

# The Prairie Mud

A publication of Capital City Master Gardener Association  
Volume 11, Number 1, January 2010



## Sowing Seeds

Hello Everyone,

If you want your garden to be productive, you must take time to plan; this ensures your harvest will be bountiful. Kellie and I have enjoyed working on your garden plans for 2010. Your willingness to volunteer time as part of the CCMGA garden has made our sky bright with sunshine. Thank you!

It takes everyone working together to make a garden successful. This first meeting will allow you to get your hands in the dirt and fertilize our plans. Don't miss an opportunity to support our chairpersons as many hands will make the tasks lighter for everyone.

Our main focus right now is to support the AMGA leaders with our time and efforts. They have spent countless hours on the March conference that we are hosting. When it is time to assist Anita Ward, Clinton Carter, Peggy Weimorts, Lynne Kuhlmann, Suzanne Reaves, Cathy Maddox, Dianne Bush, Mary Eleanor Hines, Betsy Coley and Karin Charmichael, roll up your sleeves and wear a smile.

Cecelia Terrell  
President, CCMGA 2010

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## January Meeting Getting ready for Conference

Vaughn Park Church of  
Christ  
January 26, 10:00 to 12:00



We are sorry to announce that Lisa Lennox has resigned as editor of the CCMGA Newsletter. She has worked on the newsletter for over 2 years and has been a creative force in its production. Nobody can replace her at the newsletter and in CCMGA. She is going to stay busy with her family, her vocation as a potter and teaching pottery classes. Hopefully, she will have a well deserved rest and stoke up her kilns for a future time (sorry, for the play on words). We hope she will let CCMGA continue to ask for her artistic input Thank you Lisa, for all your work at the newsletter.

## **CCMGA Committees 2010**

### **Data Base**

**Jan Gill-Chair**

### **Devotional**

**Laurice Goorley-Chair**

### **Help Line**

**Richard Moore-Chair**

### **Membership**

**Jane Shalhoop-Chair**

### **Newsletter**

**?/Editor**

**Kellie Sensintaffar/Assist. Editor**

### **Historian/Photography**

**Jan Scott-Scrapbook**

**Judy Crocket-Photography**

### **Programs**

**Kellie Sensintaffar-Chair**

### **Publicity**

**Sheila Robertson-Chair**

### **Hospitality**

**Michelle Burns-Chair**

**Jane Martin Assistant**

### **Speakers Bureau**

**Cookie Ruth-Chair**

### **Telephone**

**Chris Shoup-Chair**

### **Sunshine**

**Mary Jane McCracken-Chair**

### **Garden Pathways**

**Dianne Bush- Contributing editor**

### **Intern Program**

**Linda Carleton/**

**Marie Tomlin**

### **Advisory Council**

**Dianne K. Bush**

### **Governor's Mansion Garden**

**Karin Carmichael-Chair**

### **Ordeman Shaw House Garden**

**Kellie Sensintaffar-Chair**

### **Museum of Fine Arts Garden**

**Mary Eleanor Hines-Chair**

### **M L King Garden**

**Anne Wilburn-Chair**

### **Lilly's Garden**

**Suzanne Brookhart-Chair**

### **Projects**

**Cathy Maddox-Chair**

### **Plant Sale**

**Gail Cotney-Chair**

### **Trip**

**Anna Owen-Chair**

### **Reach For the Stars**

**Mary Eleanor Hines-Chair**

### **Conference Committee Chairs**

**Clinton Carter**

**Peggy Weimorts**

**Lynne Kuhlmann**

**Suzanne Reaves**

**Cathy Maddox**

**Dianne Bush**

**Mary Eleanor Hines**

**Betsy Coley**

**Karin Charmichael**

## Gardening by the Stars

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We have just begun a new year. January 2010, the seed catalogs arrive and we begin looking ahead on our calendars anticipating spring. Here in Zone 8, a lot of us start to anticipate what we will be doing in our gardens beginning about Easter. Have you ever thought about why, no matter what calendar day it comes on, we believe that our vegetable gardens should be planted on or about Good Friday? Is this something we should count on? Is this a good ‘rule of thumb’?

