

THE PRAIRIE MUD

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 9

September 2010

SOWING SEEDS



Focus on the "Main Thing" Love, Cecelia

Please plan to bring a specimen of horticulture from your garden or your neighbors (appropriately labeled) to the next meeting. At this meeting we will have a demonstration of flower show activities. If you have never entered a flower show, but would like to know the in's and out's of how this is done please plan to come. I am including in the newsletter a few pages from the Annual Fall Flower Show Book, that give the classes of plants that you can bring. Please use the labels you received at the last meeting, or fill out a form when you come in the door. Please come early to place your specimen at the correct table. Also, present your specimen in a clear bottle or vase of the appropriate size.

HINT: The number one key to good presentation of a specimen is hydration. Consider placing your plant in a sink or tub, completely submerged, overnight. Keep the specimen cool until it arrives at the flower show. Kellie Sensintaffar

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the flower show

CCMGA will Meet September 28,
at Vaughn Park Church of Christ at
10:00 am to 12:00. We will have
the annual CCMGA Flower Show.

CCMGA Meeting Minutes August 24, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Cecelia Terrell and the devotion was given by Annie White. Refreshments were provided by Elaine Galt, Cecelia Terrell, Richard Deneve, Yvonne Evans, Anne Wilburn and Pam Murphy.

Sunshine Committee: Marie Tomlin's Mother and Matt McClellan have been sick. Last month's minutes were approved and the Treasurer, Suzanne Brookhart, reported the ending balance for August 9,2010 was \$8,531.75.

Maggie Stringer of the Speakers Bureau would like for people to sign up to speak at Garden Clubs and other garden functions.

Michelle Burns volunteered to write an article for the Garden Pathways every 3 months. Karen Carmichael, AMGA Board member would like for you to have your hours in by Dec. for awards to be given out at our Christmas Luncheon.

"Make a Difference Day" is a volunteer organization in Mtg. and surrounding counties. The day to volunteer is Saturday Oct. 23.

The Humane Soc. contacted us to come up with a care plan at the humane shelter on how to care for their trees

that are to be planted in the dog yard.

The Sept. meeting will be a fall flower show. Bring something from your garden to be judged. A motion was made and seconded for Anne Hamner to contact the Church and see if we could do some garden planting to help offset the cost of our monthly meetings. A donation of \$500.00 for the year and a \$50.00 gratuity to Missouri at Christmas.

Volunteer projects to be submitted to Projects Committee are :

1. Goodwill on Airbase Blvd. consult on making a raised bed veg. garden.

James Williams of Parks and Rec. would like to have MG help with

2. Garden at the Flatwood comm. center

3. Catoma School help with an outdoor classroom

4 "Achieve Grant" Youth education on nutrition.

A resolution was made to give \$500 donation to the Vaughn Road Church of Christ (up from \$250.00). This was passed by majority with only two against.

Attendance for meeting: 47

Respectfully submitted by Anna Owen

Treasurer's Report

August 10, 2010

Beginning Balance \$8531.75

August 10, 2010

Deposits

Raffle/Badges \$34.00

\$8565.75

Checks

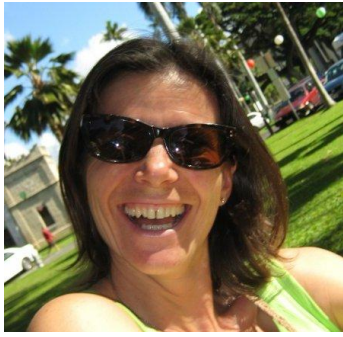
#1310 cookbooks for tea \$6.14

#1311 materials for demo \$32.04

(Hypertufa)

Ending Balance \$8527.57

September 9, 2010



Getting to Know You: Sarah Stringer

by Jerry Belcher, 2010 Intern

Interview with Sarah Stringer, Intern 2010

Tell a little about yourself. I'm an air force wife so move house (and change garden) a lot. I am now back in St Andrews, Scotland after 3 yrs in Montgomery, Alabama. Along with gardening I enjoy running, reading and eating – hence the need for the running. I also got into the habit of writing a blog while in America and have started a new one on returning to the UK. www.sarahwifelife.blogspot.com

What other volunteer organizations do you participate in? Currently no other organizations but I have volunteered for various ones in the UK in the past.

