

HAPPENINGS

Winter 2018—2019

Alabama
Master Gardeners
Association

Alabamamg.org

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BALDWIN CO MGA

Paula Pritchett

December was my last month as President of Baldwin County Master Gardeners. One of the highlights for me was getting to know and work with our MGs on an individual basis. Baldwin County Master Gardeners have become more visible because of the work we all have accomplished, and are now highly regarded in Baldwin County. I enjoyed being President!

In January our new President, Julian Walthall, begins leading our organization. BCMG will be off to a busy start with a large class of 29 Interns starting January 23. A Mentor is provided for each

Intern. The Mentor will work to make his Intern feel welcome and will help guide him/her through all the available volunteer opportunities. February will find BCMGs at Arbor Day in six different locations in Baldwin County. These six outreach events provide Interns with their first opportunity to work alongside members. In March we hold our public education series *Tuesdays with Master Gardeners*. The workshops are held each Tuesday evening at the Gulf Coast Research Station in Fairhope. The workshops are on a variety of gardening subjects and taught mostly by MGs and ACES. The admission cost is \$5 per evening, so the classes are affordable for everyone.



HAPPINESS HELD IS THE SEED;
HAPPINESS SHARED IS THE
FLOWER.

- J. Harrigan

BLOUNT CO MGA

Sherry Brewer

As we continue our twenty-fifth year as Blount County Master Gardeners, our group continues to enjoy tours and recently chartered a bus to Quail Hollow Gardens. Quail Hollow is owned by retired football coach Pat Dye, who has a Japanese maple nursery, a garden with many hundreds of Japanese maples, and a hunting preserve on his property. Coach Dye gave a history of the Japanese maples and also discussed longleaf pines and the water features on the property. He then demonstrated correct pruning skills on a mature tree after which the group was treated to a meal with him in his lodge. Several MGs purchased plants as souvenirs.

Our third Fall Conference proved to be a day of fun and learning, and was enjoyed by many. Our Blount County Fair in September would not be possible without the tireless efforts of our group. The fair was a great success with our members winning ribbons and working in many capacities. Members Cheryl and Jerry Jones hosted another successful Kids Day on the Farm. Children were bused in to participate in the day's

activities, thanks to many BCMG volunteers. We are also planning, with the Friends of the Locust Fork River, to landscape a new scenic overlook on Highway 79, which will provide river access to showcase our beautiful Blount County. The Palisades Park Christmas Winter Event is underway with our group decorating and installing plantings. In addition, member Susan Hagan continues to reconstruct our group's twenty-five-year history, which will soon be ready for publication, and we are excitedly awaiting our next twenty-five-years serving our wonderful county!



Celebrating twenty-five years with Selfies! L-R President (2011-2012) Susan Hagan, and current president (2018-19), Sherry Maddox. Photo by Sherry Brewer



CALHOUN CO MGA

Sherry Blanton

Our Association ended 2018 with our annual awards event. Volunteers pitched in to make the clubhouse very festive. After a pot luck dinner, the board presented the prestigious Red Bandanna Awards to Skeeter Sims, Myra Gann, and Ruth Sarro, members who have showed great dedication and service. We also presented MGs certificates to this year's outstanding intern class. In November we had our annual business

meeting, at which time we elected Myra Gann as our new treasurer.

The Tree Amigos MG volunteers had a holiday party for the young ladies who are residents of the Coosa Valley Attention Home where the program is housed. The volunteers purchased individual gifts for the residents as well as gifts to benefit the home. Funds came from the proceeds of the spring plant sale.

We have begun planning for the 2021 AMGA Annual Conference. Members are very excited to be part of this great event and are looking forward to hosting our fellow MGs.

CAPITOL CITY MGA

Mary Eleanor Hines

On Thursday, Sept. 27, 2018, Capitol City Master Gardener Association hosted the AMGA Fall Seminar. It was held at Taylor Road Baptist Church in East Montgomery from 9:30 - 3:00 with four outstanding speakers. The first morning speaker was Peggy Hill, who spoke on *Your Sanctuary Garden: Ideas and Inspiration*. The second speaker was Mary Beth Shaddix who spoke on *Color and Edibles for Your Garden Sanctuary*; Breakfast snacks were offered to everyone during the morning. Then we broke for a delicious box lunch and enjoyable camaraderie. Afternoon speakers were Tyson Farmer whose topic was *Sanctuary for your Wildlife Friends*, and final speaker, Brian Dahle, spoke on *Water Features for Your Garden Sanctuary*. Karin Carmichael chaired this successful event with Cathy Maddox in charge of registration and evaluation; Margaret Cully,

speakers; Mike Forster, set up and equipment; Lynn Kuhlmann, food; and Bobbie Speziale, venue site. There was a multitude of door prizes to the delight of the 153 Master Gardeners in attendance.

