



Leaf Notes

The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners



Fall 2005

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A Master Gardener Volunteer at Wright's Mill Road School

By Marcia Gibson

Are you having a hard time getting all of your MG volunteer hours in? Let me suggest that you visit your neighborhood school and offer your assistance. I did and they were thrilled to have the help. In the two years I have been volunteering at my nearest school, I have learned that the campuses in the Auburn School District get only very basic lawn maintenance (the lawn is cut twice a month by city personnel); volunteers must complete all other campus improvement projects. I easily get all of my MG volunteer hours in by doing assorted projects that improve the Wrights Mill Road campus.

The PTA committee has made significant improvements to the beauty and usefulness of the campus in the two years in which I have served as the PTA grounds chairperson. Prior to the school year, the courtyard, flag area, and the brick WMR sign all received major facelifts. Young's Plant Farm donated plant material for the makeover project! The campus really was able to put its best face forward on opening day.

This fall, two of the playground areas were refilled with three truckloads of pine bark donated by International Paper in Opelika. This not only improved the look of the playground, but took care of a major safety issue as well.

We are currently resetting all of the pots and courtyard beds for winter and spring display. Again, Young's Plant Farm is helping out with plant material. We are using the lasagna method in the pots and beds. We plant in layers using at least five different types of bulbs under a top dressing of pansies, kale, and camellias. During the winter we get lots of pretty flowers - but we look forward to a virtual fireworks show from the bulbs well into April!

In late November, notice the front door of the school. The fabulous giant wreath is made out of plant material found on WMR campus and nature trail. It's a whopper of a wreath - at eight feet wide!

I invite you all to come take a walk around the WMR campus. The city's newest nature trail and park are just across the woods on Gay Street. The park connects to the WMR campus via a crushed stone path from Gay Street to Wright's Mill Road. If you want to visit WMR courtyard, just pop into the office and pick up a visitor tag between 8am and 1:30pm.

I would love to have additional help from other Master Gardeners! If you need volunteer hours, please call me at 821-8738.

See you in the garden!

Marcia Gibson, MG Class of 2004



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The Asian Ladybug, *Harmonia Axyridis*

By Chuck Browne



You may have noticed more than the usual amount of ladybugs around your home this fall. The Asian Ladybug, although a beneficial insect, has become a serious household pest. It was originally released as a biological control agent for aphids several times throughout the U.S. and Canada. These beetles have been reported to congregate on the sides of buildings by the thousand and will move inside during cooler months if given the opportunity. We have received numerous calls concerning the ladybug. Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Where did they come from? According to the North Carolina Department of Agricul-

ture Biocontrol Laboratory, these beetles were released as beneficial insects as early as 1916 in California and several times throughout the U.S. and Canada from 1978 to 1982. Many of the beetles were released in Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Washington .

Why were they released? The beetles were initially released for pecan aphid control, but the beetle has a wide host range and can feed on rose, apple, poplar, conifer, and crepe myrtle aphids.

Do they bite or sting? These beetles are not poisonous, do not bite or sting, are not carriers of disease, and do not eat wood.

What is it about their biology that make them a problem for us? Like all other beetles, this ladybug has complete metamorphosis having an egg, larval, pupal, and adult stage. In Japan, these beetles have been reported to over winter in the cracks and crevices of rocks on mountains. In the U.S., the beetles use buildings as an over wintering site. People with log homes may find this beetle particularly troublesome due to the beetles' preference to dwell in cracks and crevices. Gita Smith reports vacuuming over a thousand ladybug carcasses in the month of November.

Are they attracted to light colors? The North Carolina Department of Biocontrol Laboratory reported that the "beetles were most often found on light-colored walls and trim or on reflective surfaces such as large windows." The beetles were also found on the sunniest areas of the buildings.

What can I do about them? Prevention is the key to keeping this lady beetle from getting into homes. Make certain that cracks along win-

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FALL 2005 GOINGS ON

By Diane Blue

Our last quarterly meeting for 2005 was held on October 18 at the home of Patti Householder, with twelve members attending. We discussed plans for the 2006 Garden Tour and viewed a video of the selected gardens. Officers elected for 2006 - 2007 are as follows:

President – Patti Householder

Treasurer – Diane Blue

Newsletter Editor – Tomie Dugas

Publicity/Secretary – Angie Simpson

Webmaster – Scott Godwin

2006 Garden Tour Coordinator – Jolly Roberts

Kiesel Garden Coordinator –

As you can see, we created three new offices, Publicity/Secretary, Webmaster, and 2006 Garden Tour Coordinator. The Publicity/Secretary and Webmaster will be tremendous assets in better presenting our organization to the public, thereby creating more interest in what we do as Master Gardeners. Although these officers don't officially begin their duties until January 2006, they are already busy. Angie will have an article submitted to the newspaper in December, and Jolly is really working hard to make our 2006 Garden Tour a success. Tomie has some great ideas for Leaf Notes, and Scott is busy creating our Web site. Perhaps it will be up and running by January!!! We accomplished much under Jaya's leadership, and we will continue to do so as Patti takes the reins. Let's all give them our full support.

Please note that we do not yet have a Kiesel Garden Coordinator. Please, will someone volunteer for this important duty? It in-

volves planning the layout of the garden, selecting the plants, and coordinating work days.

There is a core group of about eight people who work the garden on a regular basis, and we need this leadership position filled to keep us headed in the right direction.

We are currently working with Habitat to landscape and put in plants as each new home is completed.

Sondra Parmer (MG class 2002) is currently working on a school garden project in Limestone County. We'll have more to report on this project in our next issue of LeafNotes.