Easter can occur on dates between March 22 and April 25. The date is derived based on a calculation of when the full moon occurs and another calculation of when the Paschal (Passover) full moon occurs. It all started many centuries ago about the time of the Nicene Council. Easter is always the first Sunday immediately following the Paschal full moon.

However, there is another BIG factor in determining when spring is advancing. It has to do with the Vernal Equinox (equinox means equal night). The vernal equinox is always on March 20 or March 21. This is the date on which the days and nights are of equal length; after this point, the days become longer and longer. Because the Earth is tilted about 23.4 degrees on its axis the rays of the sun become more direct on the Earth’s surface. Things start to heat up! The soil is warmed and spring has sprung! Since Good Friday is always after the Vernal Equinox, it seems like a good bet the earth will be warming up. But, as you know in some years, Easter is early. This year, Easter is April 4; and in some years it can be in March. March is known for its’ unpredictable weather. One day it is lovely

and ‘spring like’, the next it is cold and blustery.

So, what guidelines do you use to start your vegetable garden? That depends on what you want to grow. Personally, I anticipate the beginning of gardening activities long before Easter. I think if you wait until Easter you have missed most of what spring offers here in Zone 8. You don’t want to miss out on little green onions, new potatoes, lettuce, radishes, turnips, and cool weather bulbs and annuals. Not to mention some of the most glorious days, temperature-wise, that we have. Some days I never want to go back into the house!

I use the ANR 63, Planting Guide for Home Gardening in Alabama for my guide. This is one of the most useful garden planting charts ever created. Another tip, keep in mind the average date of the last freeze. For this area it is March 28. This does not mean it will not freeze after this date, but your chances diminish with each passing day. If the weather doesn’t cooperate, just try again. A few seeds are relatively inexpensive. However, if you have invested in sets (plants), best wait until you are as certain as you can be before putting them in the ground. You can also measure the temperature of the soil, and use ANR 1061 as a guide for planting.

As you can see, in our ‘neck of the woods’, the Vernal equinox, the average date of the last frost, and the dates for Easter are pretty close together. This may be why the old adage about planting your garden on Good Friday works in Zone 8, some of the time. As for me, I’m going to use the tested, research based information from the Extension Service.

Submitted By Kellie Sensintaffar, CCMGA

## Protecting Plants from Cold Winter Temperatures



Cold damage to ornamental plants can be a problem during the winter months, but especially with the frigid winter temperatures we are currently experiencing in Alabama. Plants prepare themselves for winter through a process called cold acclimation. This process is initiated by cooler temperatures and shorter day lengths that naturally occur at this time of year however, homeowners can take additional steps to help acclimate plants to these cold temperatures and to protect plants from temp extremes.

The timing of acclimation is very important. If acclimation occurs too early in the year the growing season of the plant will be shortened and if too late and a quick freeze occurs it can severely injure or even kill the plant. Cold damage can occur on all parts of the plant including fruit, stems, leaves, trunk and roots. Ways homeowners can prevent plants from injury starts with plant selection. Selecting plants that can tolerate average cold temperatures for your area will prevent them from being exposed to temperatures that are unhealthy and can cause damage. Then select the proper site. Site selection is key in protecting your plant with less work and worry on the caretaker. During the winter the coldest spots are often found on the north and northwest part of the property and in low areas where cooler air settles. The warmest areas will be found in the southern portion of the property and near larger plants and structures. Windbreaks such as fences and buildings will also provide protection from cold winds which can damage plants.

Other practices a homeowner can provide is pruning during the right time of season. Avoid pruning in the late summer and early fall which will alter plant hormones and result in vegetative growth that is more susceptible to cold injury. Providing proper nutrients to the plant will also help during the winter months. Plants given appropriate nutrition are healthier and will tolerate cold temperatures better and recover quicker from injury. Also do not fertilize in the late fall as unseasonably warm temps can create a flush of vegetation that is more susceptible to cold injury.