We have been quite busy during the Fall with planting and the continuation of the greenhouse at the Montgomery Botanical Gardens. Along with Fain Landscaping Company, the Master Gardeners, under the guidance of Cathy Maddox, planted crepe myrtles along the entrance and by the terrace. We have also planted azaleas, hydrangeas, and spirea as well as 1,000 daffodil bulbs throughout the garden.

Karin Carmichael, and her Rose Garden committee (downtown) and Ann Oldham along with her Lily's Garden committee (Forest Ave. School) continue to groom and winterize the two gardens.



CHEAHA MGA

Debby Mathews

Clever garden tool maintenance tips were shared by our members at the October meeting. Ann Jones demonstrated the use of *Scotch Brite* scouring pads for cleaning hand pruners. Baby oil and window cleaners were also favorites of members. Mandy Davis used a BBQ grill brush to clean tools, then wiped with WD 40. Carol and Debby Mathews showed how a bucket of sand could be used as a rust preventative for hand tools. Steve Jones was an advocate for tool sharpeners.

Next, on tap for the Cheaha MGs will be studying seed catalogs and afterwards starting seeds for vegetable transplants to be sold in our plant sale. But first, we must elect new officers!



Pictured at our workshop are Steve Jones and Ann Jones. Photo by Debby Mathews

CHILTON CO MGA

Susan M Cleckler

Chilton County MG's have been busy! We had our second fundraiser (yard sale) of the year, and in spite of the rain, it was a big success! Chilton County also celebrated its one hundred fiftieth birthday in October.

We finished our year with wonderful speakers. Chilton County MG Rick Miller shared his knowledge on Asian culture and the different ways and types of plants used in their landscaping. Autauga County MG Glenn Huovinen spoke to us on Gardening in Small Spaces and Alternative Methods of Gardening. Glenn is working on his Advanced MG Certification. Our final speaker, Mary McCroan taught us about different types of water features.

Our annual Christmas party is always a lot of fun with Dirty Santa and loads of good food and desserts.

What a great year 2018 has been. CCMGA has elected a new slate of officers and Board members that will carry us through 2019.

We have a big year ahead of us, hosting the 2019 AMGA Conference in May. I have the privilege of working beside so many dedicated people that have been involved in the Master Gardener Program for years. With that knowledge and dedication, CCMGA proves to be a positive influence in our community.

Chilton County MGs, with the help from Autauga and Shelby counties, continue to make fundraising for the AMGA conference a priority and we are all working very hard to ensure a successful conference.



1st row L_R Sondra & Gary Henley, Wally & Lee Walters, Lanell Baker, Debbie Housner, Judy Cobb, Robin Cagle

2nd row Elizabeth York, Ann Baker, Teresa Davis, Skip Coulter, Trish Williams, Bob Bates, Nelson Wynn, Lamar Giles, Alan Reed

3rd row Susan M Cleckler, Alice Broome, Joyce Lawson, Audrey Giles, Trisha Williams, Margaret Ennis, Hariett Jackson Photo by Audry Giles

CLAYBANK MGA

Dee Gilbert

The Claybank Master Gardeners were excited to see the fall Master Gardener class graduate a very proactive group; many managed to log in their first fifty volunteer hours by graduation or soon after. We are so proud of our graduates! Also, to credit their eagerness to learn, they each presented a topic of their choosing the last day of class. When it comes to volunteering, the Interns have helped Regional Agent Lucy Edwards save the crape myrtles from being murdered at the Extension Office. These helping hands made for light work that cold December morning.

Our annual Christmas Gathering has become an opportunity to joyfully share with those in need instead of gifting one another. For the past several years the CMGers have brought gifts of toys, blankets, jackets, gloves, and canned food to be donated to the less fortunate through our local firemen, and mission outlets. We all find this act far more satisfying than padding our already overcrowded greenhouses and gardens.

In January, we will start an after-school program for Junior Master Gardeners, beginning with the fourth-grade level, at the Ozark-Dale County Library, meeting every Thursday through March. The program will include a different topic each week winding up with Life Skills and Career

Exploration. The program will be geared to interest young students with a lot of fun, interactive and hands-on experiences.

In 2019, the Dale County Extension Office and the Claybank Master Gardeners will host quarterly Lunch & Learn programs open to the public. These will be held at the Dale County Extension office.



