

Garden Thyme



Monthly Newsletter of the East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association

May, 2014

From Our President, Ann Hammond...

Spring has sprung and everything is growing. I didn't know I had so much grass! The plants are full and blooming. Isn't it great! I hope everybody has their gardens planted. It should be a good year for crops and flowers.

The Master Gardener class has ended. We now have new interns to welcome. Let's encourage them and help them to get their hours. WELCOME INTERNS!!

We just got back from the AMGA State Conference in Daphne, AL. What a grand time it was with lots of good speakers and good information. If you watched the weather you'd have seen we also had a good rain. I think they said we had 11" in 24 hours along with all the lightning, thunder and wind it could muster up. There was a mudslide behind my hotel – dirt/mud with small trees intact and resting in the middle of the parking lot.

The things you miss out on! Next year the conference will be in Cullman, AL – make your plans now!

Thank you for being so patient with me. I feel as if I have not been doing my job as well as I should. But we are still active, going and growing. Our next big event is the National Association of County Agricultural Agents July 20-24th in Mobile. Look for work dates on getting things ready. Also, look for dates for field trips – we have several coming up.


"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Ann



Our sincere condolences to Ann, Darren, Anna, Michael and TC on the loss of their loved one. Michael Scharko, Ann's dad, passed away May 5, 2014. Please remember the Hammond Family in your prayers.

*If your load
is too heavy
Remember
God will help
you
Just Ask
Him*

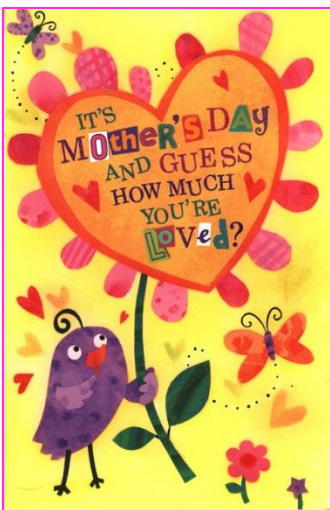




HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Sheila Bolen May 24

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY
Ann and Bill Boozer
May 3

MOTHER'S DAY
May 11



"I cannot promise a summer without hail, but I can say this with certainty: Growing at least some of your own food will change your life for the better."
Barbara Pleasant gardening author

Don't forget to let us know if you need help with your gardening. Just fill out the Garden Friends form and give it to Ann. We're here to help.

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows.

JUBILEE

By Sheila Bolen

The AMGA State Conference was held April 28-30, 2014 in Daphne, AL. Ann Hammond, Ann and Bill Boozer, Jack and I attended and, in spite of the rain, we had a GREAT time. On Monday Ann and Bill took tours of Perdido Vineyards and the Pitcher Plant Bogs at Splinter Hill, which they really enjoyed. Jack and I attended a session on "Internet Options for Master Gardeners" and after an hour of confusion we heard what we came to hear. Monday evening's dinner was at Bayfront Pavillion and the after dinner speaker, Bettie Ann Wylie, had us all in stitches with her own special style of story telling.

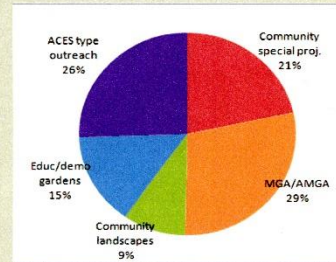
Tuesday dawned with gray skies, thunder and rumbling and by 9:00 it started raining and boy did it rain! There was thunder and lightning and wind all day - blessed the area with 11" in 24 hours. It didn't slow any of us down - everything was inside all day! The AMGA Annual Business Meeting was held and it was during this meeting that Kerry Smith presented what I believe to be some really GREAT news! Kerry was speaking on all the MGAs of Alabama and what awesome volunteers there are involved in the groups. She had 2 slides in her presentation that I believe should be shared with everybody.

thus it only shows 29 certified members.) What a great job we're doing! The second slide that I thought was of great interest is about the total hours volunteered by ALL MGAs in Alabama.

2013 Annual Report



- Active Certified Master Gardeners: **1,372**
- Interns trained: **435**
- Total hours volunteered: **209,974**
- Number of clientele contacted: **976,673**
- Equivalent to **71** full time employees in ACES type outreach



For those of you with vision that can read the little print - good on you. For those of us who can't it basically says "Way to go Master Gardeners". In summary it says we are all doing a fantastic job and we need to keep it going!

