

Garden Thyme



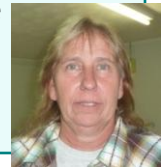
Monthly Newsletter of the East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association

March, 2014

From Our President, Ann Hammond...

Spring is almost here. At least that is what the calendar shows. This roller coaster weather may have us believing otherwise. But I do see spring coming. The daffodils seem to have come alive overnight. My baby's breath is in full bloom, and the yellow bells are waking up. Yep, I would say spring is definitely close by. Even with this crazy weather it will not be long before we are back in the dirt (soil) again. Hopefully the plants did not take too big of a hit with the extreme cold although I don't believe the cold was extreme as much as it may have been normal. After all, we have gotten accustomed to the warmer winters of years past. Therefore we think this winter has been cold. It won't be long now before we will be busy but hopefully not too busy to continue our projects. Smart yard, school beds, garden friends, and special projects. We still have a lot to do.

Then man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening. Psalm 104:23



Our March 17 Meeting...

Our March 17th meeting will be held at Ava United Methodist Church at 1:30 pm. Since we are entering the severe weather season in Alabama, it seems fitting to have a presentation on severe weather. Our speaker will be Ryan Stinnett. Ryan is a regular contributor on the ABC 33/40 Weather Blog/WeatherX.com. He provides tremendous experience to the team as he assists with severe weather on the blog and produces weather forecast packages. A self-described weather fanatic, Ryan loves all types of weather. He says, "I did not choose weather, but rather it chose me." (We'll provide his long bio for you at the meeting so you can read all of his accomplishments.)



Reach for the Stars

The following people earned stars for milestone volunteer hours during 2013. Thanks, Dani, for being with us to present the stars.

100-299 - Bronze

Toni Gay
Elaine Harris
Dee Perkins
Gary Smith
Janet Smith
Evelyn Hamrick

300-499 - Silver

Jackie Bolen
Sheila Bolen
Tom Harris
Charlie Partin
Paul Smith

500-999 - Gold

Ann Hammond
Almeta Partin
Augie Sanchez
Ralph Sanchez

For 2013, 29 members of East Central Alabama Master Gardeners logged their hours. We ranked 22nd out of 38 organizations with 3555.4 volunteer hours which is an average of 122 hours per person. Think where we would rank if all 43 members plus our interns logged their hours for 2014!

Upcoming Events/Items Of Interest...

2014 MEETING DATES

March 17 – Ryan Stinnett, ABC33/40
April 21
May 19
June 16
July 21
August 18
September 15 – Hayes Jackson Gardens
October 20
November 17
December - No meeting

If you are a Facebook user, be sure to "like" Dani Carroll's page, East Alabama Smart Yard. She updates this page frequently and includes information about all the upcoming webinars. Lots of good information!!

Tentative date for our plant sale is April 26 at Kiwanis Park.



Spring forward on March 9th

MARCH BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Judy Conaway 3/15
Ralph & Augie Sanchez 3/15



Thanks to all of you who came out for the blueberry pruning workshop and worked on the blueberry bushes. All of the bushes have now been pruned. Dani Carroll will have another blueberry seminar in July. Watch for details. If you happened to pick up an extra pair of pruners, Almata is missing hers.

And thanks to Dani Carroll for leading a discussion on blueberries at our February meeting.

Be sure to join the Webinar on March 7 for "Straight Talk About Termites." For more information on the series and how to connect to the webinars, visit: <http://www.extension.org/pages/70120>. This is an excellent way to earn CEU hours from the comfort of your computer chair!

"Springtime is the land awakening.
The March winds are the morning yawn."
- Lewis Grizzard and Kathy Sue Loudermilk,
I Love You

Membership Directory

It's time to update our ECAMGA Membership Directory. Please provide the following information to Sheila Bolen by the end of February; the updated directory will, hopefully, go out in March. Please provide the information you feel comfortable sharing with all our members.