A couple of Interns, Roger Duclos and Katherine Duclos helped save the crape myrtles from being murdered. Photo by Lucy Edwards, Extension Agent



Every garden is unique with a multitude of choices in soils, plants and themes.

Finding your garden theme is as easy as seeing what brings a smile to your face.

- Teresa Watkins

COFFEE CO MGA

Jacque Hawkins

Brenda Evans, a Coffee County Master Gardener, presented a program on Hummingbirds to the Azalea Garden Club. Fourteen species of hummingbirds breed in the United States, and the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird is the only one that breeds regularly east of the Mississippi River. The red feeder and high nectar flowers will attract them, and the sugar water is sufficient for their diet. Hummingbird wings beat an average of fifty times per second, is the only bird that can hover, and takes an average of 250 breaths per minute. Their normal lifespan is three to five years, and they are often very aggressive and extremely territorial. Hummingbirds are not only fascinating to watch, but they are also important pollinators. Remember to keep those feeders clean and be on the lookout for overwintering hummers before you take your feeders down. Contact Hummingbird Research, Inc., if you spot a hummingbird in your yard between November

15 and March 1.

The Coffee County Master Gardener's Association members had a booth at the *Christmas at the Farmers Market* in Enterprise. Cookies seasoned with rosemary and hot cider were prepared and provided by Ona Garwood, and a beautiful display of decorations that can be made from items in the environment was staged by Alice Hersant.



Coffee County Master Gardeners are operating a booth at the Farmers market. L to R: Brenda Evans, Alice Hersant, Ona Garwood, and Jacque Hawkins. Photo by Jacque Hawkins



COVINGTON CO MGA

Mary Ann Gantt

Covington County Master Gardeners celebrated another great year at a luncheon at the home of Donna Bateman of Opp. The delicious Pot Luck Lunch set the stage for the hilarious exchange of gifts. Business included the installation of new officers: President Greg Lolley, Vice-President Norma Riley, Secretary Donna Bateman, Treasurer Patricia Gunter, New Interns chairperson Dale Pancake and Plant Sale chairperson Bonnie Reed.

Covington County Master Gardeners are pairing with the City of Andalusia to earn certification as a Butterfly City.

Everyone interested in Master Gardeners are invited to our noon meetings on the second Monday of each month at the Covington County Extension building on Highway 55 in Andalusia.

Those wanting to complete requirements to become a Certified Master Gardener are invited to complete the classes scheduled for January 28-31 from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm at the Covington County Extension Office. Call 334-222-1125 for details.



Current President, Norma Riley, passes the gavel to 2019 President Greg Lolley, while Secretary Donna Batemen witnesses the installation of the new president. Photo by Mary Ann Gantt

CULLMAN CO MGA

Jennifer Underwood

Another quarter has flown by for the CCMGAI. In October, our many community outreach efforts included Peinhardt Farm Day, Oktoberfest, and the Cullman County Fair. Inspired by the Alabama Bicentennial commemoration, the fair booth covered the history of agriculture in Alabama featuring ten prints of *Panorama of Alabama Agriculture* by Alabama's WPA-era artist, John Augustus Walker.

On November 8, an Alabama Autumn planting demonstration/Work Day was held at the Demonstration Garden. Cullman County Extension Coordinator Tony Glover led an informative presentation on fall planting, followed by refreshments including *Alabama Autumn Planting Cake*. The delicious cake, created by Donnie Douthit and John Lynch, features Cullman Grown sweet potatoes, apples, honey, and pecans. After cake and coffee, the workday portion commenced. Two hundred fifty pansies were nestled in a winter color garden, and the beginnings of our new Butterfly Garden section were laid out as well. A stunning, red *Alabama Jubilee* camellia was also planted to honor Tony Glover's late brother, Steven Weaver.

We wrapped up the end of a productive year with our annual Christmas party December 2 at the Agriplex. A spirited game of "Dirty Santa"

provided entertainment after a potluck lunch. Painted wooden snowmen graced with live greenery made delightful table decorations for our Winter Wonderland theme.

In January, we plan to start our next Master Gardener training classes. We look forward to taking some new Master Gardeners under our wings.



Ellen Hall captured this breathtaking shot of a Gulf Fritillary amongst some purple asters in our Demonstration Garden. The *Birds and Blooms* magazine liked the photo so much that they featured it in their September 2018 publication. Photo by Ellen Hall

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE A MASTER GARDENER?

There is a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.

You would rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothing store.

You prefer gardening to watching television.

You plan vacation trips to arboretums and public parks.

