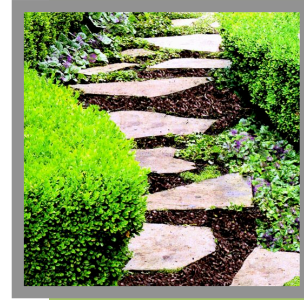


Garden Pathways



Alabama Master Gardeners Association

Spring 2010

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WOW! What a Conference!

By Diana Jones

All of the members of the Capital City Master Gardener Association are to be commended for a job well done.

Over 400 people attended; the Montgomery Renaissance Hotel was a wonderful place to hold a conference as large as this group. Financial sponsors are essential to presenting a successful conference. The Conference Fundraising Committee surpassed their goal of \$20,000. Kathy Bass also raised approximately \$7000 from businesses at the state and national level and secured corporate donors to provide free items that were given to those registered including Proven Winner Plants, Fafard and Scott's soils. The Shoppes at Eastchase provided a great tote bag for these useful gifts. The Hospitality Committee arranged for a local nursery, Little Mountain Growers, to supply each attendee with a rooted crepe myrtle also.

CCMGA members worked diligently for over two years to inform the local community about the conference and offer them opportunities to participate in supporting this event. As a result many generously gave donated items, funds, workshop spaces, publicity and speakers.

Preconference activities were so much fun. Sister Schubert cooked, people lugged rain barrels they had made, and some toured the Shakespeare Festival Garden or the Governors Mansion and Gardens. But one that had to be the most fun was painting yard art.

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From the President

Patricia Patty



Finally, it is beginning to look like spring. In my yard things are breaking ground quickly, and hopefully this year, the plants will not get frost bitten. After such a hard winter, the warm weather is especially welcome. Speaking of welcome, at the conference you elected two new AMGA Board members, Karin Carmichael and Sam Andrews, and a new Nominating Committee member, Jean Lee. At the AMGA Board of Directors meeting, the Board also appointed new member, Patti Harvey to serve out the remainder of Fred Wilhelm's term. Fred resigned due to health issues and moving out of state. We welcome and look forward to working with them. Thanks to Diana Jones and Dottie Pierce, out-going Board members and Nancy Guire, Nominating Committee Chair, for their service to AMGA. Please make sure you read Communications Chair, Patti Householder's notes from the AMGA Board of Director's meeting to find out what decisions were made there. This new feature is an effort to keep you more informed.

We also want to thank Sybil Phillips for her leadership as Chair of the Advisory Council. At the AC meeting this month, those attending will elect a new chair. We are also going to brainstorm to gather ideas of where the AC should focus their attention for the next few years. The Advisory Council was originated as the link between the AMGA Board and the local associations, and to facilitate communications. Good communication is important to all of us at AMGA and I request that every association send a

representative to the AC meetings.

Another big Thank You goes to the Capital City Master Gardeners for hosting the 2010 AMGA Conference. We had around 400 in attendance and everyone seemed to have a great time. The next few conferences are already scheduled and we hope to see you at all of them. The Mobile Master Gardeners are already very busy making plans for next year.

In my last President's message in the January issue of Pathways, I requested that you email me your program line-up for the year. This was in an effort for us to start sharing resources between the associations. I want to thank Shelby Co MGA for sending the only one I received. At the President's Roundtable session held at conference, several of the Presidents requested that they start sharing newsletters and speaker information among themselves and the ones in attendance that day planned to start doing just that. My hope is that you will join this effort and start sharing resources with each other.

The AMGA Board is here to serve the members so please feel free to contact any member any time you have a question or suggestion.

Enjoy your spring.



Over 400 statewide MGs received information and a preview of the 2011 AMGA Conference to

be held in Mobile on March 24-26, 2011. Enthusiasm was high for coming to Mobile- with the two most frequently asked questions "Are we going to Bellingrath" and will we eat seafood!

The Montgomery Conference set the stage for Gardening for Life with their theme of gardens in public spaces. Gardening for Life will continue the dialogue started in Montgomery on Master Gardeners using their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the community by showing how to garden smarter both in our backyards and in the community, showcasing the healing and therapeutic benefits of gardening and passing on the legacy of gardening through outdoor classrooms both in our backyards and in the community.

