



June 27, 2011

Dear MGA Presidents,

LET'S CELEBRATE!

Alabama Master Gardener is 30 years old this year! In 1981 a Master Gardener from New York and an enthusiastic Extension Agent in Madison County combined forces to host the first MG training classes in Alabama. We've now grown to a state-wide program supported by 18 Extension Agents, 37 local Master Gardener Associations and a state association, the Alabama Master Gardeners Association. All Master Gardeners have common goals of sharing information, volunteer service, learning more about gardening, and in making their communities better places to live.

Consider planting a tree to celebrate our anniversary..... Alabama's urban forests offer immeasurable benefits to our cities and towns. Early generations of Alabamians planted trees in our cities. Trees brought them a sense of beauty, comfort, and relief. Today people continue this effort, municipal employees and private citizens alike, by planting trees in their yards, public spaces, and streets and highways. We even have concrete evidence of the benefits of these investments. Through research, we have learned that city trees:

- Enhance retail business trade
- Reduce storm water runoff
- Attract tourism and development
- Increase property values
- Lower energy costs
- Improve personal health and well-being
- Clean our air
- Build community pride
- Increase recreational activities
- Lower urban noise
- Improve citizenship

The ACES and AMGA are encouraging all local MGA's to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a fall tree planting in a public spot – park, school, city hall, street, etc. As you know, fall is the best time to plant hardy perennials. And some of our northern urban forests were devastated by this year's spring storms. This is the perfect way to show MG's investing in the future of Alabama's local communities. Plant three, plant 30, or any number your association is able to do. Kerry Smith has posted resources on-line ([www.aces.edu/mg](http://www.aces.edu/mg)) to assist your project. [ANR 1255, ANR 0976, ANR 0814, ANR 1210 and more]

Let's make it a really big event - tell Kerry about your plans and we'll create a state-wide media blitz about Alabama Master Gardeners. You have a HUGE impact in Alabama. We should brag about it to everyone!

Thank you for considering this idea to plant one or more trees for your local Alabama urban forest.

Kerry Smith  
MG State Program Coord  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System