Dirt under your fingernails and calloused palms are matters of pride.

DEKALB CO MGA

Mary Shurett

September brought the sixty-third annual award-winning DeKalb County V.F.W. Agricultural Fair to Fort Payne. Our Master Gardeners always enjoy this week! We decorated the fairgrounds with pumpkins, gourds, corn stalks, scarecrows, and baskets of mums to provide a welcoming atmosphere.

A community booth and Master Gardener information booth were also designed. Members manned the information booth each night of the fair and enlisted names and contact information from people interested in participating in the next MG class.

Help was also given to those submitting items for judging. Our own Linda Stephens and her husband Charles were instrumental in the planning and implementation of the fair and provide thousands of hours of work each year. The DeKalb County V.F.W. Fair has been voted the state's top agricultural fair for many years. It has vast community participation and features exhibits of homemade crafts, canned foods, photography, flower arrangements, quilts, produce, baked goods, and also live animals.

Two Lunch and Learn programs drew large community support, and the participation and information delighted us. In October, we were pleased to welcome featured speaker Hayes

Jackson who taught us so much about hydrangeas.

November's Lunch and Learn speaker was garden designer June Mays, who presented the *Gardens of Downton Abbey*. June spent a year studying garden design at the English Gardening School in London and has designed or consulted on more than 100 gardens. Although she has retired from garden design, she continues to speak and write about gardens.



DeKalb County Master Gardeners Brandy Houston, far left, and Ann Houston, far right, joined Michael Thomason and Mary Beth Shaddix at the 2018 AMGA fall conference in Montgomery where they enjoyed the program, *My Garden Sanctuary*. Photo by Mary Shurett



*There is something soothing about working in the yard.
Planting seeds and seeing them poke green out of the dirt.
And it gets you out of the house with out going too far.*

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/528396-crazy-ladies>
Michael Lee West

ETOWAH CO MGA

Carol B. Link

Etowah County Master Gardeners have begun working toward 2019's annual plant sale, which is held toward the end of April each year. Two work days were held in October, and the greenhouses were cleaned, sanitized, and made ready for another year of greenhouse work. New fans were installed in a couple of the greenhouses, and new shade cloth has been purchased for another. Plants are being brought to the greenhouses to be potted for the sale.

In September, Louise Radanovich, Retired Arborist from Albertville gave a presentation on The Mighty Oak. In November, Mandy Pearson gave an interesting presentation on Cheaha State Park. A traditional Christmas dinner was the meal for the December meeting, and Master

Gardeners presented a special Christmas program. An Etowah County Master Gardener (a Marine) collected gifts and donations for Marine Toys for Tots from MGs.

On November 8, a busload of Master Gardeners made an educational day trip to Gibb's Garden, in Ball Ground, Georgia, a 300 Acre estate that includes over 100 Japanese Maples. The Japanese maple foliage was at its peak at the time of the visit.

Several Etowah County Master Gardeners recently completed a total renovation of the landscape of the Etowah County Court House, with the county furnishing all the plants, and other materials, and Master Gardeners designing and installing the plants. The Association's next project will be to renovate the landscaping at the Etowah County Judicial Building, with the same type of arrangement.



Gibbs Gardens was beautiful, and colorful at the time of the association's visit, on November 8.

Photo by Janice Hatley

JACKSON CO MGA

Bill Caudill

Happy Holidays from the Jackson County Master Gardeners!

October brought us a time to gather and enjoy each other's company with lunch and the annual plant swap. We never know what unknown items may show up. At our November meeting, we had an informative presentation and discussion on "Knowing Your GMOs." After installing the officers for 2019, the December meeting featured a very scrumptious Christmas party with presents. The slate is President, Lilly Noble; Vice President, Bill Caudill; Secretary, Sharon Bell; and Treasurer, Diane Blizzard. Board members are Donna Hawkins, Jason Shelton, Stacey Woods, Dell Cook, Judy Lessman, Ron Leighton, and Judi Weaver. The Interns from 2018 class were presented their graduation certificates and badges.

All are welcome to join us the first Thursday of each month at the Jackson County Senior Center in Scottsboro. We meet from 10:00 - noon for coffee and an interesting program, followed by our business meeting. The January 2019 program is *Inviting Bird Migration into the Backyard* with Mr. and Mrs. Herb Lewis.

Activities we participated in these last few months include the Jackson County Fair with our members manning the Flower House Exhibits. For the future, we are planning our annual Chemical Applicator's Workshop on January 8, 2019, in support of the Extension office.



L – R: Interns receiving their certificates and badges. Cynthia Smith, Dan Bullock, and Marsha Hambrick. Photo by Bill Caudill.



