



# The Prairie Mud

A Publication of Capital City Master Gardener Association

Montgomery, Alabama

Volume 11, Number 1

January 2009

## PLANT OF THE MONTH-

Camellias are the ubiquitous Southern garden shrub. Oh sure- they're not true Southerners, but like any house guest in the South, they've come to be home folks. We've fed and watered them and taken them into our gardens, and now they are just part of the family.

What you may not know about this member of your garden family is that it is related closely to the tea plant- that glass of iced tea came from a kissin' cousin to your camellias- the *camellia sinensis*. The *camellia sasanqua*- or Christmas Camellia- can also be used to make a type of tea. Tea oil comes from the *c. oleifera* and is used as a cooking oil. And of course there is the *c. japonica*, which graces so many gardens in the South.

A simple web search can turn up home remedies as different as antibacterials to antacids.

Camellias prefer well-drained, acidic soil with shade. They are at home under pines or on the north side of a building. Cultivars can be found for most any height requirement. Select full, well branched plants for your landscape. Look for uniformly shaped plants with vigorous foliage.

Lisa Lenox

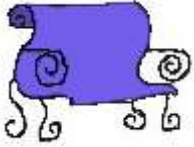


Meeting Time and Place  
January 27, 2009 9:00am  
Vaughn Park Church of Christ



### In This Issue

Plant of the Month	1
In the Garden	2
List of Officers	2
New MGs	3
Committee Chairs	4
Garden Tips	5
Treasury Report	6
What's Coming Up	7
Mailbox	8
Plant Sale	9
Plant Swap	9



## FROM THE GARDEN

I want to thank all of you for your vote of confidence in my service to CCMGA as president for the 2009 year.

I also want to thank you in advance for your support which will make this a year filled with wonderful gardening ideas, discoveries, treasures and unique opportunities, that you, as a gardener, would hope for and so enjoy. I am truly excited just thinking about the places we'll go- the things we'll learn and do, the things we'll see and all the wonders we don't know about yet. I am sure it will be a great year in the garden!

I must thank each committee chairperson and the members of all the committees. You are the backbone of our association. Thank you for undertaking the responsibilities associated with the function of your committee.

I make a promise to you that I will share and be guided by what I learned in first grade, as Robert Fulghum did in his kindergarten. His book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, sums up pretty much what I learned in my one room schoolhouse serving grades one through, supposedly, six. I learned that you share: lunch, notebook paper for writing and making drinking cups, books and seating on the eight foot home-made benches where we wrote and held our books in our laps. We shared lots more; like how to slide a slippery bank (hill) and not get muddy, and how to bend a pine sapling to horseback ride. Walking to and from school, we learned to stick together and hold hands when we had to ascend a bank along side the road if we met the monstrous yellow machine scraping the road. No doubt about it, we looked out for each other.

School was not all that complicated, either. We learned arithmetic, reading, spelling and handwriting. That's it, no more. I did not learn about social studies and science until I went off to high school some miles away.

I learned at home, not in school, as Robert Fulghum did in kindergarten, that if you plant a seed in a little styrofoam cup, the roots go down and the plant goes up because that is how it happens. My grandfather taught me about seeds and seedlings. Pa, with me helping, raised the heartiest and biggest vegetables in our community. We raised rows and rows of collards, cabbage, squash, okra, tomatoes and lots more. We planted peas, corn, butterbeans and watermelons in patches. They were big plots, bigger than our garden. We also grew bigger watermelons than our neighbors. As a child, I could have a whole side (1/2 of the watermelon) because we had plenty.

Maybe it was in my one room schoolhouse, the bounty of food we raised and the long, hot days in our crop fields that I learned to live a simple life- just what one would learn in kindergarten or first grade: observe and obey all the rules of getting along, stick together and hold hands when you go out into the world. No matter if you plant a seed in a styrofoam cup, or in the ground in your garden, the roots go down and the plant goes up, because that's way it is. Be aware of wonder!

