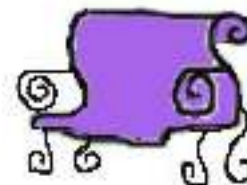


FROM THE GARDEN



The *vernal equinox* (*aequus*, equal + *nox*) will occur March 20. At the equinoxes, (spring and fall) the sun is directly overhead at the equator and days and nights are the same length, thus the Latin stem of the name. I am sure you are anxiously waiting for this twice a year occurrence. The cold weather, snow included, has been great for all that winter means to our earth, but warmer days will be greatly appreciated.

I have spoken at two ladies meetings in the last week on herbs. I think there will be more herbs planted this spring. The ladies thought it to be interesting to go outside and cut fresh herbs for teas and cooking. For me, it is one of the pleasures of gardening. Cooking is far more interesting when you can enhance the flavor of your food with fresh herbs.

I do believe that gardening helps to keep one fit. I had a fall at Southern Homes and Garden the Saturday CCMGA had a booth at their Home and Garden event. The fall was pretty awkward and could have caused a broken bone or a bad bruise, but I suffered neither. I attribute the good fortune to my hours spent on gardening chores, since I don't get in much other exercise. Creating a beautiful landscape, harvesting fresh vegetables and herbs and having a well body should inspire us to "get to gardening" right now.

Thanks again to our members who answered Kellie Sensintaffar's call to work at the CCMGA booth during SH&G's showcase event. Also, keep in mind all the other gardening events that are going on this season. Lisa and Kellie are keeping us well informed of all they hear about in the newsletter. Thanks, Lisa and Kellie! As always, thanks to all of you who go out of your way to promote the Master Gardener program through volunteering and sharing your knowledge and interest of horticulture and related subject areas. Master Gardeners make a difference in the values of our communities.

I am looking forward to the March meeting and the program on propagation and cold frames. See you then.

Happy Gardening!

Maggie Stringer



Meeting Time and Place

March 24, 10 a.m. till noon.
Vaughn Park Church of Christ

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PLANT OF THE MONTH-

Get ready for the show! "What show?" you may ask. The show put on by the beautiful, flowering azalea, of course. We, in the South, think that the azalea must certainly be a Southern bragging right, but did you know that the azalea originated in Asia? They were first cultivated by Buddhist monks and found their way on ships from Europe to Japan. They made their way from England to Charleston, South Carolina in 1848. Now azaleas grace gardens all along the Eastern half of the United States and in most of the Pacific Coast region.

All azaleas are Rhododendrons. In recent years, the term "Rhododendron" has come to mean the plant with large, leathery, evergreen leaves. The azaleas are referred to as plants (Rhododendrons) with smaller, thinner leaves.

In the early 1980s, Robert E. Lee, from Louisiana (not General Robert E. Lee) began crossbreeding the common spring flowering varieties of azaleas with the more rare type of azalea that blooms in the summer. Voila! The Encore Azalea was born. Just as its name implies, the Encore has more than one act. The "first act" opens with buds that burst open with full flower sometime in mid-summer. The curtain drops as cold weather sets in. The show continues in the spring when the traditional azaleas begin blooming. The Encore displays yet another burst of beautiful blooms. Gardeners can now have their choice of twenty Encore varieties, ensuring more blooms and color throughout the year.

Just remember, azaleas love acid soil with good drainage. Since they can tolerate our hot weather, azaleas make a perfect addition to any Southern garden or landscape. What are you waiting for? Grab that shovel and DIG!

Judy Crockett

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BIRMINGHAM GARDEN TRIP INFORMATION

We have an interesting spring trip planned for you on May 19. The total cost is \$32.00, which covers the bus and lunch. Our first stop will be the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. The Gardens are 67.5 acres that are filled with 20 thematic gardens. Each individual garden there can be classified into three types: Gardens of Collections, Gardens of Nature and Gardens of Culture.

After touring the gardens, we'll

have a box lunch there on the grounds and then we'll travel to Aldridge Botanical Gardens in Hoover. Aldridge Botanical Gardens feature more than 175 Hydrangea Species and Cultivars, foremost being the long rows of 25 year-old Snowflake Hydrangeas, the Garden's signature plant. Many of the hydrangeas will be in bloom at that time.

We'll have a morning and afternoon snack on the bus and water and juice will be available throughout the day. We'll make a short stop at the Rest Area on the way to Birmingham and also on our return home.

Bus Prizes: We will have two drawings for prizes during the bus ride.

We'll depart from the Perry Hill Shopping Center on Perry Hill Road at 7:30 , so please be there no later than 7:15 AM. We should return by 5:30 to 6:00PM

There is a gift shop at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens and also plants will be available for purchase at the Aldridge Botanical Gardens.

Please remember to pay by check only.