FLOWERS ALWAYS MAKE PEOPLE BETTER,

HAPPIER, AND MORE HELPFUL;

THEY ARE SUNSHINE, FOOD AND MEDICINE

FOR THE SOUL.

Luther Burbank 1849 - 1926

https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/luther_burbank

JEFFERSON CO MGA

Fletcher Harvey

With the Holiday Season upon us, Jefferson County Master Gardeners are reflecting on their banner year, 2018. After hosting, surviving and basically enjoying a successful AMGA Annual Conference, the troops hardly took a breath before providing valuable volunteer hours for the Birmingham Botanical Gardens Fall Plant Sale.

The highlight of our year was our Annual Banquet and Intern Graduation in November. This highly anticipated event did not disappoint a record number of attendees. Our speaker, the Grumpy Gardener, Steve Bender, brilliantly expounded on *Common and Senseless Gardening Mistakes*. After thanking Gail Pless, 2018 President, for leading us through this exemplary year, we welcomed 31 new Master Gardeners into the fold. New but not inexperienced, these folks have already contributed over 3,700 volunteer hours. Congratulations to them and to ACES agent, Bethany O'Rear, who guided these outstanding Interns through their "germination," as it were. With a smile on her face, President Pless introduced our officers for 2019. Charles

Faulkner will be President, Carol Melton, first VP, Mary Foy, second VP, and Hope Cooper, Secretary. Kate Musso is Treasurer, and Rick Cybulski will serve as Assistant Treasurer.

The icing on our proverbial 2018 cake, our always smiling and upbeat Dan Jones was recognized as Plantsman of the Year at the BBG Annual Volunteer Awards Luncheon in early December.



BBG Plantsman of the Year, MG Dan Jones trying to stifle his signature smile. It doesn't quite work, Dan. Photo by Fletcher Harvey



LIMESTONE CO MGA

Carol Knox

Limestone County Master Gardener Association had a busy last quarter. In addition to our ongoing programs of Ask A Master Gardener at the Library, Charity Garden, Keyhole Garden, and Senior Fun Fest we had some great workshops and programs. We did a plant swap set up like "Dirty Santa," exercise program to keep us in shape for next planting season, papercrete pot workshop, and a workshop on garden tool maintenance. December was our Christmas Party and graduation for our Interns who had finished the MG program. That rounds out our calendar year and now we are ready to start again in January with our new officers; Carol Knox, President; Rick Pressnell, First Vice President; Margaret McCrary, Second Vice President; Pam

Gregg, Treasurer; and Heronda McWilliams, Secretary.



December 2018 Graduates. Back Row: Kay Dye, Vida Reich, Lee Eskridge, Mikki Robinson
Front Row: Heronda McWilliams, Bobbie Mangan; Betty Patterson, Sonja Blackburn, Rhonda Britton (Tri-County Class Coordinator), Janet Hunt (LCMGA President) Ellen Gnassi (not pictured). Photo by Kipp Irlan

MARSHALL CO MGA

Annette Williams

Christmas is a time of giving, and the Master Gardeners looked forward to the charity raffle at the December meeting. The food was great, and everyone went home with a gift they won when they placed their bid. Best of all, there was a good feeling of helping someone in need.

Much hard work went into the CASA garden this year. The volunteers harvested 8,647 pounds of vegetables. They are now ready to prepare the soil for spring planting.

Several projects are planned for the Brindlee Mountain School children in 2019. There will be a butterfly garden and a fairy garden.



MASTER GARDENERS OF NORTH ALABAMA

Elouisa Stokes

Master Gardeners of North Alabama have been busy making lives better here in Madison County. We finished another Master Gardener class, had great programs, and ended with an outstanding Christmas Social at the Huntsville Botanical Garden. We awarded our special members the following. Susan Meyer and her workers received the New Initiative Award for the city's Tinsel Trail tree. Sue Khoury received Project of the Year Award for adding raised bed gardening to our local homeless day care, First Stop. Gigi Bullman received the Lifetime Achievement Award for many contributions over twenty-some years. Jessica Thornburg and Ann Schroetter received Intern of the Year Awards. The Outstanding Service Award was

Mike Ezell, the state park naturalist, taught us what to plant to attract butterflies and all about wildflowers at the November meeting.

Those who attended the Farm City tour said it was the best one yet. Our Master Gardeners prepared the desserts for the banquet.

Eddie Wheeler, Marshall County Extension Coordinator, presented MCMG with a certificate of appreciation for all the volunteer service.