*Happy Gardening*

*Maggie Stringer*

### CCMGA Officers

President Maggie Stringer  
Vice President Cecilia Terrell  
Secretary Judy Crockett  
Treasurer Suzanne Reeves

### Newsletter Staff

Editor Lisa Lenox  
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Sensintaffer

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# CONGRATULATIONS NEW MASTER GARDENERS

All the members of Capital City Master Gardener Association would like to express our sincere congratulations to all the Graduates of the 2008 class.

Lisa Addison

Nancy Bowden

Melinda Dianne Brodman (posthumously)

Robert Cope

Jim Drummand

Linda M. Carleton

Harry L. Dickerson

Martha Given

AminaHall

Selena Hardy

Christine L. Hornady

Elizabeth Littleton

Susan Mathews

Sheila Robertson

Sandy Lynn Stevens

Jarome Thomas

Sheppard Thomas

Alan Weil

Ann Wilburn



## **Master Gardener Training Class Begins**

The Master Gardener 2009 classes begin Thursday, February 26, 2009 at the County Extension office. CCMGA members, Cookie Ruth and Marie Tomlin, are coordinating the classes this year. Please assist them any way you can- preparing lunch for the interns, teaching a class, or in other ways they may need you. Thank you.

## CMGA COMMITTEES 2009

Contributing Editor, Garden Pathways  
Dianne Bush-Chair

Data Base  
Jan Gill-Chair

Devotion  
Carolyn Wright-Chair

Governor's Mansion Garden  
Karin Carmichael-Chair

Help Line  
Marie Tomlin-Chair

Homes/Grounds  
Kellie Sensintaffar-Chair

Lilly's Garden  
Suzanne Brookhart-Chair

Membership  
Jane Shalhoop-Chair

M L King Garden  
Anne Wilburn-Chair

Museum of Fine Arts Garden  
M.E. Hines-Chair

Newsletter  
Lisa Lenox/Chair

Ordeman Shaw House Garden  
Kellie Sensintaffar, Chair

Photography/Historian  
Jan Scott-Chair

Plant Sale  
Gail Cotney-Chair

Program  
Cecelia Terrell-Chair

Projects  
Cathy Maddox-Chair

Publicity  
Sheila Robertson-Chair

Reach for the Stars  
Sandra Thompson-Chair

Refreshments  
Emily Frye-Chair

Shirts  
Carol Gietl-Chair

Speakers Bureau  
Nell Copeland-Chair

Sunshine  
Marilyn Harper-Chair

Telephone  
Sandy Stevens-Chair

Trip  
Barbara Samuels-Chair

AMGA Advisory Council  
Karin Carmichael, representative

If you are not serving on a committee and would like to, call the chairperson and jump on. Everyone is needed to make the association all it should be to meet the needs of all its members

## GARDEN TIPS FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH

**Store ashes in sealed fireproof containers.** Apply a dusting around lilacs, asters and roses in the spring. Do not apply to acid loving plants. Excess ashes can be composed.

**Look for plants with improved drought tolerance and pest resistance.**

**Don't forget to feed the birds.** Many of the birds we see in winter are seed eaters. Trees, grasses, and wild flowers have just finished their yearly production of seeds and this is the kind of food our wintering birds live on.

**Fruits and Nuts:** Planting season continues for dormant trees. Fertilize fruit trees. Apply half of the fertilizer recommended for grapes now; apply the other half soon after fruit sets. Continue dormant pruning and grafting. Start strawberry plantings.

**Shrubs:** Planting season continues. Visit camellia shows to learn of hardy varieties in your area. Spray all shrubs with a fungicide before new growth starts. Good time to prune all shrubs before new growth starts.

**Don't prune early-blooming species because flower buds will be removed.** In March fertilize shrubs (except azaleas and camellias) according to a soil test. Late planting may be made in March, particularly if they are container-grown. Watch for harmful insects as new growth appears.

**Roses:** Prune hybrid tea roses in South Alabama; delay pruning for a few weeks in North Alabama. Continue planting. Watch for aphids as new growth appears. In March begin a spray or dust program. Begin fertilizing as soon as new growth appears.