The afternoon speakers were Dr. William Welch and Greg Grant. Dr. Welch is author of *Perennial Garden Color* and *Antiques Roses for the South*. He and Greg Grant co-authored *Heirloom Gardening in the South* and Dr. Welch is a regular contributor to 'Southern Living Magazine'. Greg Grant has authored *Home Landscaping - Texas* and *Southern Heirloom Garden* as well as co-authoring the book with Dr. Welch. Both speakers were very informative and very engaging - full of humor and valuable tidbits for gardening.

Tuesday night the rain continued, along with all the lightning, thunder and wind it could muster up. Wednesday morning brought flooded and washed out roads, mudslides and boardwalks that were washed away! After a presentation by Greg Grant on his restored Dogtrot house in East Texas the conference was adjourned and we all looked for new routes home.

Smaller MGA's Raise the Bar



- Averaging hours per volunteer:
 - Cullman (69) = 111/vol (top 10 reporting overall)
 - Wiregrass (55) = 148/vol (top 10 reporting overall)
 - Chilton (60) = 122/vol
 - Calhoun (46) = 154/vol
 - Autauga (67) = 102/vol
 - Cherokee (33) = 109/vol
 - Coffee (36)* = 104/vol
 - Claybank (17) = 105/vol
 - East Central (29) = 111/vol



Look at where we are! Ninth in the state in volunteer hours!!! (These records are from before the interns from 2012 were certified



SMART YARD

Last fall Ann applied to AMGA for grant money to help with the costs of work to be done at the Smart Yard at the Ashland ACES building. At the state conference East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association was awarded a check for \$340.00. We need to put on our thinking caps and come up with ideas for the walk way. Let's see what we can come up with at the next meeting.

ECAMGA Meeting Agendas

Our regular monthly meetings for May thru August will be held at Ava UMC. September will be the trip to Hayes Jackson's "garden" in Anniston. October is still to be determined. The November meeting will be at Ava UMC for the Thanksgiving meal.



FIELD TRIPS

We're scheduling a trip to Lazy K Farms in Pine Mountain, the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham, Hills and Dales in LaGrange, another hosta trip to Brian Moore's for those that didn't go the first time and a trip to Holmestead Farm outside of Ashland. Look for emails for votes on days. These trips are scheduled for days other than our meeting time. Majority votes decide on days. If there is enough interest we can pitch in and rent a van so as to travel together.

Old Folk Sayings and Wives Tales

If someone gives you a plant don't thank the person for it and the plant will live and grow better.

For tomatoes to grow and produce better, dirt should cover not only the roots but also the stem up to the first limb of the plant.

To keep you seeds from clumping together during planting, sprinkle and rub some talcum powder over and through them.

Basil planted in pots or in the ground repels mosquitoes and flies.

Snap beans planted near Irish potatoes help keep Mexican Bean beetles and potato bugs away.

Flour sprinkled between rows of vegetables will coat cabbage worms as they crawl through it thereby killing the worms.



PLANT SALE



April 26th dawned bright and clear. The sun was shining with a promise of a beautiful day for the annual ECAMGA Plant Sale held in Kiwanis Park.

We were so anxious for our first customer. It was almost a shame the first two folks by were law enforcement officers just checking out what was going on! Boy, did we try to sell them plants!

By eight o'clock we were raring to go and the folks started coming by. We had tons of fun chatting with customers about the various plants, anxious to answer any questions.

The customers came in waves so we had time to make sure everything was priced to sell and every plant had a spoon! Stories and laughter were shared by all. And, if you listened carefully, there was usually something to be learned in all the stories!



All-in-all it was a fun profitable day for ECAMGA members. Start making your "plant plans" now for the 2016 Plant Sale!



Green ache-ers

by Ernie Witham

I'd never seen a concrete lawn until I moved out west. Back east we wouldn't think of such a thing. I mean, where would you stick in the plastic bird with the windmill arms?

That's why I had to stop when I saw my neighbor digging a large hole where his yard used to be.

"Did it for my wife," he said. Then he noticed me eyeing several orchids and a rosebush. "Want 'em?"

I love my wife. That's why I took the plants. And she was excited. She kissed me, grabbed the car keys, and hurried for the front door.

"Where ya goin'?"

She smiled. "I need a few supplies." She returned a few hours later, her arms full. "What is all that?"

"Well, I'm going to replant so I bought some potting soil, a cushion grip transplanter, a trowel, some gloves, some knee pads and an extension for the hose. And I bought a pruner and floral shears for the rosebush. You know, I've been thinking. We could put in a whole garden. Hibiscus. Rhododendrons. Fruit trees..."