Jack and Sheila Bolen
517 Clairmont Springs Rd
Talladega, AL 35160
256- 354-2188
sheilabolen@hotmail.com
BD: Jack 9/21
Sheila: 5/24
Anniversary: 8/10

Did you know that 86% of US gardeners grow tomatoes? Easy, tasty – they're the perfect crop. This year try a hybrid like Black Pearl or Tye Dye. Our experts predict these will be the season's hot tomatoes!
From Better Homes & Gardens

Welcome To Our Newest Class Of Interns! We Are Happy To Have You!!



Front row: Dani Carroll, Regional Extension Agent, Wyoleen Sikes, James Beddingfield, and John Terrano
Second row: Marcia Houze, Anna Hammond, Jessie Smith, and Betty Terrano
Back row: Michelle French, Elaine Beddingfield, Ann Brown, Michael Hammond, Brittany Garrett, Andrew Warren, Susan Reynolds, Alyce Johnson, Linda Barnes, and Crystal Walker

Folklore and Old Wives Tales

- You can expect one big storm at about the time winter changes to spring.
- Fog over a pond of water on an autumn or spring evening warns of a frost that night.
- The call of the first whippoorwill in the spring signals the end of cold weather.
- Don't plant onions and potatoes on the same side of the garden.
- Basil planted in pots or in the ground repels mosquitoes and flies.
- Flour sprinkled between rows of vegetables will coat and kill cabbage worms as they crawl thru it,.
- Flour will also coat and kill any slugs that crawl thru it.



The Wrath of a Wicked Winter

Hayes Jackson, Urban Regional Extension Agent

The local landscapes are showing signs of the recent winter cold. Some garden plants show immediate cold damage while others wait until basking in some warm spring-like temperatures before displaying their battle wounds. Unfortunately, not every winter is average. The winter of 2013-14 seems quite harsh. While the official low in Anniston was 8°F, some local gardens reported even colder temperatures. My backyard thermometer read a bone-chilling 7°F. On the heels of an extremely mild winter, the most recent winter felt extremely cold. In fact, the 7°F I recorded on my backyard thermometer was the coldest I have seen in eighteen years. While we expect to see these extreme cold dips on occasion in areas of Central Alabama, this winter seemed relentless with the frequent Arctic fronts and icy winds.

While many landscape plants take the cold winters in stride, many gardeners like myself often push the envelope with many subtropical shrubs and perennials. While perennials like elephant ears and cannas often fare better being dormant and comfortable covered in a layer of mulch, it is the tender shrubs like oleander and bottlebrush that are exposed to the biting cold and heavy frost. I have noticed many sago palms (*Cycas revolute*) gracing the local landscape. The rich green sago leaves are now a straw-colored brown as are many bottlebrush (*Callistemon* species). Some oleanders (*Nerium oleander*) look a little peaked. What's a gardener to do?



Assessing Cold Damage in the Landscape

Some cold damage is immediately apparent on landscape plants. Some plants turn dark olive green only to fade to a tannish brown. Cryptic or hidden damage only shows up once the weather warms. A plant may appear undamaged, but when temps hit 80°F the foliage of stems suddenly succumb. Never assume a plant is dead because it is damaged. Healthy and established plants are more able to tolerate extreme temperatures. Newly planted specimens and weakened or stressed plants will suffer the most. Don't fret if you see off color foliage on some landscape plants. The change in foliage color to an off yellow or purple is a natural phenomenon in many plants. Look for dried or desiccated foliage. Often the newest growth is more susceptible to cold.