Soon it will be time to elect new officers and give out awards.

We hope everyone had a blessed Christmas season. We are looking forward to 2019.

presented to Alice Lawler for 16 years of coordinating the Tri-County Classes twice a year.

Our Master Gardener of the Year Award was Sue Khoury for all the ways she has pitched in wherever needed.

The highlight of the evening was a special notice for Alice Lawler. She is retiring from coordinating MG classes and her hosts, as well as both of the Extension Agents who have worked with her, made tributes to her organization, kindness, and skill in working with at least 936 students over those 16 years.

The Jane R. Parks Memorial Fund was able to financially help First Stop and Madison Elementary School with gardens this year.

Congratulations to all our honorees.

Plans for the spring are already underway. Please join us at any meeting on the second Thursday of the month in the Murray Building, Huntsville Botanical Garden.



MOBILE CO MGA

Mary Nash

The slate of officers for 2019: Martha Brown-President; Joan McCracken-Vice President; Mary Nash-Recording Secretary; Janet Waters-Corresponding Secretary; Linda Kloter-Treasurer; Luan Akridge and Carol Dorsey-Directors.

The Fall Plant Sale at the Mobile Botanical Gardens on October 19-21 was a success. Everyone helped with placing plants, putting out plant photos, and labeling plants.

The week of November 26-29, everyone helped with the Mobile Master Gardener Greenery Sale and Mobile Botanical Gardens Holiday Sale on November 30 and December 1 by gathering greenery, washing and preparing it, designing and creating floral arrangements, transporting and setting up at the Botanical Gardens, making bows, and painting pinecones.

Good food and fellowship were enjoyed by 115 Master Gardeners, Interns, and guests at The Mobile Master Gardener 2018 dinner and awards ceremony which was held on December 9. The Master Gardener of the Year is Carol Dorsey (class of 2016) and Rookie of the Year is Ellen Killough (class of 2017).

Martha Brown has agreed to head a team to design and create the Master Gardener display for the 2019 Festival of Flowers. The theme for the Festival is *The Gardens of The Netherlands*. Festival of Flowers Dates: March 21-24, 2019 at Providence Hospital Campus, Mobile, Alabama.

Mobile Master Gardener Spring Seminar is scheduled for Monday evening, February 18, 2019. The speaker will be University of Georgia's famed football coach, Vince Dooley. Advance reservations are required, and the deadline for reservations is February 8, 2019. Admission is \$40 for the general public and \$30 for Master Gardeners.

MORGAN CO MGA

Barb Brown

As has become our normal, there is no downtime for the Morgan County Master Gardeners.

Fall is when we are busy cleaning up our yards and bringing all the new-and-unusual, and the old tried-and-true plants into the greenhouse for division and propagation. We have made so many friends in the community that often we find plants left at the greenhouse gate for us. Susan K. and Rita S. are keeping up with our Hospice program, providing plants for distribution. Larry and his merry men keep up with all the ongoing maintenance. Judith has kept the Ask a Gardener booth going and selling plants too.

A perfect wrap up for 2018 is our annual Christmas party. MG's are as well known for their cooking as their gardening, and I know a wide array of goodies will be waiting for us. We've had to find a new venue for the party as our

attendance has grown so. We'll also be welcoming six new graduating Interns into our fold.

Welcome to Paul Gohmann, Penny Roy, Bob Honea, Jennifer Williams, Susan Kingsley, and Tessa Lucas.



We end the year with a new (and returning) slate of officers. Two thousand nineteen officers: Nancy Waldron, Secretary; Larry Moss returning as President; Susan Ledbetter returning as V.P; and Cecelia Adams, Treasurer. Photo was taken by Susan Kingsley



PIKE CO MGA

Elaine Knight

The Pike County Master Gardeners were very busy during the fall, but that is what being a Master Gardener is about, and these busy gardeners have been up to the challenge.

After summer gave way to fall, the gardeners were anxious to get their hands in the soil. The herb bed at the Pike County Museum was waiting, full of weeds that had flourished because of the summer rains. So, they put on their gloves, sharpened their clippers, loaded bags of topsoil and mulch, and began their task of cleaning the bed. After a few hours of pulling the weeds, they added some fresh topsoil and mulch to enrich the soil. Finally, the gardeners were ready to call it a day. A Job well done!

In November, the Pike County Master Gardeners met with the Troy Florabunda Club. The guest speaker was Dr. Charles Mitchell, who is a camellia expert. He said the flower originated in Asia, but has been a favorite of southern gardeners for years. It is the state

flower of Alabama, and often called the *Rose of Winter*. Dr. Mitchell loves to share his knowledge of camellias and is even willing to share his cuttings. He encouraged the gardeners to grow camellias in their gardens, that is if they want a shrub that has beautiful foliage and numerous blooms.