I picked up the sales slip. I noticed a slight tightening in my neck. It happens sometimes when the weather is going to change, or when I think I've made a big mistake. I looked out the window. The sky was blue. Maybe I just slept wrong.

For the next few days my wife was extremely happy. She's go out and talk to her new plants for a while, then come talk to me for a while. It was like one big happy family...until she found the yellow leaf.

"I think my pH may be off," she said. Then she grabbed her keys and left. She returned with her arms full again.

"I got a moisture meter, some root feed, and this forty-tests-in-one soil tester. I want to make sure my soil acid is high enough and that my potash is correct."

"Of course," I said, turning small circles with my head. I checked the sky again. Still blue. I switched on the weather channel. That's when I heard the scream. I ran for the door so fast that my feet got there before my hand could turn the knob, and I ended up mashing my face against the door just as my wife threw it open from the outside.

"Are you all right?"

"I found a snail," she said. "Snails eat the leaves, then the plant dies." She grabbed her keys again and dashed out the door. In the background I heard, "No rain in sight. Looks like summer is on its way."

A short while later I helped my wife unload the car. She inventoried everything as we carried it out to the backyard.

"Let's see, put the insecticidal soap here, the fungicide over there beside the pelletized gypsum, the flower dust and sowbug bait can wait, but hand me the slug and snail pellets, will ya?"

My wife came in just after sunset. She hadn't showered. Her clothes were dirty. Her hair was...unusual. "Do we have any D batteries?" she asked.

"I think so. What are they for?"

"The flashlight, of course. Snails come out at night."

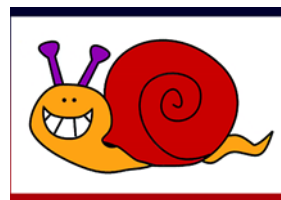
The next few nights we fell into a routine. I sat on the couch with a heating pad on my neck, and my wife patrolled the garden. I watched the patter of the flashlight, sweeping left, then right, and occasionally I'd hear "Ahh-hahh" followed by a crunch sound and a chilling laugh. The only time my wife came in was for more supplies.

"Got any beer?"

"Sure. Hey, how about I make us each a margarita? We'll rent a movie, order Chinese..."

"I just need beer. To put into little saucers. Snails wade in and they drown." She had a strange look in her eye.

My wife went out early the next day. I took the opportunity to venture out into the yard. The plants were covered with burlap and surrounded by dishes of stale beer. The yard was littered with dozens of bags, boxes, spray bottles, shovels and spades. I picked up the trowel. There were notches carved in it below the word "Snails." I heard a quack.



"Are those ducks?"

"Yup. Cute, huh? And they were on sale."

"What are they for?"

"Ducks eat snails," she said proudly. "I'm still checking into what kind of bird eats rose mites. "Course we'll have to put in some netting. And I think we'll need a new fence. And a duck pond. And a bird bath. And..."

I dropped the trowel, grabbed the Ben-Gay, and walked over to my neighbor's house. His yard was completely done now. Pink concrete, artfully cut into diamond shapes. He saw me coming, reached into his pocket and handed me a business card. It read: "Hector's Low Maintenance Yards. No Job Too Big".

"Give 'em my name," he said. I told them you might be calling."

Spring

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell a message about Spring.

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

ALLERGIES

APRIL

BASEBALL

BEES

CROCUSES

CYCLAMENS

DAFFODILS

DANDELIONS

EASTER

EQUINOX

FLOWERS

FROGS

GOLF

GRASS

GREEN

GROWTH

IRISES

LILIES

MARCH

MAY

NEW LEAVES

PLANTING

RAIN

RENEWAL

ROBINS

SEASON

SNOWMELT

SOFTBALL

SPRING BREAK

SPRING CLEANING

TULIPS

WARMER

WET



All Bugs Good and Bad

2014 Webinar Series



Photo Credit: Nadeer Youssef, Tennessee State University

Fire Ant Management

June 6, 2014
2:00 PM EST

Elizabeth "Wizzie" Brown

Please join us for this webinar series for information you can use about good and bad insects. Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 2:00 PM EST.

In this webinar, you will learn how to manage fire ant problems. You don't have to spend a lot of time and money to control fire ants. A little knowledge about how fire ants live will make you see how easy it is to control them.

For connection information, visit: <https://learn.extension.org/events/1370>.

For more information on the series visit:
<http://www.extension.org/pages/70120>.