For the Halloween season, ***Out in the Garden*** (Helen Arnold and Kit Conner) entertained many pre-school children via field trips to the store. They all visited the Butterfly Garden, and some planted bulbs (marking their names so that they can come back in the spring and see the benefit of their work). Crafts, storytelling and a Punkin Patch/Maze were also enjoyed by all, including the teachers and moms. It is never too early to get the kids involved in GARDENING!!!!!! ***Out in the Garden*** has also hosted several local Garden Clubs. It is very exciting for them to offer programs with new and inventive ideas on planting pots, decorating with plants, and general gardening tips to such appreciative folks.

Urban Birder, the first officially published newsletter for Urban Birding (Holly Plumlee and Cindy Gail), is now on-line at this Web site: <http://www.urban-birding.com/october05contents.html>. Great job fellow Master Gardeners!!

Enjoy a safe and happy holiday season with family and friends. Merry Christmas!!



FROM THE PRESIDENT*By Jaya Krishnagopalan*

It is that time of the year again. This note is a little reminder that **Service Reports** of volunteer time will be due soon. If you have a success story or an interesting project you worked on this year, please include that as well.

Please report all your volunteer hours by mail or on-line. This is very important for Lee County and the State MG Association. Please do not be shy or think that you did not do as much as you should have done. All hours are equally valuable and all projects are equally important. You are a valuable partner in the Extension Service mission to educate Alabama's citizens, and your volunteer work helps Extension in countless ways.

All reports need to be turned in by January 1. This coincides with the due date for AMGA membership dues which should make remembering easier. Service Reports now can be reported by either of two options:

- ANR – 985
- on-line at http://www.aces.edu/mg/volunteer_area.tmpl

If using the internet report, first "create an account" with your e-mail address. You will need the passcode, "MGA04", to complete the six-question form. This account provides security for all your information. Call or e-mail Jaya or Diane for more information

ATTENTION!!!

Master Gardeners, our next meeting will be held at **noon, January 12**, at the Lee

County Extension Office in Opelika. This will be a brown bag luncheon and dessert and drinks will be provided. There are many issues to discuss, and we will begin taking pictures for our photo directory. We are going to have six meetings in 2006 rather than four. Your input is needed as to what should be happening at our meetings. Do you want to have speakers? We have people active in several areas: Kiesel Demonstration Garden, Habitat landscape design, Garden Tour; Extension Assistance, Forest Ecology Preserve, School grounds maintenance, photo directory. Where would you like to work and what do you enjoy doing? Would you like to have some meetings at noon and others in the evenings? Would you like to alternate meeting locations between Auburn and Opelika? These will be some of the issues we will be addressing in a survey which will be distributed soon. If you have other issues that you think should be addressed, please tell us about those issues. We want to have a much more active and visible club than we have had in the past. It will take your participation to make this happen!

State and local dues are due in the month of December. Dues should be remitted to the State office by January 1, so please submit promptly to the address indicated on the form.



ALABAMA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, INC.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Dear Master Gardener:

The Alabama Master Gardener Association (AMGA) Board of Directors has set \$5.00 as the annual membership dues for January 1 – December 31, 2006. Members are very important to this Association, and we hope that you will join or renew your membership. To remain on the state membership list and to continue receiving the *Garden Pathways* newsletter, please complete this application and give it, along with your dues, to your local association Treasurer by January 1, 2006.

Name: _____ Office: _____
(Please indicate if you currently hold state or local office)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Association Name: Lee County Master Gardeners

County of residence: _____

Class information: County of training: _____ Yr of Graduation: _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP (Check one)

	Local dues	State dues
<input type="checkbox"/> Active Alabama Master Gardener	<u>\$10.00</u>	<u>\$5.00</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Member	No fee	No fee
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Member	_____	<u>\$100.00</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Associate Member (Extension Employee)	No fee	No fee
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron Member	_____	<u>\$5.00</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Member	No fee	No fee

Make checks payable to Lee County Master Gardeners and mail to
Lee County Master Gardeners Association
Lee County Agricultural Center, Suite 4
600 South 7th Street
Opelika, AL 36801

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dows are sealed and attic vents are sealed or screened. Do not crush the beetles as they can stain wallpaper and upholstery. Vacuuming up or sweeping away the beetles is the first line of defense. The small hand held vacuum works well with little to no damage to the bug. Don't forget to discard the vacuum bag outside when you are finished. No insecticides are currently recommended for lady beetles as they are beneficial insects.

The best method of control however, is exclusion. Caulk around windows and door frames and fill cracks in wood or brick to eliminate the beetles' access to your home. Install new weather stripping around all exterior doors. Not only will this help keep insects out of your home, but it will also save on heating and cooling bills.



Chambers County MG Students Invited to Join Lee Chapter

By Gita Smith

Students in Chambers County were wrapping up their 2005 MG studies when they got an invitation in November to come join us here in Lee County. On the second-to-last day of class, I visited the students to tell them a bit about what we do here in Lee County. It had been the hope of several of us in Chambers County to start our own MG

group, but the numbers aren't quite there yet. So don't be surprised to see some fresh faces at our next quarterly meeting.

We are hoping that Lee County MGs will cross the county border (it's not as long as the Canadian border or as dangerous as the Mexican border!) to work with Chambers MGs on a couple of projects in 2006. Among the ideas on the drawing board are a community garden, teaching high school and middle school students about plants, and beautification of some civic buildings.

With 12 new graduates emerging from the classroom, there should be lots of energy to try new and exciting gardening projects.



2006 Officers: Left to right, back row: Angie Simpson, Diane Blue, Patti Householder, Jolly Roberts. Front row: Tomie Dugas. Scott Godwin was not available for the picture.



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