Protect plants in containers by placing them inside a protective structure such as a house, garage, greenhouse, or shed. Since the roots of container plants are above ground they are especially sensitive to cold temps. Also plants in containers that are left outside should be bunched together and covered with mulch or burlap to reduce heat loss from the sides of the containers. Covering your plants with blankets or boxes will help protect them, but remember to remove the cover and provide ventilation during the day to allow heat to release that was trapped underneath. If the blanket is not removed this heat can cause growth activity to begin in the plant which would be very harmful when the plant is exposed to cold temps. Also continue to water plants regularly during the winter months. Moist soil absorbs more heat and will help maintain a warmer temp around the plants roots. Adding fresh mulch to the base of landscape plants and containers will also help retain moisture.

To determine if your plants have been damaged by cold, wait several days after a freeze and remove a portion of the buds, stems, or leaves and cut a cross section into the tissue and look for any brown or black discoloration. If localized damage is found in the foliage or stems you should prune out the damaged tissue several inches below the injured area. Some plants that are injured will recover on their own depending on the severity of damage; others may die and needs to be replaced.

Mallory Kelley

**CCMGA Treasurer's Report /  
December 2009**

**Beginning Balance  
December 06, 2009** **\$5,831.30**

Deposits	Luncheon	146.00	
	Auction	751.00	
	Reverse		
	Ck#1278	24.24	
	Luncheon	18.00	
	Membership	490.00	
			<u>1,429.24</u>
			<u><b>\$7,260.54</b></u>

Checks	Meeting Exp	165.00	
	Wynlakes CC	1495.95	
	AMGA	400.00	
	Ken		
	Whitaker/Refund	36.00	
	Fees/Checks	40.74	

**Ending Balance January  
06, 2010** 2,137.69  
5,122.85  
**\$5,122.85**

**LAST CHANCE  
(Membership)**

If you have not paid your dues, please do so at the January meeting (see Jane Shalhoop). Also, you may want to check with Jan Gill regarding your picture for the directory. Thanks, Jane Shalhoop, Membership

**Congratulations: Shane Harris!**

Shane Harris, Regional Extension Agent in Home Grounds/Gardens and Home Pests in Tallapoosa County, received a Superior Award in the County/Regional Extension Agent category in recognition of outstanding service and accomplishments as a home horticulture agent. Shane also did an outstanding job in Montgomery County, again, congratulations Shane!



Jasmine Hill, April 2009

**MARCH CCMGA MEETING**  
The date of the March meeting will be **March 30, 2010**. We will meet at **Jasmine Hill Garden**. Lunch will be catered. More to come.....  
**Kellie Sensintaffar, Programs**

**CCMGA OFFICERS**  
Cecelia Terrell, President  
Kellie Sensintaffar, Vice president  
Ernestine Lewis, Treasurer  
Anna Owen, Secretary



# What's Comin' Up?

CCMGA Calendar for January and February 2010

## CCMGA Dates

Tuesday, January 26 CCMGA Monthly Meeting, 10:00am to 12:00pm  
**Vaughn Park Church of Christ. Please plan to attend, this is an important time to share plans for the upcoming AMGA Conference.**

**Friday, Saturday, Sunday January 29-31, The Greater Montgomery Home and Garden Show.**

**Classes for 2010 Interns, beginning January 7, Orientation.** Meeting with the mentors.

## **Petals from the Past**

**Saturday, January 30, 2009 Great Groceries from Your Garden - Debbie Boutelier** 10:00am -12:00-This class is a primer on organic gardening covering all the basics from soil preparation to harvest. While the emphasis of this class is on vegetable gardening, the basics can be applied to any type of gardening. There is a strong, direct relationship between the health of our bodies and the health of food-producing soil. Learn how to produce a bountiful and healthful harvest using no chemical or synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. Your harvest will again taste like

the wonderful vegetables from your grandparents' garden, not the tasteless, industrially grown produce that passes for fresh in our supermarkets. 12:00 Lunch (Optional) \$10 (advanced reservations required) Please call the retail shop before 3:00pm on Friday, January 29, to place your lunch order. 205-646-0069  
12:30 - Class resumes  
Class will be finished by approximately 3:00 p.m.  
Fee\$10.00. Please call the retail shop to make your reservation.

Debbie is a retired county agent, a Master Gardener, and the Southeast District Membership Delegate for the Herb Society of America.