Gardening for Life will offer:

- What is native and what is not
- Good Plants Gone Bad
- Gardening for insect diversity
- Hurricane resistant trees
- Gardens as outdoor classrooms
- Organics in the garden
- Ornamental grasses & woody species
- Sustainability in the garden
- Mistaken identities
- Fabulous foliage
- Vegetable gardening in containers

These are just a few of the topics covered in the four breakout sessions over the two day conference. Gardening for Life is a call to action for gardeners to "garden smarter" in their yards, in their interaction with wildlife, in the preservation of the ecosystems and in educating future generations.

Speakers, tours, workshops and the good company of MGs- all elements for a successful and educational Conference!



**News From Our
State MG Program
Coordinator
Kerry Smith
Auburn University**

ready to share!

Stepping Up and Helping Out

Master Gardeners have a long history of helping others. From Washington to Florida and Maine to California, you volunteers assist your local communities in endless ways. Alabama is of course no exception.

Last fall we started a new Alabama Master Gardeners Steering Committee in an effort to create, or collect, several resource materials that can be used by everyone. This large group divided into smaller groups in order to better achieve each task. One such group wants to collect your ideas for Educational Outreach. We know that each local MGA has great ideas and projects that benefit their communities. Why not share all these with each other. We'll share our successes, maybe learn from failures, and help each other with ideas and tools for outreach projects.

Our goals are: to promote "you can too;" to build programming partnerships with ACES; to gather resources to help you; to collect your ideas for sharing; and to collect these in web files that everyone can access. Whether public demonstration or more formal classroom style workshops, youth projects like outdoor classrooms, quick & easy information booths, guided walks, demonstration gardens, or any other public education projects you've had success in doing – we want to hear from you. We'll be calling you soon so have ideas

The Educational Outreach committee members are:

Pam Sloan, Tuscaloosa Co.

Laurie Reinwald, Tuscaloosa Co.

Bill Loefstedt, Baldwin Co.

Harriet Turner, DeKalb Co.

Larry Meyer, Morgan Co.

Carma Gronback, Baldwin Co

Mary Pendley, MGNA

Charles Pinkston, ACES - NE
Region Regional Agent

2009 Alabama Master Gardener Summary

It's always exciting to share the numbers, especially when they increase each year. Please remember that we also want to hear about, and see pictures of your local projects and successes. These stories make the numbers more interesting and encourage our decision makers to pay attention and take notice.

**Number of active, Certified
Master Gardeners: 2026**

Number of Interns trained: 429

Total hours volunteered: 138,519

**Value of volunteer hours:
\$2,493,342**

Number of contacts: 309,997

35 local MGA's reporting

AMGA AWARDS PROGRAM

Dotty Pierce,
MG of North Alabama
AMGA Awards Committee
Chair

The winner of the 2010 Top Hours for the Year Award is Dee Hubbert of the Shoals, with a total of 1837 hours for 2009. The 2010 Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award recipient is Kathie Bass of the Master Gardeners of North Alabama, who has volunteered 8419 hours since completing the class. The 2010 Gary Murray Outstanding Service and Dedication Award went to Alice Lawler of the Master Gardeners of North Alabama. She took the MG class after being presented with a "scholarship" upon her retirement from teaching. Since completing the class in 1998 she has been a very active member, working on nearly every project. She began assisting with MG classes in 1999 and has served as Class Coordinator for the last eight years. In addition to her administrative duties, she and another Master Gardener teach the Container Gardening class each session of the class. She worked closely with the REA to develop and organize the Tri County (Madison, Morgan and Limestone) classes beginning in 2005. On the AMGA State Steering Committee, she chairs the Class Management Committee, which deals with planning for MG classes statewide. In addition, she has been involved with assisting with both children's and adult classes at Huntsville Botanical Garden and teaching Container Gardening for UA Huntsville continuing education program. She resides in the Old Town Historic District of Huntsville and has opened her garden for tours several times. Her other community involvement is extensive and keeps her active outside of Master Gardener activities.

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The 2010 Mary Lou McNabb Alabama Master Gardener of the Year Award recipient is Kathie Bass, nominated by Limestone County. She took the MG class in 2002 and immediately became involved in a variety of local association projects, including working closely with classes and assisting interns in finding ways of earning required hours. In 2005 she revitalized the position of Volunteer Coordinator and developed a job description and procedures as well as guidelines for all project chairs.