From left to right, Debbie Carpenter, Judy Griswold, Cathy Jorgensen, Leigh Calk, Elaine Knight, and Nell Haigh are still smiling after a workday at Pike County Museum. Photo by Elaine Knight.

SHOALS MGA

Michael Thomason

Our autumn was beautiful and hot here in the Shoals. In October we had our annual picnic at the St Florian Pavilion. Approximately eighty people attended even though it turned cold and rained. We enjoyed a catered lunch by Pop's BBQ.

In November we had our annual Thanksgiving meal catered by Pop's BBQ and held our Intern Graduation. We had eight interns graduate this year, and we look forward to them joining us next year.

In December, we had our annual Christmas lunch catered by Bert Rieff at the Underwood/Peterville's Community Center. What a wonderful time of the year to enjoy with fellow Master Gardeners.

In January we have our annual awards ceremony. We always look forward to seeing who picked up awards for their achievements throughout the year.

As this year begins, we anticipate the new Intern Class starting in late January and developing our 2019 projects list. We will start planning for our annual plant sale to be held in April. We look forward to the coming spring as we browse our seed catalogs this winter. Have a great winter.



Photo by Wray Dillard



ST. CLAIR CO MGA

Pam Garrison

Bethany O'Rear spoke to us about her agricultural outreach trip to Haiti. She taught gardening techniques to university students. There were many factors to overcome in attempting to garden there - water access, depleted soil, unavailability of fertilizer, lack of native pollinators.

Our October monthly meeting speaker, Michelle Reynolds, taught us about succulents, and our knowledge of succulents was greatly expanded.

In November we were busy getting any last minute fall flowers and vegetables in the ground. Our meeting was well attended by members, and we were happy to be joined by a number of the Interns. Hollin Williams lives in St. Clair County, and his farm, Ireland Farm, is in Alpine, Alabama. He grows organic vegetables

that are sold in local restaurants and Pepper Place in Birmingham.

Some work days were planned for projects this fall. We had previously planted fruit trees and vines at Williams school. Four trees did not survive and were replaced. Master Gardeners and Interns worked together with a group of students to get the work done. It was fun to have the students help, and they brought enthusiasm and a slew of questions. Their questions gave us plenty of opportunities to teach and encourage future gardeners. We also planned and completed a project at the Lincoln Library. We weeded the beds, removed dead and unhealthy plants, and pruned and regrouped some existing plants. Some plants were purchased to freshen and replace what had been removed, and the beds were all mulched with pine bark. It took several days, and now that it is finished, the library looks very nice.

TALLAPOOSA CO MGA

Barbara Butler

Tallapoosa County Master Gardeners hosted two young, energetic entrepreneurs at our September meeting. Mark Haberstroh and Allen Carroll presented a very interesting program on their mushroom business, Fungi Farm, LLC. Located in Tallapoosa County, this farm is bringing a new business approach to our community. Our members were amazed at how interesting, and varied fungi can be. The program was proof that fungi can be entertaining if the information is provided by two fun-guys.

Several of our members enjoyed a field trip to the Governor's Mansion garden in October. A great day was had by all touring the beautiful grounds.

Members distributed information on Master Gardeners and the Extension Service at several fall and winter festivals this year. We manned booths at the Dadeville Fall Fest and the Spirit of a Hometown Christmas, also in Dadeville. Also this fall, the Tallapoosa Master Gardeners participated

in a new program where civic groups created scarecrow exhibits in Dadeville's Keebler Park. The Master Gardeners' contribution was titled Garden of Weed 'in. We are a punny group.

We look forward to assisting with a new Master Gardener training session that is in the planning stages for this winter/spring. It is always great to help bring in and educate new members.



Tallapoosa Co MGAs display at the Dadeville's Keebler Park entitled *Garden of Weed 'in*. Photo by Prencella Hamby

Gardening is full of wisdom and advice handed down from generation to generation. Do you know what works, and what doesn't work?

Singing or talking to flowers helps them to grow better.

TRUE -- The scientific reasoning behind this is that as we talk or sing to our plants we release carbon dioxide with our breath. This encourages the plant to convert it to oxygen, which in turn produces more growth. There is no *firm* proof, but if you enjoy talking or singing to plants it seems possible that it might benefit your plants too, so go for it!