**Saturday, February 13, 2010, Tree Fruits in the Home Garden - Dr. Arlie Powell**  
10:30am - 12:00 Dr. Powell will discuss variety selection, care and maintenance of tree fruits such as apples, pears, figs, oriental persimmons, peaches and nectarines.  
12:00 - Lunch - You may bring your own or a box lunch may be ordered for \$10.00. Please call the retail shop before 3:00pm on Friday, February 12, to place your order. 205-646-0069  
12:30 - Walking tour of Petals tree fruit gardens and pruning clinic

**Petals from the Past, con't**  
**Saturday, February 20, 2010, Home**  
**Garden Design 101 - Tracey Britnell**

**10:30am** Come join us and learn the basic principles to enable you to design your very own functional and beautiful landscape and gardens. Tracey has a degree in Interior Design, Merchandising and Design as well as Landscape design. She is the owner and operator of Creative Elements Landscape and Garden Design.

**Saturday, February 27, 2010, Antique**  
**Roses - Jason Powell 10:30am - 12:00**

Jason will discuss variety selection, care and maintenance of antique and old garden roses.

12:00 - Lunch - You may bring your own or a box lunch may be ordered for \$10.00.

Please call the retail shop before 3:00pm on Friday, February 26, to place your order.

205-646-0069

12:30 Pruning techniques for antique roses.

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**CCMGA hosting:**  
**AMGA 20th Annual Conference**  
**March 18-20, 2010**

**Montgomery Renaissance Hotel and  
Spa at the Convention Center  
Montgomery, Alabama**

**(See AMGA website for room reservation link)**

**You may access the AMGA website by going to [www.alabamamg.org](http://www.alabamamg.org). If you are not going to make reservations by email, Montgomery area residents should call the Renaissance directly (334-481-5000). People living out of the Montgomery area can call Toll-free:1-877-545-0311 and ask for reservations. Tell the reservation clerk that you would like to reserve a room for the Alabama Master Gardener Conference, and that you have the event code to get the reduced room rate. The event code is 'AMGAMGA'. The clerk should take it from there. February 16 is the deadline for reservations.**

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**There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues. ~ Hal Borland**



# Greater Montgomery **Home & Garden Show**

► **January 29-31**

**Renaissance  
Montgomery  
Convention Center**

## **The Home & Gardening Event of the Year**

### **Save Money!**

*Take advantage of exclusive "Show Only" discounts and pricing.*

- Talk with the Experts
- Compare Prices and Get the Best Deal
- Eliminate the Middleman—Buy Direct
- Arrive early & get your FREE coupon savings book with discounts on home show products & services! (\*while supplies last)

### **Save Time!**

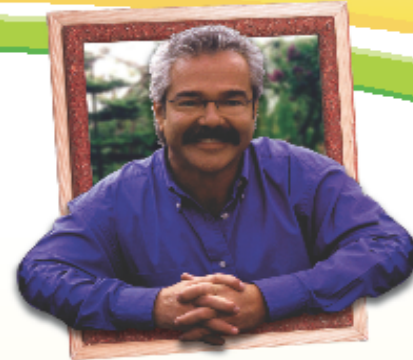
*Find everything for your home & garden— all in one place!*

- Complete Flooring Center
- The Latest Trends In Kitchen and Bath
- Home Improvement Alley Featuring Remodeling and Building Experts
- Gardens and Landscapes

### **Have Fun!**

*So much to see & do! Pay once—come back Free all weekend long!*

- Complimentary Wine Tastings
- Shop 'til You Drop In Our Art, Gift and Gourmet Area.
- Kids Zone
- On-site Pet Adoptions In our Pet Zone
- Free Seminars All Weekend Long



**Paul James**



Host of HGTV's *Remodeling  
by the Yard*



**Lou Petrozza**



Celebrity chef from FOX TV's  
*Hell's Kitchen* Season 4



**Discount coupons available at [ShowTechnology.com](http://ShowTechnology.com)**

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to help at the Greater Montgomery Home and Garden Show!



Master Gardener Intern Class 2010 Orientation January 7, 2010



Mallory Kelley, Class Coordinator; Marie Tomlin and Linda Carlton, Intern Class Facilitators 2010