CAPITAL CITY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

February 24, 2009 Meeting Minutes

President Maggie Stringer called the February meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at Vaughn Park Church of Christ. Refreshments were provided by Gail Cotney, Anita Ward, Reggie Gipson, and Emily Frye.

Kellie Sensintaffer gave the inspirational devotion, Twelve Rules from the Garden.

The program was presented by Kellie Sensintaffer on *Taxonomy for DUMMIES*.

After corrections were made to January's minutes by Marie Tomlin and Cathy Maddox, the minutes were approved. A motion was made that the minutes be accepted. The motion was seconded and passed.

Committees

Treasurer/ Suzanne Reaves presented the budget for 2009, which was approved by the membership by voice vote. Suzanne has developed a new form that will provide a better means of tracking expenditures for future audits.

Membership/ President Maggie Stringer applauded everyone involved with producing our new pictorial membership directory. We now have 90 member on roll.

Mentoring/Suzanne Reaves asked for more interested people to sign up to be mentors for the new class of interns for 2009.

Trip/Barbara Samuels: The trip date has been set for **May 19, 2009**. Destination: Birmingham Botanical Gardens and then to Aldridge Botanical Gardens in Hoover, AL. Cost: \$32 (includes cost of transportation and lunch)

Plant Sale/Gail Cotney reminded us about Herb Day which will be **May 9, 2009**. A truck will be present during our April meeting, so plants can be loaded for the plant sale, one of our biggest fund -raisers. Make sure your donated plants are viable and labeled with information applied with a permanent marker. Tongue depressors, or popsicle sticks, are great for labeling. Gail will gladly accept all volunteers who want to help with the plant sale project.

Old Business

Remember to ask for plants in the newsletter if you need some. Also, if you have some plants to share, please let the members know by contacting Lisa Lenox, our newsletter editor.

AMGA Conference April 2-4, 2009 Featured speaker will be Joe Lamp/ *Garden and Deck*.

Reminder: CCMGA will be the host for the State Conference next year, which will be held March 18-20, 2010.

New Business

A workshop for beginner gardeners and other interested persons will be presented Saturday, March 14, 2009, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Richard Beard Building, 1445 Federal Drive. Cost: \$15, which includes lunch. Pre-registration is required. Call the County Extension Service to register.

Volunteers were requested to help cut limbs on Monday, March 2, to provide limbs for an art project for the Clean City Commission that will be created by Patrick Darty, on March 19, 2009.

Announcement: If you won a prize, remember to bring one for the raffle for the March meeting.

Also, please see Emily Frye to volunteer to help with refreshments for our meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Crockett, secretary



Terrific Garden Tonics
By Jerry Baker

2 Tbsp of whiskey, any kind.
1 Tbsp hydrogen peroxide
1 Tbsp fish emulsion
1/4 tsp instant tea granules
1/2 tsp unflavored gelatin (this is protein)
1/2 tsp dish washing liquid (makes water wetter and breaks cohesion so water penetrates better)
1/2 tsp ammonia (liquid ammonium nitrate or baby food for plants)
1/2 tsp corn syrup (if you do not have any corn syrup handy, you can use pancake syrup in a pinch as its first ingredient is corn syrup) [does not attract ants as it is so diluted)
1 gal warm water

Mix these ingredients in a bucket and pour into your watering can and use instead of plain water. You will be amazed.

Houseplant clean up tonic spray on your plants

1 tbsp dish washing liquid
1 tbsp antiseptic mouthwash (discourages pests)
1 tsp ammonia
1 tsp instant tea granules
1 qt warm water

Mix and put into a hand held spray bottle and mist your plants.

PLANT SALE!

We are quickly coming up on the date of a major fund raiser for CCMG, THE 2009 PLANT SALE. The success of this fund raiser depends totally on the participation of our membership. You always come through, and we on the committee salute your efforts. You provide the product with which we fill our booth on MAY 9. There are many plants that appeal to those at the sale: herbs (any and all), herb pots, vegetables, blooming plants of any kind, ferns, blooming shrubs (gardenias, azaleas), hostas, unusual plants like heirlooms, bulbs, daylilies, caladiums, cannas, ivy, flats of annuals or biennials, asters, alyssum, moonflowers, coleus, geraniums, impatiens, marigolds, nasturtiums, petunias, salvia, sweet pea plants, vinca, zinnias, hibiscus, hydrangea, ornamental grass, lambs ear, daisies and sun hardy plants, begonias, house plants and many others. Also, don't forget any garden statuary, decorator pots, baskets, or other containers in which you can make an arrangement. We would like to see someone try some sunflower seeds in pots.

We would love to see 100% participation this year. If you can't provide something from your garden, consider making a donation of plants from a local nursery or planting a container for the sale. The flats we had last year were some of the first things to sell.

