

# Garden Thyme



Monthly Newsletter of the East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association

April, 2015

## Musings from Jack ...

My book recommendation this month is *The Power of Movement in Plants* by Charles Darwin.

Fertilize tree fruit and nut

Fire ant mound bait that has worked for us. Follow directions. Amdro Bait – active ingredient hydramethylnon

Hanging jug traps are catching a lot of fruit flies

The peach growers we talked to all say peaches are labor (require frequent spraying) intensive

Bag your fruit and give us a report. We used hosiery last year. Dismal failure. Tom and Elaine said paper worked well.

There is a UNC website that has an 1895 article for a leveling frame to terrace/contour a hillside.

*Jack*



**ECAMGA**

**ANNUAL**

**PLANT SALE**

**April 25**

**8:00 – 12:00**

**Kiwanis Park in Wedowee**

Plant sale set-up is Friday April 24<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 – 6:00 at Kiwanis Park. We will be at the covered picnic table area by the ball field. Please bring your plants, folding tables, pop-up awnings, chairs, hypertufa pots, etc. with you Friday evening so we can have everything set-up before Saturday morning.

## Gardening ... Wow!!

March 23<sup>rd</sup> Ann Hammond, Linda Barnes, Martha Burnett and Jack and Sheila Bolen arrived in Cullman for the 25<sup>th</sup> AMGA Annual Conference. It was three days of garden talk, door prizes, presentations on many different topics and lots of good 'ole fellowship and food. We all had our favorite speakers but my favorite was Carol Reese who basically said "just get out there and do it – you may change it later but get out and do it!" She was a down-home southern girl with quite the southern drawl and had a message that can cross the lines of all our gardens, landscapes and lives. We attended a session presented by Fred Spicer, Executive Director and CEO of Birmingham Botanical Gardens on "Pruning Techniques, Outcomes and Design Influences" and found his talk very informative and educational. Of course, we don't have any shrubs to prune but found the information and pictures of his projects from beginning to end very informative. Ann, Martha and Linda attended a session presented by Carol Reese on "Special Effects in the Garden" and they were pleased with her presentation, also. During the AMGA Business Meeting on Tuesday the new Officers, Board Members at Large and the Nominating Committee Member were installed. Also during the meeting 2014 AMGA Badge Awards were given out and Ann Hammond received her Gold Badge for 1000+ volunteer hours! Way to go Ann!!!! Wednesday brought the conference to an end we all headed home, glad for the experiences and knowledge we were taking with us. All-in-all it was a great time and we're all looking forward to what the next conference will bring our way! 2016's conference will be in Dothan and is themed "Sculpting the Garden".

Oh yeah – the two draped hypertufa pots we donated for the Silent Auction each sold for \$25.00! We did not win the Newsletter Award nor did we win the Search For Excellence Award, however, that will not stop us from trying again!

2015 AMGA Conference attendees: (L to R)  
Ann Hammonds, Linda Barnes, Martha Burnett, Sheila Bolen,  
Jack Bolen



**April Celebrations**  
Ann Hammond – April 28<sup>th</sup>  
Gary Smith – April 29<sup>th</sup>

## SPRING VOCABULARY WORD SEARCH



R	B	Z	B	V	S	W	W	H	K	F	C	T	Q	C
R	S	G	U	O	C	A	W	F	M	O	E	S	F	L
Y	H	M	T	N	K	T	V	X	R	O	B	I	N	K
W	O	Y	T	O	Q	G	R	E	E	N	Y	Q	W	Z
G	W	Z	E	C	T	T	O	X	T	L	A	Z	F	A
T	E	Y	R	L	I	K	R	O	E	V	H	M	W	Y
G	R	Z	F	E	P	D	J	Z	A	T	V	O	Y	K
A	S	D	L	A	Q	A	Y	S	P	P	B	A	G	T
R	I	M	Y	N	G	N	W	E	Y	N	L	J	V	B
D	K	W	K	I	S	D	T	S	I	Q	Y	D	L	L
E	P	A	Z	N	W	E	M	A	Y	F	A	I	W	O
N	G	N	Y	G	V	L	R	S	B	I	E	S	H	S
U	L	I	O	Y	K	I	K	J	B	I	Y	T	Y	S
Z	Y	N	R	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	C	K	E	O
Y	Q	K	P	I	C	N	I	C	W	O	B	N	U	M

