. Other wildflowers I love are Queen Ann’s Lace, butterfly weed and rattlebox. All of which I tried to dig up and transplant into my garden. I was never successful with butterfly weed as its roots are so deep making it almost impossible to get to with my little trowel. Rattlebox was easy as all I had to do was grab a few of the dried seedpods and throw them in the garden.

Some wildflowers are transplanted by other means – birds and the wind. Beautyberry and winterberry seem to grow in the most unlikely places. If you have one in your garden you will end up with several as the birds eat the berries and deposit the seeds wherever they choose. I personally do not care as I think they are so pretty with their stems of purplish/reddish berries. And the fact that they attract the birds is very appealing to me.

One thing I have learned about transplanting some wildflowers is that when you take them out of their natural habitat and bring them into your fertile soil they go a little – well - wild! I learned this lesson the hard way after digging up some wildflowers that were growing on the side of the road in dirt that was hard as a rock. Yes, I said dirt as it was not “soil”. By the end of the summer I had wildflowers growing all over, taking over the entire garden. So a word to the wise – be careful of invasive wildflowers!

Then there are plants like Pokeweed that really are not that pretty but when mixed in with other plantings they can be stunning. When we went to the Houmas House in 2012 I noticed how the head gardener used this plant in the landscape. It really caught my eye and made me rethink using it in my own garden.

So as summer winds down take the time to look at the beautiful wildflowers that have begun appearing on the side of the roads around town. Some of them you will recognize, others may catch your attention and lure you over to the side of the road. Just remember they are called “wildflowers” for a reason!

May all your weeds be wildflowers,

Penny

Chronicles by Nancy Adams

Congratulations to Kathy Sanders, Cynthia Zan, and Jan Tanner, Interns who have completed the requirements for certification and are officially Master Gardeners! These three have already become actively involved and are making a difference.

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to hear **P. Allen Smith's** presentation to the **National Association of County Agricultural Agents** last month at their annual meeting in Mobile. Mr. Smith is an award-winning garden expert who is nationally known for his gardens. He has two television programs, *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home* and *P. Allen Smith's Garden to Table*, and is one of the nation's best known experts on designing gardens of all kinds. You may have seen him on NBC's Today Show, where he is a regular contributor.

All who attended August's **Lunch & Learn** program, *From Garden to Kitchen – Making Pesto*, presented by our own Master Gardener **D.J. Johnson**, went away with exciting ideas about dishes they could make. In addition to making and sharing pestos with the group, she gave a brief lesson about the origin of pesto.

At the August general meeting, County Agent Assistant, and Master Gardener **MaryJo Broussard** spoke about **Classroom in the Forest: Forest in the Classroom**, a 4-H Board program for Grades K-5, in which volunteers go to classrooms to teach about the forest for an hour

in the fall. They then take the children to different forests in the spring. MaryJo is looking for volunteers to help.

Marion Titlestad and Sarah Clark of Bay Gourmet Catering in Mobile inspired attendees to use fresh fruits, seeds, and vegetables to make delicious and satisfying smoothies and appetizers in their presentation, **Garden to Kitchen: Seasonal Appetizers**, at the August general meeting. Marion made smoothies with avocado, banana, blueberries, apple, mango, coconut water, chia seeds, kale, and frozen strawberries. Sarah made crostinis with toasted French bread, olive oil, goat cheese, arugula, and peaches with a touch of brown sugar. And they didn't just show it to us; they made enough for all to taste and savor. What a treat!

Marsha Stolz needs help with planting the **DREAM Garden** on Friday, **September 12, at 9:30**. Also, the **Herb Garden** will be planted on **September 23, at 9:00**. Bring gloves, tools, and a smile – and don't forget



P. Allen Smith autographs his book for Judy Weaver

the bonnet!

Mark your calendars: Mobile Botanical Gardens' **Fall Plant Sale** will be held on two weekends: Oct. 11-12 and 18-19. The Botanical Gardens will also have **training sessions for docents** in late September and again in February. Those interested should contact Judy Stout.

The Fall AMGA Educational Seminar, Wild About Our Back Yards, will be at Lake Guntersville on September 16, from 9:00 to 2:30. **Contact Jane Trawick** for more information. Four



Bay Gourmet Caterers presentation during August Meeting

Master Gardener of the Month, August 2014 Carol Eskridge

If, since 2012, you have attended any Master Gardener Seminars, Greenery Sales, Farm to Tables, field trips or State Conferences, Botanical Gardens plant sales or Gallery of Gardens Tours, or if you dropped by the butterfly garden at Ronald McDonald House...then you have seen our August Master Gardener of the Month, Carol Eskridge.

In between you may have seen her don the green apron and help someone make Pesto or plant an herb garden at ACES or any one of dozens of other Master Gardener activities and events she has supported with her volunteer hours.

How does she do so much?

The irony is that this same master gardener will look you directly in the eye with that sweet smile and say that she really doesn't have time to be more involved. I guess not. When does she sleep?