On the Discovery Channel show *Myth Busters*, they determined that heavy metal music played constantly resulted in the best growth rate of

plants. Panelist Beardshaw, who has been a familiar face on BBC2's *Gardener's World* over the years, also said using rock music as a nutrient appeared to create larger flowers. He had one greenhouse that was silent, one that played classical music, and one that played Black Sabbath. Those flowers in the Black Sabbath (heavy rock) produced the biggest flowers whom were also more disease resistant. But where is the carbon dioxide coming from in the stereo system? It's not, so perhaps the changes in growth can be tied to the increased vibrations in the air?

<http://www.livingexpression.com>

WIREFRASS MGA

Devonne Ellis

After our September Fall Plant sale, our group started preparation for a hurricane in October. Afterward, we found ourselves helping the botanical gardens, Landmark Park, and our neighbors with the mess the hurricane left us. After the cleanup, Wiregrass Master Gardeners were busy preparing our plants for cooler temperatures.

During November, some of us attended a Lunch and Learn in Dale County in support of our Master Gardener Jan Robertson. She showed us how to decorate our tables for the holidays. Jan created a Christmas gnome out of greenery and a Horn of Plenty made from a tomato cage covered in sheet moss. We all enjoyed how she took the ordinary and made it extraordinary. Tom Boyle and his helpers took time to teach children in the kitchen garden during Living History month at Landmark Park.

Also in November, President Jan Shirley passed out the philanthropic awards. The recipients were Vaughn Blumberg-Charlotte Smith, Aunt Katie's Community Garden-Michael Jackson, Dothan Area Botanical Gardens, and Landmark Park. Many thanks to our members for raising the funds to

make this project happen.

Some of us took a rest after our Christmas Party in December. We have now begun sewing seeds for our Spring Plant Sale, and also for the other gardens we support with plants. We are fortunate to have a seed house within our greenhouse so that we can seed early. On January 26, we will have a seed swap at Landmark Park. If you are in the Wiregrass area, bring seeds and swap with us.



L to R: Charlotte Smith-Vaughn Blumberg, Jan Shirley-President, Wiregrass Master Gardeners, Michael Jackson-Aunt Katie's Community Garden, receiving philanthropic awards. Photo by Devonne Ellis



MORE MYTHS HANDED DOWN

Applying Vicks Vapor Rub on a Hummingbird Feeder will repel wasps and bees.

TRUE-- Bees, wasps, and other stinging insects love hummingbird feeders and will often chase the hummingbirds away. As it turns out rubbing Vicks Vapor Rub around the feeding flowers effectively repels the bees and wasps away, but doesn't bother the birds because birds don't have a sense of smell,

but the wasps and bees do.

Note: Another effective method of repelling bees and wasps from the feeder is to install bee guards, which fit on the feeder flowers, restricting the insects' access but still allowing the hummers to feed through the grates with their long bills and tongues.

<http://www.livingexpression.com>

QUAIL HOLLOW GARDENS

**CLAYBANK MASTER GARDENERS - DALE COUNTY
COFFEE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS - COFFEE COUNTY
COVINGTON MASTER GARDENERS - COVINGTON COUNTY
WIREGRASS MASTER GARDENERS - HOUSTON COUNTY**

Coach Pat Dye's Quail Hollow Gardens and Crooked Oaks Hunting Lodge were visited by Master Gardeners from Claybank, Coffee, Covington, and Wiregrass County Master Gardener's Associations. Coach Dye identified many of the trees, told of how they were obtained, and demonstrated the proper way to prune a maple while the group walked through the gardens, and then Coach Dye hosted a lunch catered by his chef.



Shown in photo (front row left to right): Cyndy Weber, Jacque Hawkins, Mary Grave Hood, Freda Darling, Don Lassiter, Jean Inscho, Anne Edwards, Dee Martin, Bonnie Reed, Alice Hersant, Coach Pat Dye, Devonne Ellis, Linda Hendrix, Sue McCabe, Jan Shirley, Lisa Enfinger and Joyce Dees.

Middle row: Wanda Maddox, Janet Shinaberry, Lucy Edwards, Rita Moore, Charlotte Hamm, Joan Ray, Maggie Sickler, Nancy Robbins, Norma Riley, Paula Allman, and Dawn Sterling-Smith.

Back Row: Mark Johnston, Steve Ray, and Jim Sickler.

The gardens are located in Notasulga, AL, and you can schedule a tour by contacting their office at 334-257-1519.

Article and photo by Jacque Hawkins



Pathways

WINTER

2018—2019



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Got Questions



We've Got Answer



aces.edu/questions

SPRING PATHWAYS DUE MARCH 15 2019

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