**Annuals and Perennials:** Replant early plantings of hardy annuals. Prepare beds for summer annuals. Tender annuals may be planted in South Alabama. Check garden centers as plants are available.

**Bulbs:** (March) Plant gladiolus every two or three weeks if a long blooming season is desired. Plant tuberous begonias in pots. Plant dahlias.

### **Miscellaneous:**

Check and repair sprayers, dusters, and lawn mowers.

**Vegetable Seeds:** Plant hardy crops recommended for January and February, plant collards, salsify and Swiss chard. After danger of frost is past, plant tender vegetables.

In February, See ANR-63 for guide to planting seeds for varieties recommended by Alabama Extension Service.

Adapted from Alabama Cooperative Extension System publication ANR-47

## CCMGA Treasurer's Report

January 10, 2009

Beginning Balance	December 10, 2008		\$5,731.12
Deposits	Auction	\$1,034.85	
	Luncheon	\$396.00	
	Membership	15.00	
			1,445.85
Checks	Meeting Expenses	-150.00	
	Luncheon	-1421.34	
			-1571.34
Ending Balance	January 10, 2009		\$5,605.63

### Luncheon a Success!

A big thank you to everyone who bid on items at the Christmas Luncheon and Auction! The auction is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year, along with the Plant Sale in the spring.

This year we raised \$1034.85

Thanks again!

### Not Too Late: Make a Green Resolution

A new program, currently called "Alabama Yards & Neighborhoods," and developed by Auburn University horticulture department is currently being launched. It promotes sustainable landscapes that can be used by lawn and garden professionals, master gardeners, garden clubs and novice gardeners alike. . The step-by-step approach to sustainable landscapes, addresses everything from getting started by evaluating your specific landscape needs and options, to installing rain gardens and rain barrels for water conservation

Created from science based knowledge, the publication will be used in 2009 to train individuals and groups to implement the program, which is aimed at reducing the use of pesticides, water and even fuel inputs in our landscapes. You can view the program at [www.ag.auburn.edu/hort/landscape/Alabama\\_Yards\\_and\\_Neighborhoods.html](http://www.ag.auburn.edu/hort/landscape/Alabama_Yards_and_Neighborhoods.html). There is also a printable version on this site.



## WHAT'S COMING UP? FEBRUARY-MARCH CALENDAR

The January meeting will be devoted to the business of the Association which will give us more time for programs in the following months. Cecelia Terrell, vice president and program chair, along with her committee is planning a year of informative and interesting programs. The committee took your suggestions and will implement as many as possible to provide a well rounded program for the year. The trip committee is busy researching possible sites to visit in the spring. We are looking forward to an exciting and fun trip.

Time is running out to report your **volunteer hours**. Remember, **volunteer hours** are used to justify the continuation of the of the Master Gardner program. A reminder and steps on how to report your hours online will be available at the January meeting. **January 31, 2009 is the deadline for reporting your volunteer hours.**

The 2009 AMGA Convention will be held in Huntsville, AL, April 2-4, 2009. You may go online to get the information or wait for the AMGA Pathway newsletter coming out soon. Everyone is encouraged to go to Huntsville. The conventions are always educational and fun, plus excellent networking opportunities. We will host the convention next year, 2010, you may pick up some hosting tips

**Tuesday, January 27**, CCMGA Meeting. 10:00a.m. – noon. Perry Hill Road Church of Christ.

**Saturday, February 21**, Montgomery Jackson & Perkins, Weeks Rose Seminar, 334-277-6746. Free. Southern Homes and Gardens, Wetumpka Hwy. (10:00 a.m.) Vaughn Rd. (2:00 p.m.) Guest speakers instruct on taking care of roses.

**Saturday, February 21**, Montgomery Zoo, Family Fun Day/Butterflies. 334-240-4900. [www.montgomeryzoo.com](http://www.montgomeryzoo.com). Admission charged. Learn more about butterflies and what to do to attract them to your yard. 10:00 a.m.-noon.