She has also served as chair of several local committees and currently serves AMGA as State Conference Fundraising Chair, a position she accepted in 2009. She works diligently to enlist the sponsorships necessary for a quality and affordable conference. She holds memberships in three local associations and is actively involved with two of them. At the local level she has established a strong relationship with Habitat of Humanity and coordinates a number of landscaping projects at Habitat homes in Huntsville every year. She has organized and conducted homeowner education workshops as well as the Landscape Design Workshop for Master Gardener classes since 2005. When asked about her involvement with the MG program, she states, "the multitude of opportunities offered throughout the Master Gardener program have enriched my life and hopefully made me a better person."

I have enjoyed serving as your Awards Committee Chair for the past three years, and appreciate all the support from local Agents and associations through Awards submissions.



Kathie Bass receives Lifetime Hours Award from Dottye Pierce. Kathie was also won the Mary Lou McNabb Master Gardener of the Year for 2009!



Dottye Pierce presents Dee Hubbert the Top Hours of the Year Award



Alice Lawler received the Gary Murray Distinguished Service Award.

Project Funding Recipients

By Bob Crabtree

At the annual conference in Montgomery there were two recipients of the Project Funding Program. Lee County Master Gardeners started some time back on building a Master Gardener Demonstration Garden in Kiesel. This \$1,000 will to be used to complete this project in Auburn.

The Buffer House is a historic home built in the 1920's in the Town of St. Florian. The Shoals Master Gardeners will use the \$1,000 they received to plant ornamental trees and shrubs to screen the Buffer House from adjacent buildings and highway traffic.

There is Project Funding money available for legitimate projects. Any questions please contact me. Bob Crabtree (crabby308@bellsouth.net)

humorous talk on “Plants Don’t Always Do What You Want Them To Do”...you know, those plants that someone gives you and says they will grow anywhere.

The theme of Public Gardens continued on Friday with Dr. Doug Phillips of Discovering Alabama. Mary Ann Neely and Robert Gamble discussed the history of Montgomery.

Breakout sessions covered a wide variety of topics dealing with problem areas in our personal gardens as well as public areas, making gardens for the birds, landscaping with herbs, and developing a tranquility garden.

Featured speaker for the awards banquet was Steve Bender of Southern Living; he gave an entertaining talk on “Public Spaces...Beautiful Places.”

The prestigious Mary Lou McNabb award went to a well deserving Kathy Bass of Limestone County MGA. Karin Carmichael and Sam Andrews were installed as new board members.

The conference wrapped up Saturday morning with a beautiful presentation by Nimrod Long on landscaping with stone. Other presentations were making every raindrop count and the development of a demonstration garden at the Elmore County Extension Office. Final door prizes were given, good byes were said and a successful and enjoyable conference was over.

Congratulations to Cathy Maddox, Conference Chair, and the steering committee. They were:

- Betsy Coley, Co-chair and Registration
- Suzanne Reaves, Program and Publicity
- Dianne Bush, Facilities and Fundraising
- Karin Carmichael, Hospitality and Tours
- Jane Shalhoop, Finance and Silent Auction
- Mary Eleanor Hines, Food Functions and Centerpieces
- Clinton Carter, Conference Evaluation
- Lynne Kuhlmann, Book Signings
- Peggy Weinmorts, Conference T-shirts

All of the members of the Capital City Master Gardener Association are to be commended for a job well done.



CCMGA at AMGA Conference



The workshop with Sister Schubert was very popular.



Incoming & Outgoing Board Members. Thanks for your service!



A participant at the hands-on Bonsai Workshop.

Important Dates

- **April 17 A-Day Plant Sale**
Auburn University, corner of College St. and Samford Ave.
9 a.m.-dark.
www.ag.auburn.edu/hort/plaenet/plantsale.html
- **April 17–20 Historic Garden Week in Charlottesville, VA**
www.vagardenweek.org
- **April 17-18 Huntsville Botanical Garden Spring Plant Sale**
Saturday 9-5, Sunday 1-5
www.hsvbg.org
- **May 4-5 Landscape Design Study School** The school is Course 4, Auburn University
Contact: Linda Stephens, 3453 Co Rd 121, Fort Payne, AL 35968; 256-638-4000;
lindaste@farmerstel.com