Pruning Cold Damaged Plants

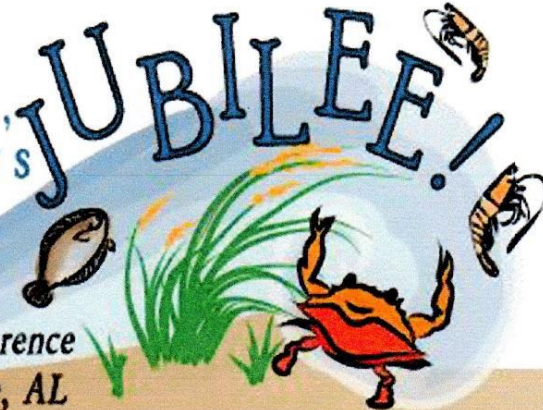
Give the landscape some time to recover. Often evergreen shrubs will drop damaged leaves only to be replaced by new spring growth. I have a large Sweet Viburnum (*Viburnum odoratissimum*) that has bronzed foliage, but the stems are healthy. My creeping fig (*Ficus pumila*) has burned, crispy foliage too. Some plants may have partial stem damage. Partially damaged wood should be removed down to strong, healthy wood. If an entire plant seems to have dead stems, remove the dead wood to allow new growth from the base. An excellent way to test if the wood is damaged is to scratch the bark with your fingernail. If the bark is hard and dry, the stem is likely to be dead. If the bark is supple and reveals a soft green, the stem is alive. Give plants some time to re-sprout new growth. You will be amazed how resilient some plants can be.

The brown sago palm pictured? The dead sago palm fronds should be removed. The crown should re-sprout when warm weather commences. If the center is damaged, allow some extra time for the base to re-sprout. Many plants can make an amazing comeback if given some time and proper care. If you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to call your local Extension Office.

Alabama ...
A Gardener's

2014

AMGA Annual Conference
April 28-30 - Daphne, AL



We are now about six months away from the 2014 Alabama master Gardeners Conference. We will be meeting April 28-30, 2014 at the Daphne Civic Center (DCC) in Daphne, AL. The Baldwin County Master Gardeners have been working with the DCC staff to ensure that we host the best possible conference experience. We have made arrangements for you to participate in some interesting side trips on your way to the conference on Monday April 28th. The tour schedule has been set up so you can tour both the bog and winery. Most are just a short mile or two off of I65.

Monday April 28th you will find our resident expert Fred Nation, at the Splinter Hill Pitcher Plant Bog waiting to provide a personalized tour of the Bog. Fred will lead a tour from 12:30-1:30PM and a second tour 2-3 PM. More information about the Bog can be obtained at the following link, [Alabama Splinter Hill Bog](#).

You may also want to save some time to visit the Perdido Vineyards Winery, [Perdido Vineyards & Winery](#). While there, winemaker, Jim Eddins,

will show you how the wine is made and how they make their internationally award winning vinegar. The tours are scheduled from 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. and a second tour 2- 3 p.m. Jim can easily be persuaded to explain how they produce bio-fuels with a portion of the crop. Just a visit to the gift shop and tasting room is worth the trip.

We have told Dianne at Crenshaw Farms Daylily Garden in Stockton, AL to expect several master gardener sojourners to stop in on their way to the conference. [CrenshawFarms-DaylilyGarden](#).

A stop at the Baldwin County Bicentennial Park may be another interesting choice, especially for history buffs. Bicentennial Park includes a nature trail which contains flora, fauna and wetlands indigenous to Baldwin County. [Baldwin County Bicentennial Park](#).

Just remember to leave time to make it to Daphne for conference registration.

The first day of the conference will culminate with a no host barbeque at the Daphne Bayfront Park Pavilion. It is lo-

cated in beautiful, newly landscaped Bayfront Park on beautiful Mobile Bay. [Daphne Bayfront Park Pavilion](#).

There are several hotels in the area that will be conference host hotels. Favorable room rates have been negotiated with the Daphne Hampton Inn and the Marriott properties (Fairfield Inn and Courtyard) near Bass pro Shop. Each of them has a registration link on the conference web site. We have our own dedicated page on the hotel web sites which automatically provides the code for the special conference room rates. These pages provide links to other events and attractions in the area, for those coming early and or staying a few extra days. The hotel conference rates include several days before and after the conference. Please encourage your master gardener friends, planning their trip, to support the host hotels at: [Hotel Information and Registration](#).

Blakely State Park and Meaher Park will also be available for those master gardeners who will be traveling via RV. Blakely is a new modern campground designed and built to accommodate the largest recreational vehicles. Meaher has 56 new campsites with up to 50 amp electrical connections with water and sewer. Information about these sites can be obtained by clicking on [Hotel Information and Registration](#).