**Saturday February 21**. Prattville Regreening Arbor Day 2009. 334-358-3245. [www.prattville.com](http://www.prattville.com). Free. Church of the Living Water 435 Sheila Blvd. To commemorate the anniversary of the devastating tornado that hit Prattville, there will be planting of 1000 five-gallon trees in areas that were affected. Volunteers are needed 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**February 23-27**, Mobile. Arbor Day Celebration. 251-973-2217. [www.bellingrath.org](http://www.bellingrath.org). Admission charged. Bellingrath Gardens and Home, Theodore. Learn about planting and caring for trees. This is the perfect time to plant trees at Bellingrath and in your garden.

**Wednesday, February 25**, Montgomery. Horticulture Day, Old Alabama Town's Loeb Reception Center, 8:30 a.m. Send your \$15.00 registration fee plus your name, address, club (CCMGA) and district to Debbie Summerlin, Horticulture Day Chairman, 724 Mitchell Creek Rd. Wetumpka, AL 36093. Call 334-567-2812. Registration deadline is February 23. The



# MAILBOX

***This is a new column in the newsletter, please write to us. If you have questions about some area of gardening or simply have something to say, please submit them at the monthly meeting or email them to Lisa Lenox or Kellie Sensintaffar.***

Question:

I am unsure when to prune my azaleas and my hydrangeas. Should I prune them in summer?

Answer:

You may prune early (spring) blooming shrubs (like azaleas) right after they bloom. If you prune them later you risk cutting off the bud that has already formed for next years flowers. Prune late blooming shrubs (like hydrangeas) in fall or very early spring (February/March). Most hydrangeas bloom in May/June. The flowers stay on the bush for quite some time, so depending on how long you wish to leave the blooms on, will determine when you prune. Some gardeners like to leave the dried blooms all winter.

You can prune out dead wood in azalea and hydrangea bushes anytime. This helps the plant to resist disease and creates a more attractive plant. Remember, if you severely prune back hydrangeas that you may get fewer flowers because the flowers of this plant are formed on old growth. Azaleas and hydrangeas do not have to be pruned at all, unless you have space constraints. This allows the plant to look very natural in the garden.

Question:

When do I plant lettuce in my garden?

Answer:

Vegetable gardening is not just for the hot summer months. Many vegetables can be grown in the cooler fall months, or early spring months. Lettuce does best when temperatures are relatively cool. In south Alabama, plant lettuce in the early spring (late February and March) months or fall (September). See County Extension ANR -63 for varieties and specific time frames

Camellia Oleifera- tea oil camellia



When planting lettuce, using a row cover will help extend the time required to grow lettuce in the Montgomery area. Other cool season veggies such as carrots, beets, collards, turnips, cauliflower and onions can also be planted. Cold frames are useful in getting an early start on seedlings, just be sure to watch the temperatures so plants do not get exposed to extreme heat or cold.

For more information go to ANR-47 and ANR-63

**Plant Sale 2009:** *Saturday, May 9, Mother's Day Weekend*

Trust everyone is beginning to think about what they might donate to the **Third Annual Plant Sale**. Last year, the committee had five truck-loads of plants to deliver to Old Alabama Town and nearly doubled what we made the previous year.

Herbs of any kind always sell out, as do tomato and vegetable plants. Believe it or not, small containers of ivy and asparagus fern were a big



seller in 2008. Don't we all have a little of that? Flowering plants and shrubs with pictures go over very well. Use the Internet for illustrations or old flower catalogs. Ask Elaine about how well her plants sold with her sales pitch and descriptions. Even the **Plant Sale Committee** was impressed with her fervor. We voted Elaine and Emily *CCMGA Saleswomen of the Year*. Mark your calendars and let's make 2009 the biggest and best yet.

Committee: Suzanne Brookhart  
Jan Gill  
Gail Cotney  
Jane Shalhoop

## PLANT SWAP

Karin Carmichael needs common aloe, if anyone has any to share she'd be most appreciative.

Maggie Stringer needs lirioppe and mondo grasses. If you have more than you need, please share.

If you have more plants than you can handle, or need something, please write to Lisa Lenox or Kellie Sensintaffar and let us know!