BLOSSOM  
BUTTERFLY  
CLEANING  
DANDELION  
FLOWERS  
GARDEN  
GREEN  
MAY  
PICNIC  
RAINBOW  
ROBIN  
SHOWERS



### SIFAT

May 12<sup>th</sup> we will be taking a tour of SIFAT – "Servants In Faith and Technology" located between Lineville and Wedowee on a 176 acre farm on County Road 113. Tentatively we will be meeting there at 10:00 for a tour of the facilities. Bring your lunch and we will share a meal together on the grounds. Alyce Johnson has been our point-of-contact for this outing so please give her your thanks. I will be putting out an email with further information soon.

# Savory

By Gary and Janet Smith

The herb we want to talk about this month is Savory, another member of the Lamiaceae (the mint or deadnettle) family of herbs. We told you a great many culinary herbs belonged to this family.

When you talk about savory, you are talking about two very similar herbs, summer savory and winter savory. Winter savory or *Satureja montana* is a woody perennial and will last through a mild winter. It likes drier ground and is most hardy when kept dry. If the ground around this plant gets wet and freezes, it will die.

Summer savory or *Satureja hortensis* is an annual and has a more fragrant aroma, but it cannot stand any frost. The genus *Satureja* is named for the satyrs, ancient Greek mythical demigods of the forest who were known for their lusty habits and half-man/half goat shape. Legends held that the satyrs wore crowns of savory, and the herb was once held to be an aphrodisiac.

Winter savory has a stronger, more resinous flavor than the milder annual summer savory; both impart a peppery bite to foods and blend well with thyme, marjoram and basil. Both are used to marinate meats, add flavor to beans and vegetables. Both summer and winter savory are known especially as "bean herbs" because, from the cook's standpoint, they add flavor, and on the medicinal side, they reduce flatulence and gas.

Both savories look a lot alike, only the winter savory is more woody with many more leathery leaves. Both plants have narrow leaves that have no stems and grow in opposite pairs around the stalk. Both savories grow a little over a foot high, but the summer savory is the taller of the two. The two are close cousins.

So, which one do you choose? Herbal guru Richo Cech, and owner of Horizon Herbs offers the following advice: Winter has it over summer because it is perennial and therefore needn't be planted yearly. Summer has it over winter because it is a bit tastier and the leaves are softer and easier to work with. But both are excellent and totally interchangeable spices.

Savories have a very small, white-to-lavender, and two-lipped flower that grows out of the axil or base of the leaf. Like most other mints, the bracts or smaller leaflets growing with the flower makes the opposite pairs of leaves look like they grow in whorls around the stalks or branches. The flowers bloom from June until September. Bees are attracted to both varieties' pink, white or purple flowers.



Winter Savory  
[www.davesgarden.com](http://www.davesgarden.com)



Summer savory  
[www.vegetablegardener.com](http://www.vegetablegardener.com)

For about the last seventy-five years, savory has been used primarily for cooking. However, it was not always that way. For thousands of years, savory was mainly used as a healing herb. Even when it was used as a seasoning, it would help the body to digest food and get rid of gas on the stomach.

Medicinal benefits of savory besides serving as a digestive aid include antibacterial, antioxidant, astringent and carminative. The primary constituents that give savory these properties are rosmarinic acid, thymol and ursolic acid.

Winter savory is an evergreen perennial. Native to Mediterranean, Europe, and Russia. The dark green, shining leaves are an esteemed European medicinal rich in antiseptic thymol. Bright green-leaved aromatic shrubs are wholesome and carminative. Harvest the pre-flowering tops several times in the summer, shade dry, and rub out the stems. This makes good spice. Not quite as good, however, as Summer Savory.