It may be a little early for flowers to be blooming, so bring some pictures cut from catalogs, or from your own garden. This will make a great presentation for our buyers. Make sure all of your plants are clearly labeled. Use permanent ink on tongue depressors or some other permanent marker. Bulbs should be separated, labeled and bundled in groups of six. Bring your plants to the CCMGA meeting on April 24, we will pick them up and keep them until the sale.

Some of the people who come to our booth know very little about gardening and it becomes an education for them. In the past, we have had people who have just moved to Montgomery from out of state. They come to find out what grows here and to purchase plants for their yard and gardens. Because the sale takes place Mother's Day weekend, we often have adult children who bring their mother or grandmother to purchase plants on their day. It is such a pleasure to help people pick out and plan their gardens. There are



as many garden needs as there are buyers at the sale. The Plant Sale Committee encourages Master Gardeners to join in for the fun and for the educational aspects of the sale. Volunteer hours can be recorded for your participation, not only the time it takes to provide the plants, but also joining us for the promotion of the sale. We let the public know about the Master Gardener Helpline, hand out the phone number and answer gardening questions.

Last year, many of you showed-up and stayed an hour or two to promote our plant sale. We begin to have visitors as early as 8:30AM and the best selections are found before noon. Thank you for your support. We welcome any ideas you might have for how we can improve the annual plant sale. Let's make this the best year yet!

Suzanne Brookhart, Jane Shalhoop, Gail Cotney, Karin Carmichael, and Jan Gill

WHAT'S COMING UP!



Event calendar for March and April 2009

Monday, March 23, Birmingham. Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Spencer Lecture, Mary Palmer Dargan, "Timeless Landscape Design". 5:30 PM. Book signing 6:30 PM. Call Shelly Busby, 205-414-3965, for information.

Tuesday, March 24, Montgomery. CCMGA monthly meeting. Vaughn Park Church of Christ. 10AM to 12PM. Program speaker will be Ken Tilt, Professor at Auburn University, School of Horticulture. "Plant Propagation and Preparing Raised Garden Beds."

Friday, March 27, Mobile. Premier Gulf Coast Flower Show, "Festival of Flowers." Information and tickets go to: www.festivalofflowers.com.

Thursday – Saturday, April 2-4, Huntsville. 19th Annual AMGA State Conference, "A Garden for All Seasons." For a registration form, go to www.alabamamg.org. Or, look in the last publication of the "Garden Pathways".

Monday/Tuesday, April 20-21, Tuscaloosa. Master Gardener workshop, "A Diverse Garden," with Dr. William Welch from Texas A&M, speaking on "Antique Roses for Alabama". CEU certificates, Look for E-mail containing the Registration Form.

Friday/ Saturday, April 17-19, Birmingham. Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Spring Plant Sale. More than 85,000 plants. The public sale is from 9 AM- 5PM on Friday and Saturday, and 11AM to 3PM on Sunday. This free-admission event will be at the former Bruno's supermarket next to Colonial Brookwood Village on Lakeshore Drive between Highways 31 and 280. For more information about

Spring Plant Sale, contact Event Coordinator Shelly Busby at 414-3965 or sbusby@bbgardens.org.

Sunday, April 26, Birmingham. Birmingham Botanical Gardens, "Earth Day At The Gardens". The largest Earth Day celebration in the state, the 12th Earth Day the The Gardens. The event includes free hands-on activities for all age groups including a scavenger hunt to learn about nature and the environment. Entertainment includes local bands. All these activities are provided by over 60 non-profit environmentally-focused organizations to help us all learn about Alabama's natural resources. 1-5PM.





Tina's Tidbits and Tips

Hi there!!! My name is Tina Bowles. I am a member of the CAMGA and the CCMGA. I welcome you along on a trip with me to learn about the wild world of Gardening.

With this old back of mine, it makes it hard to sit or bend. So—I have decided to visit with ya'll through our paper. There are several things that you need to know about me. First, always is usually not the best answer, because there are always so many possibilities to everything. For example, they say not to save seeds from hybrid plants, as they will not come back true? No, I would not plant my whole garden in that seed, but why not try one or two? Who knows what you will come up with, maybe even your own unique plant. Another thing is, no matter how unable I become, I will always be a plant-a-holic!!! When you go to a nursery, and really get excited, no, I mean REALLY excited, then I believe that it is in your blood! If you love what you plant, and don't kill it with kindness, it will probably flourish. And there is so much more. But I am a firm believer in Lasagna Gardening, and that is what I am going to talk to you about today. With my problems with sitting and bending, my husband and I are really trying to get things ^UP^ as much as possible. I have been reading gardening books and magazines for some years now. I came across a book called, Lasagna Gardening, by Patrica Lanza. I started reading it, and it was making a lot of sense! I read that book from cover to cover. It impressed me so much, I did something that I Never do. I reread a book. Highlighting along as I read, I realized how many recycled materials could be used to build my beds. I'm a pretty good cook, and have been known to turn out a mean pan of lasagna or two, so I figured I would give it a shot! The gathering began.