How did you get interested in gardening? Watching my parents in the garden every weekend when I was growing up. My dad has a large vegetable patch and greenhouse and my mum tended the flower and shrub borders. I guess it just seemed the natural thing to follow in their footsteps except I do both the vegetables and the flowers as Nick is not a gardener, yet.

What is your favorite type of gardening? I like reclaiming overgrown areas and tidying up borders, I enjoy growing tomatoes and other small vegetables, and in each house I have lived in so far I always plant a clematis and some lavender. Not getting to live anywhere for a long period of time I haven't really developed my gardening skills.

What projects would you like to see the Master Gardeners take on next? Anything that regenerates rundown areas would be great.

Sarah Stringer now lives in UK.

Know Your CCMGA Projects
By Cathy Maddox, Projects Coordinator

CCMGA members are active and prolific in earning volunteer hours throughout our community. While there are many locations, events and ways to earn those required hours each year, there are a few projects that are official CCMGA endeavors. CCMGA has adopted projects that our membership has voted to support both with our physical efforts and our funds if needed. Several years ago due to the growth in membership and the need for more effective coordination, CCMGA established a process for consideration of projects and formed a committee to review proposals for new projects. I chair that committee. The members of that committee are Dianne Bush, Betsy Coley, Nell Copeland, Mary Eleanor Hines, and Suzanne Reaves.

As requested by the members at the last CCMGA meeting, I am providing this article to inform the membership on our projects, the proposal review process and to encourage communication and coordination across our membership.

The current CCMGA projects and their respective chairs are:

Ordeman-Shaw Courtyard Project – Chair, Kellie Sensintaffar
MMOFA Circle Entrance Project – Chair, Karen Weber
Central AL Helpline Project – Chair, Sandi Ferguson
CCMGA Plant Sale Project - Chair, Suzanne Brookhart

The Governor's Mansion Garden project funded by the AMGA grant is ending this year and has no chair.

The established process by which a new project may be considered for official adoption by CCMGA is as follows:

Step 1. The CCMGA Project Proposal Form is completed by the CCMGA member who is supporting the proposal. (Form can be obtained from Cathy Maddox)

Step 2. The member then submits the proposal to the CCMGA Project Chair (Cathy Maddox) for review and consideration by the Project Committee.

Step 3. **If** the CCMGA Projects Committee determines that the proposed project is NOT within MG parameters, the chair informs the member who submitted the request about the committee's decision. If the member desires further consideration of the proposal, the chair may offer recommendations for revising the proposal/idea.

Step 4. **If** the Project Committee determines that the proposed project IS within MG parameters OR that additional information is needed, the chair informs the member who submitted the proposal.

Step 5. If approved by the Projects Committee, the proposal is then presented to the CCMGA Board of Directors by the Projects Committee Chair and the member who submitted the proposal for consideration. The Projects Committee Chair assists the proposing member to prepare for the presentation before the BOD.

Step 6. If the CCMGA BOD votes to support the proposal, the Project Committee Chair and the member who submitted the proposal jointly present the proposal to the membership at a regularly scheduled meeting for a determination of whether the project will be adopted as an official project by the association. Additional people associated with the proposed project site may be requested to assist with the presentation and responding to questions.

Step 7. If the membership votes to adopt the project, it is designated as a CCMGA project and may be granted some funding from CCMGA.

Step 8. The CCMGA President appoints a chair of the committee to manage the new project and the President encourages the CCMGA membership to join the committee for this project.

Step 9. Chairs of all CCMGA projects will provide information and updates on their projects and committees to the CCMGA Project Coordinator periodically as requested.

There are many other opportunities, events and locations where master gardeners can earn volunteer hours as long as the volunteer opportunity is approved by an ACES agent as being horticultural outreach/education. Some of those options are the Shakespeare Garden, Lanark, Lily's Garden, and assisting at the ACE's office and many others.