Summer savory is an easily grown garden annual that produces large amounts of small leaves that when dried and removed from the stem make what is probably the most omnigastric spice known to herbalists. The early colonists brought savory with them when they came from Europe. They said it was the best remedy for anyone who was taken with indigestion. Savory is somewhat astringent, so it is good for those with diarrhea. The tea is good for a gargle for loose gums and sore throat. If the juice of the leaf is squeezed on a mosquito bite or an ant bite, it will give quick relief to the itching.

Strew seeds on a fine seed bed or propagation tray in spring and keep moist. Vigorous and evident germination will occur within a week or two. Plants prefer full sun, rich soil and regular watering to attain plumpest succulence. The Queen of Culinary herbs, Summer Savory nonetheless likes to hide in closets. Both savories have been used to enhance the flavor of food for over 2,000 years. Savory is an herb so bold and peppery in flavor that since the time of the Saxons it has come to denote not only the herb itself, but is synonymous with tasty and flavorful foods.



## CONGRATULATIONS

To our newly Certified Master Gardeners and our dedicated volunteers that earned Stars for all their hard work.....



*Pictures by Dani Carroll*



March 16<sup>th</sup> we met at Ann's shop for our monthly meeting, Intern Certification, Reach for the Stars and Draped Hypertufa Workshop. From the looks of the pictures a good time was had by all!





## GARDENING CHORES

- 1.Spring has finally sprung; however, cold nights and late freezes can still happen. Our last average frost date is April 15. Many of you may remember the Easter freeze of several years ago, when every azalea flower turned to mush.
- 2.Although we are two weeks into spring, the ground and the night air have still not warmed up enough for summer annuals. Perennials can be added now, though. It is a good idea to allow plants straight from a greenhouse to harden off before adding them to the landscape.
- 3.Add a fresh layer of mulch if you have not done so lately. Not only does mulch help to conserve water and moderate soil temperature, a circle of mulch provides valuable protection from lawnmowers and weed eaters. Two to three inches is plenty. When applying mulch, take care not to pile the mulch against the trunk of the tree or shrub. Think doughnut shape, not volcano.
- 4.Plants like azaleas and forsythias, which finish blooming this month, should be pruned when blooming ceases. Pruning spring-flowering shrubs should be completed by the first week of July.
- 5.April is a good month to divide fall-blooming perennials.
- 6.Allow the foliage on daffodils to yellow and dry naturally. Do not cut, braid or tie with a rubber band, as the foliage helps the bulb get the energy to bloom next year. You can, however, remove the spent blooms.
- 7.If you have not performed a soil test in the last three years, there is no time like the present. Test kits can be obtained from the Alabama Cooperative Extension Office. There is no charge for the kit, but the Auburn Soil Lab (where you send your soil samples) charges to run the tests. Fertilizing — whether lawns, shrubs, trees or vegetables — should be done only according to the results of a soil test.
- 8.If you have an insect problem in the garden, correctly identify the insect first. (If you are having a problem with an ID, the staff at the Cooperative Extension office can help.) If the insect is harmful and needs management, chose a method that will do the least harm to humans and the environment. If that method involves a pesticide, always read the directions carefully and follow them exactly.
- 9.Summer-blooming bulbs such as oriental or Asiatic lilies can be planted this month; caladiums need to wait till around Mothers Day, when the soil is nice and warm.
- 10.Time to get tomatoes, peppers and eggplant plants into the ground. Parsley can go in the ground, but heat-loving herbs like basil may need a few more weeks before they can be planted.
- 11.There will be many plant sales this month; all those beautiful plants can be so tempting. Before you make a purchase, remember to choose the right plant for the right place. You want to minimize stress on the plant, and maintenance work for the gardener.