Carol Eskridge joined Master Gardeners in 2012 after retiring from St. Paul's school where she ended her working career as an administrative assistant. Joining one of the largest intern classes (2012) Carol has risen to the top of her class and made herself known as someone to be relied upon.



2nd Vice President Brenda Bolton with Carol Eskridge

Carol's family is native to Alabama and she was born in Mobile, moved to and spent her childhood in Houston, then returned to Mobile. Carol worked as a court reporter in Alabama for 11 years, then went home to raise her children as a stay-at-home mom. She later worked at St. Paul's in several roles and ended her career there after 17 years as an administrative assistant.

Carol attributes her interest in gardening to a lifetime of experiences in the fertile South. She recalls visiting her grandfather's large vegetable gardens, picking cotton and visiting sugar cane fields as a child, and always being surrounded by the South's ever-present gardens. Gardens "were just always there" she says. Which is why we love the South, right?

She joined Master Gardeners motivated by the master gardener reputation that she was exposed to through the Mobile Botanical Gardens plant sales and events, as well as several friends who were master gardeners. She wanted to learn, and she wanted a vehicle for volunteering in the community, and master gardening seemed to be the place to do both.

What Carol enjoys most about Master Gardeners is getting outside and actually working on projects, and she would like to see us continue having those opportunities and adding to them. While meetings are a necessity, they are not why she became a master gardener. She likes the getting out and the doing, the interacting with people and being part of a group with like interests. "I'm a worker bee," she says.

Part of this worker bee's schedule is time tending her own new raised bed vegetable garden where she and husband Joe are enjoying a variety of peppers, tomatoes, okra, even a few peas and white eggplant. "It's amazing what sun will do," she laughs, explaining that she has tried vegetables in the past but finally had to bend to the will of Mother Nature and move her efforts to the only true all-day sun spot in the yard this year.

She said that "one of the biggest gifts" Master Gardening offers is the gardening knowledge that is always out there. "Nothing we come across is new..." because someone else has already been there and is ready to share that experience.

What a nice thought, and what a nice gift Carol gives to us when she reminds us of what we all have to gain from each other.

Lunch and Learn

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

Monday, September 8, 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

Topic: “Composting For The Novice”

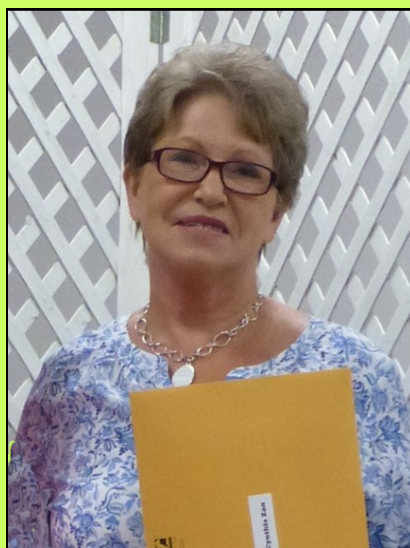
Presenter: Denise Heubach, Urban Regional Extension Agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, will talk about the techniques and benefits of backyard composting. Participants will have the chance to observe different composting methods and learn how to set up a simple composting system at home. Vermicomposting, a method of composting with worms, will also be discussed. Learn how to set up a “kitchen composting” bucket to reduce your food waste and begin producing organic matter for your garden using “red wigglers”.



Denise Heubach



Newly Certified Master Gardeners



Cynthia Zan



Jan Turner



Kathy Sanders

Presenter: Eleanor Craig

Fern Ridge Farms, of Cedar Bluff, AL

When: Thursday, September 4, 2014 9:30 – 11:00 am

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

Admission: Free

Topic: “The Wonderful World of Ferns”

Fern Ridge Farms is a small retail nursery located in Northeast Alabama specializing in hardy garden ferns. They presently grow over 75 varieties of garden ferns in quart, gallon sizes, and 3-gallon sizes. Eleanor will bring a variety ferns for purchase and talk about the care and maintenance of ferns. A wonderful opportunity to learn more about a much-loved garden plant that has been in existence for a very long time.



2015 Master Gardener Dues

Jo Hayes, Membership Chairman

It is time to begin paying membership dues for 2015. Our dues will remain at \$25.00 per year. \$10.00 of this goes to The Alabama Master Gardener Association. They require our dues be paid to them by December 31, 2014. Therefore I am requesting our dues be collected by December 1, 2014. This will give Susan time to get the payment to the State Association. This year we collected dues from 143 Master Gardeners. Next year the membership goal is more than 151 which was the number of paid members in 2010.

2015 Membership Dues - \$25.00 (2014 Interns Excluded)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please send check to:

Susan Morrison

12915 Dauphin Island Parkway

Coden, AL 36523

Seminars

REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE

The Wiregrass Master Gardener Association & the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens

Invite you to a summer Seminar

"The 3 R's: Living Green"

with Guest Speaker & Instructor,
Kimberly Ylitalo, Master Gardener
"lover of all things having to do with recycling and compost"

Thursday, August 21, 2014
 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
 \$10.00 per person

Register by calling DABG, 334/793-3224
 or send check with name and phone number to:
 DABG, 5130 Headland Avenue, Dothan, AL 36303

Receive **FREE** recipe booklet for DIY "Lotions and cleaning potions"

workshop will include demonstrations on
 how to make your own laundry soap (new and improved recipe)
 refashioning tote bags from t-shirts and
 how to make a composting bin using simple materials

Come join in the fun and learn some 'good stuff.'