There are several project ideas being discussed among CCMGA members at this time. If any of those ideas should develop into a CCMGA project proposal, the CCMGA Project Committee will be happy to review the submitted proposal in accordance with established procedure. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like a Project Proposal Form.

I will add that there has been continued work on the Flatwood Project. Betsy Coley has directed the activities, and a project proposal has been completed. Kellie Sensintaffar, Vice President

By Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent
Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests



Plant Lettuce for a Fall Vegetable Garden

Lettuce cultivars fall into 4 main categories:

Looseleaf lettuce, Butterhead lettuce, Romaine lettuce, and Crisphead lettuce



Lettuce is a great plant for the Fall vegetable garden, but it is also great to incorporate with ornamentals in your seasonal beds or in containers. Fall is known to be the best time to plant lettuce, but it can also be planted in early spring. Lettuce is a cool-season crop that grows best in 60 to 65° F temperatures, but can be grown at temps as low as 32° F and as warm as 80 to 90° F. With warmer temps in the early fall or as warmer temps approach late in spring the lettuce will begin to have a bitter flavor.

Most lettuces are established by direct seed or transplants and require a well-drained, moist soil with a pH of 6.5 to 6.8 and are sensitive to low pH (It is a good idea to add organic matter to the soil when planting). If no soil test is done, apply one and one-half cups of 8-8-8 fertilizer per 10 feet of row prior to planting. Sidedress with five teaspoons of ammonium nitrate per ten feet of row three weeks after planting. Mulch is a good idea to help retain moisture, but if applied too heavily, you may harbor snails that will feed on the lettuce---so mulch sparingly.

Plant leaf lettuce in rows one to two feet apart with seeds one-quarter inch deep and 10 to 20 seeds per foot in the row. Always thin leaf lettuce to six inches apart in the row when plants are two inches tall. For head lettuce it is best to grow from transplants and these should be planted in rows three feet apart with 12 inches between plants in the row. If there is danger of a late frost after planting, cover with a row cover to protect your lettuce. Below is a description of each type of lettuce that can be grown in this area along with general information and popular varieties.

Looseleaf lettuces are a good choice for gardens in Alabama. This lettuce is extremely easy and fast-growing with a maturity rate of 40 to 50 days and has a higher heat tolerance, but let the temperature lower before you harvest or the leaves will be bitter. Curly Oak Leaf and Royal Oak Leaf are two looseleaf lettuces you may want to plant. Included in looseleaf lettuce varieties are colored-leaf lettuces, such as: Red Sails (red leaves), Rouge Salad Bowl (red leaves) and Sierra lettuce (leaves are green with a red blush).

Aquarius and Buttercrunch are types of **butterhead lettuce** that have a loose heading cup-shaped dark green leaves and takes longer to mature at a rate of 55 to 70 days. At maturity, this lettuce forms a small head with a light yellow appearance.

Romaine lettuce is extremely easy to grow in Alabama and is popular in markets and has become one of the favorite lettuces for salads. This tall, upright-lettuce has a fast maturity rate and can grow 8 to 19 inches tall. Its leaves are long and loose and it is more tolerant of unfavorable weather conditions. Romaine lettuce is also referred to as Cos types, Paris Island Cos is a great variety to plant.

Crisp head lettuce is the most available lettuce seed cultivar called Iceberg and is commonly found in many garden centers. This lettuce will form a compact head with light green leaves and matures slowly at a rate of 80 to 100 days. For best growing results this type of lettuce should only be grown in the fall.

Alabama Wild Things

The Jerusalem Artichoke, a weed by any other name

by Kellie Sensintaffar, MG 2007

The Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus* L.) may be a weed to some, but this relative of the sun flower in the Daisy family, *Asteraceae* has a lot of potential as a crop plant or at the back of a sunny border. It can be grown throughout the U.S. and tolerates a variety of temperature and rainfall conditions. Once used by North American Indian tribes as food prior to the arrival of the European settlers. Champlain, the explorer, took this plant from North America to France in 1605. By the mid 1600's it was widely used as a human food and livestock feed there. In France, the Jerusalem artichoke is called "topinambour."