One day I went out and got all of the ingredients, and this is how I assembled my Lasagna Garden—
Don't forget to water after each layer!!!

—Lay down cardboard or thick layers of newspaper the shape you want your garden, don't make it too wide, remember, you are not to step on it again. You have to get to the inside center. Three feet is a good width for me, but some folks prefer 4 feet. And if you make more than one, don't forget to leave adequate spacing for a good width isle.

—Cover with hay or straw, but not pine straw. Hay tends to have a lot of seeds, so put it at the bottom so the seeds don't germinate.

—Cover with whole newspaper, about 6-8 sheets thick

—Cover with mushroom compost

—Worms, from compost bin, or from bait store. They just Love all of the munchies!

—Shredded leaves and newspaper

—Peat moss.

Did you remember to water after each layer??? Layering brown and green, when you can, helps. You can add what you have or anything you like. The more nutritious the pile, the healthier the plants will be that you are growing. I try to keep my layers 2-3 inches thick. And don't forget, no meat, fat or bones to draw the critters!

But there is one thing that you Must Not Do... TURN THE PILE!!! That is really defeating the purpose anyway, and if you do, weed seeds might be exposed. In no time, your layers will settle, and it will be time to add more. Stop adding layers atleast a month before planting, to let it work on decomposing and settling. Add a layer of finished compost on top. That will leave the top soil chock full of nutrients that will help fertilize your plants!

My husband was so impressed with my 2 beds, that we brainstormed and figured out how to make sides for them from recycled things we had. He helped me build 3 more! The harvest was just phenomenal for such a small space. We do a lot of experimenting, which we have incorporated more and more in our experiences with gardening.

Ms Patricia Lanza has written several books on this topic. She will be speaking at the 2009 Huntsville Master Garden Convention in April. You should try to get in to hear her talk. I have learned a lot from her books. Sure wish I could meet her in person!

From starting seeds, to dreams of beautiful flower beds and bountiful veggies—Spring is in the Air—as we journey on thru 2009.

Till next time,

As always,
Happy Gardening,

Tina Bowles

March 24 Program

The program presenter for March 24, CCMGA monthly meeting is Ken Tilt. He is a professor, in the school of horticulture at Auburn University. He will speak about "Plant Propagation and Gardening in Raised Beds." He is also part the team developing the "Alabama Yards and Neighborhoods" program. This program is aimed at reducing the use of pesticides, water and even fuel inputs in our landscapes. The goal is to sustain Alabama's lawns and gardens while saving money, time and energy and protecting the environment. For more about the program go to www.ag.auburn.edu/hort/landscape/Alabama_Yards_and_Neighborhoods.html.



GARDEN TIPS AND TRICKS

I have spent the past three days cleaning out all of my beds. Clipping out dead limbs from shrubs and trees, cutting down dead flower stalks, trimming frost burn from monkey grass, and mowing up dead grass have been my mission. Hopefully, all of the beds will be ready for the spring planting which I will begin in early April. I need to know when to plant my caladium bulbs that I saved from last year. Elaine Galt is the guru on this subject.

As for the flower show, the most important thing that I can think of is to plan ahead. See what is blooming in your yard and cut it the evening before the flower show so that the specimen will have time to "season." Remember, your entry does not have to be a blooming one. It can be a cutting from a shrub, a vine, or a fern. I always love to see what is growing in other members' yards.

Can't wait.

Karin Carmichael

Dear Karen,

You have wait until the ground warms up. When will that be? April, is probably a little too early because of the rain. The bulbs can rot. May is good, but I never get around to it until June. I have nasturtiums planted and hate to pull them up too early. They (Caladiums) will dry when it gets too hot. They come up fast then (the Caladiums).

Elaine Galt

CCMGA Treasurer's Report – March

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------|
| Beginning Balance, 02/10/09 | | \$5,275.63 |
|-----------------------------|--|------------|

Deposits:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------|--|
| Raffle & Badges | \$ 29.00 | |
|-----------------|----------|--|

| | | |
|------------|--------|--|
| Membership | 120.00 | |
|------------|--------|--|

| | | |
|---------------|----------|---------|
| Total Deposit | \$149.00 | +149.00 |
|---------------|----------|---------|

Checks:

| | | |
|-------|----------|--|
| #1258 | \$200.00 | |
|-------|----------|--|

| | | |
|-------|--------|--|
| #1259 | 222.75 | |
|-------|--------|--|

| | | |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| Total Cks | \$422.75 | -422.75 |
|-----------|----------|---------|

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Ending Balance: March 10, 2009 | | \$5001.88 |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|



In Memorium
Joy Drum Waller