Notes From AMGA Board Meeting

March 20, 2010

By Patti Householder

- We have two new board members – Karin Carmichael, from Montgomery and Sam Andrews from Fairhope.
- Kerry Smith reported that 2,026 master gardeners reported hours for 2009, which was a significant increase. There were 430 interns from 29 counties in 2009.
- Kerry reported that the Help-Line needs more advertising. She has information that can be used if your local newspaper has dead space to fill. Her email is smithkp@auburn.edu

- Ellen Huckaby has a list of advanced master gardener courses that will be offered. Her email is: knighec@auburn.edu
- The 2011 State Conference in Mobile is in the final preparation stage. Get ready for another great conference next March.
- The Local Association Handbook revision should be ready for review, by the Board, at the June meeting.
- Bob Crabtree reported that only \$2,000 of the \$5,000 was given out for project funding. Local associations are encouraged to apply for these funds to be awarded at the 2011 conference. Look for deadline dates for applying later this year in Pathways.
- A license tag design was accepted at conference. Kathie Bass will start the paper work. Once this is done she will let everyone know through Pathways. Then 1,000 plates will need to be pre-ordered before the state will begin making the plates for distribution. Any garden enthusiast can purchase the plate. The board approved that the funds generated from plate sales will be distributed as follows: fifty percent to the AMGA Horticulture Scholarship Fund Endowment and fifty percent to the Alabama Master Gardener Program.
- Fred Wilhelm is moving and has resigned from the AMGA Board. Patti Harvey from Dothan will complete Fred's last year of his term.
- The Pathways Newsletter will be mailed out each January, with State Conference information. All other issues will be sent via email to those with email.
- Jim Kennedy expressed the desire to find a person that could be trained as membership database backup. This person needs to have a good knowledge of Excel and Access. Please contact him at jamesrk@bellsouth.net if you are interested.

Master Gardener Happenings Around Alabama

Autauga County

By Pam Olson

We applaud Capital City MGA for a well-run, informative, and beautiful state conference. Thank you for the labor that resulted in a great experience for all of us who attended from Autauga County.

The beginning months of each year are always filled with MG awards, plant sale preparations, and plans for what we want to accomplish in our demonstration gardens and our own gardens as we head into spring.

Fifteen members received pins and lots of appreciation from ACES for working the 2009 Helpline. Twelve members received "Reach for the Stars" pins and certificates, and Gene Stapleton's gold badge was

awarded at the conference.
Congratulations, Gene!

Our monthly programs began with city horticulturalist Ken Johnson sharing his accomplishments and vision for adding more color to Prattville.

Ronald Ellis gave a dynamic presentation on organic gardening at the March meeting. He covered French Intensive double dug raised beds, companion plants, and organic sprays for pests.

We have 23 enthusiastic interns in this year's class and a new mentor program to help them feel already connected to their local organization. They are eager to find volunteer opportunities for sharing information and serving the community. Interns represented Master Gardeners and distributed Extension information at Autauga County Military Community Resource Day. We are proud of this new group and look forward to working with them in the years ahead.

Baldwin County

By Gordon Cooper

We kicked off the year with the start of our new intern class in January and the re-opening of the Master Gardener Infoline February 1. At the end of February, our master gardeners participated in Arbor Day tree giveaways in Fairhope, Daphne, Foley, Gulf Shores, Silverhill and Magnolia Springs. We also distributed tree planting and maintenance guides prepared by our county extension.

March saw the implementation of our public education series "Tuesdays with Master Gardeners". We presented two-hour workshops on each of five Tuesday evenings in March covering such topics as repairing lawn and garden beds, pest management and fertilizers, raised beds and kitchen gardens, container gardening, and landscape design. Attendance increased more than six-fold from our fledging effort last year.

In March we also participated in the annual Festival of Flowers in Mobile, where master gardeners have always had a popular booth. This year's featured potted plants in a garden setting, and our volunteers gave sage advice and information to all who stopped by.

Our twelfth annual spring plant sale was April 8-11. This is last big plant sale of the season and our major fundraiser for the year. Offerings included over 50 varieties of perennials propagated from master gardeners own gardens and native trees and shrubs from area nurseries. Thirteen area garden clubs were invited to attend a special opening day event including a presentation on native plants by Tom Dodd III, a well known third generation nurseryman.

The end of April brings Earth Day Mobile Bay at Fairhope's Pier Park. Featuring entertainment, food and extensive exhibits, this huge celebration of things green is one that the whole family can enjoy. Baldwin County master gardeners will have a prominent booth at the fair, as they do every year.