FREE samples! **Door Prizes!**
Snacks and light refreshments

"Be the change you want to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi

Wild About Our Back Yards



AMGA 2014 Fall Seminar

September 16, 2014
 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Guntersville State Park
 Goldenrod Room

Registration: \$25
 Payable to:
 Marshall County Master Gardeners (MCMG)

Send Registration and Check to:
 Wilma Tanner
 80 Ensley Drive
 Arab, AL 35016

Seminar Sessions...

1. All About Eagles
2. Easy Gardens For The South
3. Nature Calls: Photographing Your Backyard and Beyond
4. Landscaping That Works (Full Day = 4 CEU's)





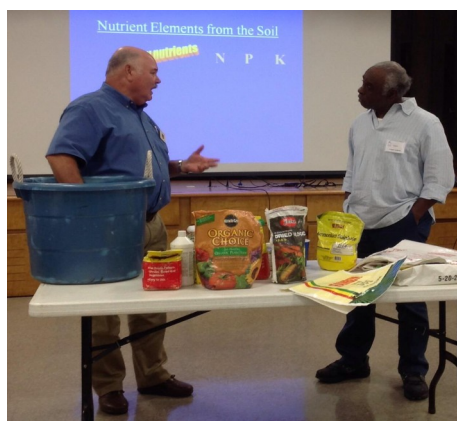
2014 Master Gardener Class



Dr. Mitchell with Class of 2014



Judy Stout with Intern Arnie Luterman
 Jan Ladd and Roy Suberly in background



Dr. Mitchell with Intern Robert Ledford



Joe Pippin class helper

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Mobile County Master Gardeners

www.facebook.com/Mobile County Master Gardener's Forum (a private group for Mobile County Master Gardens and Extension Staff only)

Twitter: [@MoCoGardeners](https://twitter.com/MoCoGardeners)

Shutterfly Photos: <https://mobilecountymastergardeners.shutterfly.com/> Password: Gardener (capital G) You must join Shutterfly (at no cost)to use the photo site.

Our Family Pet by Alice Marty

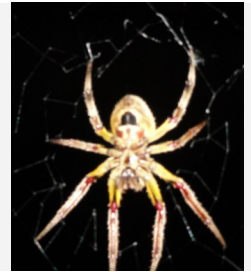
This little lady has been our autumn friend for the last two years. She doesn't build her large web until evening. Then she eats it by morning to re-ingest the protein it takes to build each night. If you forget she is there it can be quite a harrowing experience to walk through the web before the motion light comes on.

She is very difficult to photograph well, but I believe she is an orb weaver.

There are several other spiders species in the yard, but this nocturnal female fascinates me the most.

I cheer her on to eat all the mosquitoes she can each evening.

Like them or not spiders are a sure sign fall is coming soon.



The Gulf Coast Herb Society

and

Mobile Botanical Gardens

present

Herb Day 2014

Herbs from A to Z

Saturday, September 20, 2014

9 a.m. – noon

Mobile Botanical Gardens

5151 Museum Drive

Mobile, AL 36608

Cost \$30

Includes lunch, info packet, door prizes,
hands on project and more

We will be selling hard-to-get herb plants that grow well on the Gulf Coast, our unique cookbook "HERBS: A Reason to Season", and other herb/garden related items.

Cut here and send this part with your check—please **PRINT** clearly

HERB DAY 2014 REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Mail this form and your check to: GCHS, P. O. Box 81817, Mobile, AL 36689

Mobile County Master Gardeners
Mobile County Office
1070 Schillinger Rd. N.
Mobile AL 36608-52 98
Phone: 251-574-8445
E-mail: aces.edu/Mobile/mg

Officers

President	Penny Claiborne '10
1st Vice President	Regina Gunn '11
2nd vice President	Brenda Bolton '12
Recording Secretary	Nan Costello '10
Corresponding Secretary	Beth Walmsley '11
Treasurer	Susan Morrison '07

Board of Directors

Glenda Eady '09	2014
Greer Wilhelm '10	2014
Jackie Jenkins '11	2015
Joe Pippin '11	2015
Mary Ann Days '11	2016
Carol Eskridge '12	2016
Past President - Connie Barron	'08

Term Expires

Appointees

Newsletter Editor	Alice Marty '07
Volunteer Activity Coordinator	Elisa Baldwin '06
Volunteer Hours Coordinator	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 or the Extension Office.

Issued by

Ellen Huckabay

Regional Extension Agent



Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities



www.facebook.com/



Twitter: [@MoCoGardeners](https://twitter.com/MoCoGardeners)

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator and employer. www.aces.edu