[http://www.annistonstar.com/life/april-gardening-calendar/article\\_4faedcae-d498-11e4-bca0-fb57af0987ad.html](http://www.annistonstar.com/life/april-gardening-calendar/article_4faedcae-d498-11e4-bca0-fb57af0987ad.html)





# Birmingham Botanical Gardens



Janet, Gary and Jack check out a Possumhaw tree



Entrance to Gardens



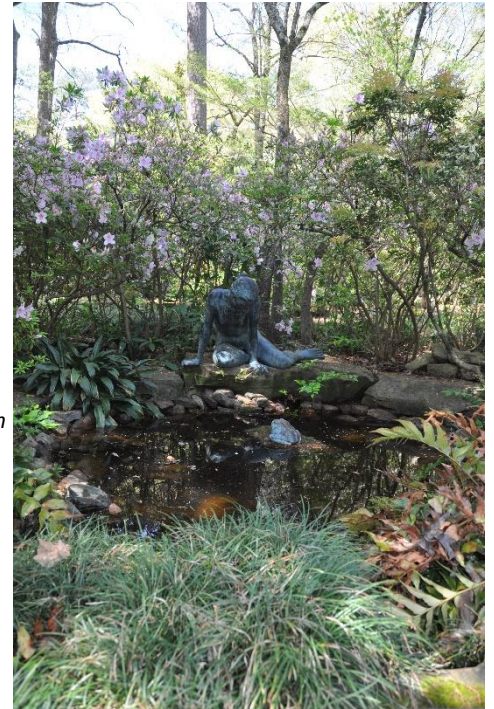
Martha, Linda, Dee and Wyoleen

April 11, 2015 eight ECAMGA members and three guests met at Birmingham Botanical Gardens for a self-guided tour and lunch meeting. Never having been there before I was enthralled by the number of flowers, plants, trees, shrubs in the gardens. Never had I seen so many different day lilies, irises or hostas in one location! The gardens are so much bigger than I had anticipated – no way you could do the complete gardens in one day! We will return!

Entrance to Ireland Iris Garden and Hosta Walk



Water feature in Southern Living garden



My favorite bed of roses!



Entrance to Hess Camellia Garden



Dunn Formal Rose Garden





# Celebrate Earth Day with Backyard Composting



As the 45th Earth Day approaches April 22, many people have been taking this day to reflect upon the planet on which we live. It gives us a time to be grateful for our Earth's beautiful skies and stunning waters, it's wondrous forests filled with green and mountain ranges that can pierce the heavens with their magnitude. With all of the beauty that the Earth has to offer, it is our job as citizens to make sure that it stays that way; not only for future generations but for ourselves. One such way to do that is backyard composting.



Jon Archer Center compost pile

Mallory Kelley, a regional Extension agent with Alabama Cooperative Extension System, talks about how simple composting can be at home. "Making your own compost is probably the simplest way to ensure high quality compost and save some money," said Kelley. "It's really not as complicated as you may think: There are many commercial composting bins and containers on the market that make it a mess-free and hassle-free process."

After getting a bin to place it in, the first real step in composting in your backyard is to know what is compostable and what isn't. Just like with any recipe, you only need to know the right ingredients.

"The biggest things not to put into a compost bin would be anything with fats or oils and bones. This will draw in unwanted critters but it will also it make smell bad and stop the formation of compost. Examples of this would be salad dressings, peanut butter, dairy products and bones, of course you also don't want any metals or plastics," said Kelley.

Wondering if there is any order to which you should be placing your compost? ACES Regional Extension Agent Ellen Huckabay talks about a good place to start in your layering methods.

"A good place to start is to start composting vegetable and fruit peels, coffee grounds and egg shells along with shredded paper, newspapers, grass clippings and leaves from your yard. Be careful with grass clippings though," said Huckabay. "If you spray herbicides in your lawn do not put those in your compost as most landscape plants and veggies are sensitive to lawn herbicides."



Bee Hive Community Garden Mobile, AL

If your composting begins to smell, Huckabay said, "If your compost begins to really stink here's the fix: increase your "browns," and turn your pile. I never leave green materials from food on top. Is it too wet? Maybe it needs to be covered, double check what you're adding because compost piles should never have an offensive odor."

Composting is a cheap and easy way to reduce your own waste while improving your yard and garden soils. It also contains beneficial bacteria necessary for plant growth, it improves soil texture and it provides necessary nutrients for a healthy garden. Composting also relieves pressure on public landfills by reducing the amount of garbage that pollutes the earth. It is so easy and simple, so let's celebrate Earth Day right and give back to the Earth.