The end of April also will see the graduation of our class of 21 interns. Although this class is somewhat smaller than in recent years, we continue to recruit exceptional "new blood" for our organization. Our Mentor Program matches interns with experienced master gardeners for support and to help integrate them into our organization.

Calhoun County

By Sherry Blanton

Our association has gotten off to a busy start in 2010. Even though it has been cold and wet and our area has seen three snowfalls, our volunteers have gotten many projects up and running. The 4 H Tree Amigos group spent the winter months propagating plants in their greenhouse in preparation for their first plant sale of the season, April 17th at Cane Creek Gardens at

McClellan. The sale of unusual perennials, trees, and shrubs benefits the therapeutic horticultural program at Coosa Valley Youth Services. Lunch and Learn, a series of noontime gardening programs for the public, begins its third year on April 28th with Dr. Eve Brantley speaking on "Using Rainwater in Your Landscape." Learning how to grow orchids was the program for the monthly MG meeting in March.

Under the leadership of MG Truman Norred (secretary of our local association and Jacksonville city councilman) the city of Jacksonville built a pocket park. In addition to plants and trees highlighting winter beauty there will be a gazebo. Master gardeners helped install the park.

We will host a Tomato Workshop on April 30th. Stan Roark and Kerry Smith will be the presenters.

Coosa Valley Resource and Development Council have acquired the Bowling Alley and the land adjacent to our home at Cane Creek Community Gardens at McClellan. MGs are making plans to clear the land between Cane Creek and the Bowling Alley to develop a series of woodland paths.

As in all MG organizations, the energy and dedication of our volunteers make projects like those described (and many others) possible.

Etowah County

By Beverly Hill

January meeting found the Etowah County MGs meeting in a different place. We traveled north on Hwy 411 to Northeast Etowah County Community Center to a larger meeting room. To need a larger room is a good thing. Our attendance in March was 98 members and guests. New President Alice Pruett established a new committee. The Infrastructure

upkeep and problems arising from the buildings and greenhouses owned by the MGs. A third greenhouse was erected in March to provide additional space for the vegetables to be sold in the Plant Sale on April 23 and 24, 2010. Preparations are in full swing for the sale and volunteers have been potting, dividing and fertilizing anything that stands still. The greenhouses are filling up already. Landscaping for the local Habitat Houses continues to be an on-going project. Two were done in January and February and another is ready for March. According to Frank Dressman MG, we are landscaping an average of five houses each year. It looks like we have a head start on houses already this year. The 2010 Master Gardener Course is underway with the 20 students who will be honored at the April covered dish meeting. Programs at the meetings this year have included a presentation on "Dreams in Diversity" presented by Sharon Green, owner of a local nursery and greenhouse; on antique roses presented by Jason Powell, owner of Petals from the Past; and Larry Beane, National Park Ranger from Little River Canyon, made us aware of the many plants in the Park that on the endangered list some of them found only here. Larry invited everyone to attend one of the many tours to see plants in the Park.

Many of our members are now actively entering their volunteer hours on line at the ACES website. This is great when it is time to tally hours in deciding who get which award in April at our Awards meeting. We changed our routine of serving a complete meal at each meeting to having snacks at all but four meals during the year. This has been well received by the membership and quests. Our Social Committee Chair, Shirley Boyd makes "snacks" look like a meal. Craig Scott, Librarian at Gadsden Public Library, recognized MG Buddy Mullis at our March meeting for his donation of lilies in honor of his wife. These were planted into the

landscape of the Library with the help of some of the MGs. We are all awaiting the blooms this spring. Bonnie Link and Joe Davis, Advanced Master Gardeners, are presenting a class on pruning at the greenhouse for local MGs. This will be a learning experience and will get the roses, etc. ready for the sale.

Will spring ever arrive?

Our yards are calling us and we all hope the snow is GONE. Happy Gardening.

Jefferson County

By Tricia Farris

Cold temperatures and gray skies during the first quarter of 2010 had Jefferson County Master Gardeners looking forward to their spring gardens. While waiting for the weather to warm, we enjoyed some excellent speakers, as well as continuing our volunteer activities in the community.

At our January meeting, Huntsville's Herb Lewis presented a program on "Attracting Birds to the Home Landscape." Herb has created a haven for birds in his backyard with water features for bathing, hollowed-out logs for storing suet, and bird feeders and houses. We had a large attendance, with not only Master Gardeners but also members of the interested public.