This plant is neither a artichoke nor does it have anything to do with Jerusalem. There is more than one explanation of the name "Jerusalem." Pilgrims may have thought of it as a new feed in a "new Jerusalem." Another derivation is that the word Jerusalem is a mispronunciation of the Italian word for sunflower-girasol. Additionally, the name of a 17th century gardener, Petrus Hondin of Ter-Heusen, Holland who distributed his artichoke apples throughout Europe, became modified. The Ter-Heusen, became Jerusalem in the U.S.

Although the tubers have been marketed for human consumption in the U.S. there have been scarce quantities. The plant can be grown for human consumption, alcohol production, fructose production and livestock feed. Similar to water chestnuts in taste. They can be eaten raw, boiled, sautéed, roasted and mashed. Once the tubers have been stored they become sweeter. They can be stored for long periods of time, made into flour or pickled. They are available commercially under several names, including sunchokes and lambchokes.. In France they are used for wine and beer production. In Germany,

much of the Jerusalem artichoke root is used to produce a spirit called "Topinambur", "Topi" or "Rossler". Ethanol and butanol, two fuel grade alcohols, can be produced from this plant, but the production has not been considered competitive with gasoline prices in the past. About 50% of the 12 million tons of sugar consumed annually by Americans is grown and produced in the U.S. Although the Jerusalem artichoke is a viable fructose source, the U.S. sugar industry has been hesitant in utilizing it because farmers have been concerned about the potential of the plant to be a weed problem. Use as a livestock feed is being heavily researched and many recommendations are available regarding this use. As a garden plant, give it a lot of room. This Spring, I received a tiny 3 inch plant from a friend. It is now about 4 feet high and 2 feet wide. It appears to be starting to bloom. If you have some and have not used systemic insecticide, weed killers like IMAGE, or other potentially hazardous chemicals around the area, why don't you dig up a tuber or two, and taste it. You will need to place it in cool, dark storage for a week or two. This allows the inulin (not insulin) to convert to sugar, creating a sweeter taste I will warn you about inulin, it is not well digested by some people, leading to abdominal distress. *Gerald's Herbal*, printed in 1621, quotes the English planter John Goodyer on this: "which way so ever they be dressed and eaten, they stir and cause a filthy loathsome stinking wind within the body thereby causing the belly to be pained and tormented, and are a meat more fit for swine than men." This could be why they have never caught on. Never the less, I may try them. Probably NOT at my next dinner part



whats comin' up?

CCMGA Event Calendar for September and October

Tuesday, September 28, CCMGA Monthly Meeting, Vaughn Park Church of Christ. 10:00-12:00. Preparing for a Flower Show and Business Meeting.

Tuesday October 26, a field trip to Pat Dye's new garden. Meeting time will be 10:00am, but please check for *details later.*

Tuesday November 22, Making Christmas wreaths. Charlotte Wood and Gail Cotney will be the presenters.

57th Annual Fall Flower Show
presented by
The Montgomery Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.
October 8 - 17, 2010
Alabama National Fair
Located in the Cultural Arts Center
Alabama Agricultural Center & Fairgrounds
1555 Federal Drive, Montgomery, AL 36107. 334-272-6831
There is a \$3.00 entry fee per entrant per show.

Master gardeners are welcome.

"If I were to name the three most precious resources of life, I should say books, friends and nature; and the greatest of these, at least the most constant and always at hand, is nature."

--Naturalist, John Burroughs

CCMGA Officers, 2010:
Cecelia Terrell - President
Kellie Sensintaffar - Vice president
Suzanne Brookhart - Treasurer
Anna Owen - Secretary

Please send all articles you would like to have in the newsletter to me by October 10. I will be out of the country from October 17 - 26. I am hoping to have the newsletter published by October 16. Wish me a good trip, I will be in Israel.