We are looking forward to meeting you at the conference.



March 1, 2014

Presidents and Advisory Council Representatives of the AMGA,

Please share the following with the members of your associations:

- The **FAQ** link on the conference site – amgaconference.org – has some **answers to questions** already asked and **UPDATES** for those registered for conference.
- As with past conferences, Baldwin County is asking for a donation for the **SILENT AUCTION**. The value should be in the \$50 range. Only new items please; if antique, so state with value. Your donation to the Silent Auction is very much appreciated by BCMG and guarantees a lively, fun bidding process when we have desirable items on which to bid. We thank the county that has already sent in a donation.
- **Monday evening dinner**: inadvertently, the **vegetarian choice** was left off the registration form. The choice will be a dinner-sized vegetable salad at the same price. If you have completed registration and want the salad, please email Pat Greer at conf2014pat@gmail.com. These salads will be pre-packaged at the caterers so only the exact number requested will be available. If you have yet to complete registration, just write VEGETARIAN beside the 'amount charged' line.
- REMINDER: the **HOTELS** room rates are available until **March 31** or until the group block is sold out – whichever comes first. These are excellent rates that will increase once the rooms [group block] are booked.

As I said at ADVISORY COUNCIL, my direct conference email for questions is 2014ConChair@gmail.com. If you have questions, please send questions/comments to this email address. I will get answers and reply and then post to FAQ if the concerns might apply to others. This is the same email address for the **BEAUTIFICATION/TREE BOARD issues/questions** you may have for the Public Works directors of Fairhope and Daphne who oversee the landscapes of the public lands in each city.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you on the beautiful EASTERN SHORE of ALABAMA in less than 2 months!

Frieda Romanchuk and the Steering Committee of the 2014 Conference

**THE WEBSITE FOR DETAILED INFO ON THE AMGA CONFERENCE IS
AMGACONFERENCE.ORG.**

GARDEN FRIENDS

Q. What is it? What does it cost?

A. A group of Master Gardeners willing to work in your garden in return for your doing work in their garden. The only cost is your time and effort.

Q. What kind of work?

A. Here are some examples: prune shrubbery or fruit trees, make a garden path, build a new flower bed, propagate plants, put in bedding plants, move or install shrubs and small trees, make a compost pile, divide perennials, design and lay out a landscape, identify and tag landscape plants, build a trellis, make raised beds, install a drip irrigation system, edge beds, weed and clean up a garden.

Q. How much time is involved?

A. If your garden is one of the work sites then you will be expected to reciprocate with other Garden Friends. If your garden is not one of the work sites then you are welcome to join the work party without any commitment.

Q. What about volunteer hours?

A. This work does not count as volunteer hours since we will be doing work for other Master Gardeners. (Think of this as an old fashion barn raising! Everybody helps and reciprocates as needed.)

Q. How do I join?

A. If you would like your garden to be one of the work sites, do a work order and get it to Ann Hammond at ashmmnd@gmail.com or by mail. Also contact Ann if you have any questions (256-610-1625).

SAMPLE GARDEN FRIENDS WORK ORDER

WORK ORDER: Stan Roark

TIME: 8:30 am to 12:00 noon

DATE: February 21. Make-up: February 23

LOCATION: 1024 County Road 133, Wedowee, AL.

DIRECTIONS: From US 431 turn east on Alabama Hwy 48 towards Woodland. Turn left in front of Randolph County High School onto CR 133. House is a 2-story cedar house 1 mile from Hwy. 48.

CONTACT: (256) 357-4268 or stanroark@gmail.com.

WORK TO BE

PERFORMED : Install bed edging, propagate roses, dig small Japanese maples, prepare planting holes for 6 fruit trees and amend with compost, dig planting bed for boxwoods, divide one area of variegated lirope, move 2 large stones.

TOOLS NEEDED: Gloves, digging tools.

OTHER: I will provide bottled water, coffee and cookies.