In February, we celebrated the volunteer achievements—and cooking skills—of our members with our annual "Reach for the Stars" potluck luncheon. Members received 24 Bronze, 8 Silver, and 10 Gold Stars, along with one Gold and one Platinum name badge. In 2009, JCMGA members logged a total of 14,941 hours of volunteer service. We also honored 10 members for dedicated service to the Gary Gerlach Plant Information Help Line.

Our March meeting included a presentation by our Vice-President, Harold Deason, of his travels to Kenya, Africa. Harold volunteers in rural areas of Kenya installing water purification system to help improve the health

and the quality of life for the area's residents. Members enjoyed seeing pictures of the water systems under construction, as well as the plants, birds, and wildlife of Kenya. We have continued our quarterly night meetings with a March presentation on Organic Gardening by ACES regional agents Tony Glover and Sallie Lee, along with Arnold Caylor of the Auburn University Experiment Station in Cullman.

JCMGA members share their knowledge year-round responding to callers on the Gary Gerlach Plant Information Help line at the Beatty Hannah Center at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

In addition to our other activities, we are beginning to make plans for the 2012 State Master Gardener Conference to be held in Birmingham. Please mark your calendars for March 22-24, 2012 when we will look forward to welcoming our fellow Master Gardeners from around the state.

Marshall County

By Maggie Cox

The year of 2010 has started off with some good programs presented by some of our own. Dry streambeds were the topic of Terry Poffinbarger's informative lecture at our January meeting. Linda and Dal Widner presented a program on terrariums for our February meeting.

Plans are underway for our annual plant sale. Jean Duke, plant sale chair, announced the sale would be April 17 at the Wallace Pavilion on Gunter'sville Lake. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

March was our annual awards luncheon. We feasted on salads, soups and desserts provided by our members. The following members of the class of 2008 were present: Lynn Davis, Jean Duke, Mark Evans, Priscilla Evans, Bob Killian, Bill Kirkpatrick, Brenda Potts and Cecilia Pullen.

J.D. Swartzlander earned his platinum badge with Joyce Kirkpatrick reaching the gold badge status. Bronze star recipients were Bill Kirkpatrick, and Brenda Potts. Silver star recipients were David Cox, Margaret Cox and Sharon Ransdell. Gold Star Recipients were Jeanette Cauvel, Betty Graham, and Wanda Teal. Telephone Helpline Award Gold Pin Recipients were Martha Millican and Terry Poffinbarger. The Rookie award was given to Robert Kilian. Joyce Davis received the leadership award. The Paul James Gardening Guy award was presented to J.D. Swartzlander and Terry Poffinbarger. The Martha Stewart award went to Nell Amador. Wilma Tanner received the Job Well Done award and the Green Thumb award went to Betty Graham. Thanks for always being there award was presented to Rebekah Bates. Wanda Teal received the going for the gold award and Martha Millican received the coveted Gold Digger award. The award recipients were delighted with the stepping-stones made by our own Vickie Dodd.

Plans are underway for some trips for the spring.

Lee County

By Tomie Dugas



Announcing the **Lee County Master Gardeners 2010 Garden Tour**. Make sure to save the dates – Saturday, May 15, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday, May 16, 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. Advance tickets are \$15, available at Blooming Colors in Auburn and Southern Crossing in Opelika, as well as at the Auburn and Opelika chambers of

commerce. Tickets can be purchased during the tour for \$20 at Blooming Colors, Southern Crossing and at all the tour gardens.

On the tour are six uniquely different private gardens from quirky & art filled to old-world sumptuous, plus two bonus stops – the newly renovated Master Gardeners Demonstration Garden at Kiesel Park, transformed into eight themed gardens, and Auburn University's Davis Arboretum where LCMGA has established a docent training program and began giving public tours last fall. For additional information on the tour or to order advance tickets (deadline May 7th), contact our tour coordinator, Jolly Roberts, at 334-826-1595 or e-mail laurenroberts@charter.net (Subject: Tour Tickets). Checks may be made payable to LCMGA.

In other news, the LCMGA has approved new by-laws to strengthen our organizational structure. The bylaws are based on those of the AMGA organization. LCMGA has added a public relations officer and a training officer to our slate of officers for 2010. We also have begun drafting a long-range plan for our organization.

Master Gardeners of North Alabama

By Elouisa Stokes

Where did the cold winter go? With snow and rain and snow and rain we all thought we'd get a chance to plan our gardens but all of a sudden here it is SPRING and we're not ready.

North Alabama Master Gardeners are busy answering questions on the Hotline and at several local garden centers. It's great fun to set up a booth and have folks come by with questions about their gardens—flowers, vegetables trees, and shrubs.

Our programs have been lively and informative. Bess Parks told us so much about vegetable gardening

in March that I thought we would all be out tilling our gardens the next day. The highlight of the month was the Tomato Workshop set up by our Workshop Committee. They had already sponsored two wonderful workshops with Karen Reed, a highly regarded local stained glass artist, and have planned for one workshop a month through November. In January they held a Glass Spinner Workshop and a Marble Wind Chime Workshop both of which sent home the most beautiful articles for our gardens you can imagine.

The April workshop is Backyard Vegetable Gardening and should get everyone ready for our Spring Plant Sale the end of April. All of these programs are available to the general public so that we can offer more educational programs. In addition, we are offering a general landscaping class in April especially for Habitat homeowners, which is open for the public. This is a fantastic opportunity to be seen by all of our community and is being presented by Kathie Bass, named Alabama Master Gardener of the Year. We were all pleased with her honor.

The state convention in Montgomery, hosted by the Capitol City Master Gardeners was wonderful. The meals were great (ask someone about the decadent chocolate cake with decadent chocolate frosting!!), the speakers were good, and the information was very helpful. I particularly enjoyed the trip to the Governor's Mansion where I discovered there is a pool in the shape of the state of Alabama!! There were so many North Alabama Master Gardeners that it was hard to include us all in the picture.

About 50 of us went on a trip to Mobile to enjoy the Mobile Festival of Flowers and the Bellingrath Gardens at the end of March. Thanks for our touring committee who plans something once a month for us to see for planning this wonderful trip.

Mobile County

By Patty Scott

March 6 was the date of our 6th Annual Educational Seminar. Speakers this year were Scott Ogden and Lauren Springer Ogden, their topics being Plant-Driven Design and Designing with Bulbs. It was a great day with quite a few "out of town" attendees.

Also with March came the Mobile Botanical Gardens Spring Plantasia, a huge 4-day plant sale that, this year shared the weekend with the Providence Hospital's Festival of Flowers. March was a very busy time involving lots of volunteer hours.



Mobile Master Gardeners, Jane Trawick, JoAnne Ortmann, Alice Marty and Paula Johnson did a fine job on their rendition of "Chimenea de la Mexicana" at the Festival of Flowers.

Everyone knows that Master Gardeners are the best cooks; so we are working on a great cookbook. We hope to have it in hand by the end of the year as an additional item at our Christmas Greenery Sale.

Although the JMG program has been incorporated into various Mobile County public schools, now a number of home school groups have included it in their curriculum. These home-schooled groups, already involved with 4H, have acquired a \$5800 grant from RC&D to build raised beds for vegetable and herb

gardening. These will be located in our MG demo garden at the extension office and will include irrigation. They will learn to cook the fresh produce at the extension under the guidance of a regional extension agent. Growing vegetables and herbs, cooking them and enjoying the feast is an ultimate learning experience. This will be an ongoing project, so they will learn about soils and soil prep, composting and crop rotation. Master Gardener Penny Smith heads up the JMG program in Mobile. These Junior Master Gardeners meet once a month as a group, but will work individually also. This past winter, they have been working on a quilt for the County Fair next fall. At least five regional agents have been a great help with this project. We feel our demo garden has taken on another level of excellence.

We are planning a tour of Splinter Hill Bog Preserve led by Fred Nations in April. Our annual spring pick nick is scheduled for May. Lots of work gets underway early in the spring for the Mobile Botanical Gardens Gallery of Gardens Tour May 13 and 14.

Shelby County

By Regena Varvoutis

Shelby County had a good representation at the Alabama State Master Gardeners' conference in Montgomery on March 18-20th, with nineteen participants. Attending were: Carol Beard, Cathy Canant, Myra Healy, Dot Kachelhofer, Jane Keeton, Joe Keeton, Bill Legg, E.C. Lewis, Laverne Martin, Jeanon Massien, Sybil O'Brien, Tricia Paden, Merle Schukoske, Regena Varvoutis, Trisha Williams, Murry Williamson, Wayne Williamson, Nelson Wynn, and Maves Youngblood. We were delighted to see Heidee VanSant was awarded the Platinum badge for 2000 hours of volunteer service. Congratulations, Heidee, on such a high honor!



19 Shelby County MGs attended the State Conference.

Shoals Master Gardeners

By Amy Cruce

What a great time to be a Master Gardener! We've been getting ready for spring with some great workshops...rain barrels and hypertufa. We've added two new projects: assisting the Colbert County Tourism Board with its activities for Earth Day, and working with Central Elementary school to finish an outdoor classroom landscaping project. Previous projects are proceeding well; and the new class graduated, bringing our membership to 152. Our March speaker was David Flanigan, president of the North Alabama Dayflower Society, and his presentation of "The Near-Perfect Perennial" sent most of us scurrying to the bulb bin.

A great big "Good Job, Well Done!" to the Montgomery MG chapter for it's wonderful conference! Twenty-nine Shoals gardeners attended and came home with glowing reports of the classes and seminars. Thanks for all the time and effort...it was greatly appreciated.

Georgia Master Gardeners Fall Conference Set for October

Master Gardeners – Replenish after your summer labors. Attend the 2010 Georgia Master Gardeners' Fall Conference. Gather ideas, products, inspiration for winter planning and spring planting.

The 2010 Master Gardeners' Fall Conference -- *Garden Stewards: In Tune With Nature* -- will be held in LaGrange, Georgia, on October 1 and 2. Hosted by the Troup County Master Gardener Association and assisted by Master Gardeners from Carroll, Coweta, Meriwether, and Muscogee Counties, this conference promises to be an exceptional event. Master gardeners and their spouse or a guest are invited to attend this conference.

The venues for *Garden Stewards: In Tune With Nature* will be Hills and Dales Estate and the Callaway Conference Center at West Georgia Technical College. Guest speakers will include author and television personality Felder Rushing; author and lecturer Dr. Allan Armitage; Hank Bruno, director of Horticulture at North Carolina's Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden; and Mike Sikes, horticulturist and marketing coordinator for McCorkle Nurseries, Inc.

The conference schedule provides ample opportunities for informal "Meet and Greet" events, autographing sessions, vendor shopping as well as substantive presentations by the exciting compliment of expert speakers and vendors. Felder Rushing and Dr. Allan Armitage will present both days of the conference. On Friday, Jo Phillips, horticulture manager at Hills and Dales, will lead garden tours and discuss *Hills and Dales Signature Plants*. Helen Phillips, horticulture instructor at Columbus Technical College will provide a seminar on Friday afternoon entitled "*Herb Gardening in the Home Landscape*." Kenny Manis, expert in the growing and hybridizing of registered daylilies will also present on Friday. On Saturday, Hank Bruno will provide information on "*Getting in Tune with Nature*" and Mike Sikes will end the conference with his presentation on "*The Garden Steward Collection for Fall*."

Saturday conference fee of \$65.00 includes morning and afternoon refreshments, entrance to vendor shopping area, lunch, and speaker presentations. Your paid Saturday conference fee entitles you to attend the Friday events at Hills and Dales (garden tour, seminars and reception) for a fee of \$6.00.

For additional information, please contact the Conference Coordinator, Gary Carter at 706-616-4153 or carterg@bellsouth.net



West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Master Gardener Association invite you to join us at the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference, October 11 -14 in Charleston, West Virginia.

Come and join us in sharing gardening information, history and Appalachian culture. The International Master Gardener Conference will be held at the Charleston Convention Center October 11-14, 2011 when fall brings cool nights and colorful mountain

scenery. The event will provide opportunities to learn gardening techniques that will help increase biodiversity, control exotic weeds, make the most of native plants in the landscape and improve gardening methods. Pre and post tours will help you discover the splendor of the Appalachian Mountains and the beauty and history of West Virginia.

Hosted by West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Master Gardener Association, the conference will feature a variety of presentations for every level of the soil yielding arts from the study of plant materials to the challenges of sustainability. Every facet of growing mediums, combat techniques against invading species, rapacious pests and new and exciting plants will be discussed. Whatever your interest in cultivated flora, there is bound to be a venue. While the array of lectures and workshops will offer something for every interest, our famously safe home offers a rich mixture of activities for all visitors.

For more information on speakers, hotels & sponsors please visit: www.imgc.ext.wvu.edu/

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