

PATHWAYS

Fall 2023

Courtesy of Pexels

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AMGA Website
alabamamga.org



AMGA 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND BUSINESS MEETING

Joni Trusty Euler

Are you eager to learn new gardening techniques and tips? Interested in attending gardening seminars presented by dynamic speakers? Need ideas for your own "green space" by taking a garden tour? Ready to renew old friendships and forge new ones? Want to visit a paradise location in Alabama?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, mark your calendar for the 2024 AMGA State Conference to be held April 22-24, 2024, at the Daphne Civic Center in Daphne, Alabama. Baldwin County Master Gardeners (BCMG) are excited to be hosting this event and are working tirelessly to bring an informative, fun-filled conference experience for Alabama MGs and nearby coastal Mississippi and Florida MGs. In addition to the various learning opportunities, attendees can shop from a variety of vendors, bid on great silent auction items, and win fabulous door prizes. Conference information is available through the BCMG website (<https://baldwinmastergardeners.com>) under the 2024 AMGA Conference tab. This site is continuously being updated. Conference registration and instructions for hotel registration will be utilized via the website, along with information about speaker presentations, tours, meal menus and cost, along with things to do while you are visiting beautiful Baldwin County. Early registration opens on January 1, 2024. We look forward to seeing you in "Paradise Found!"





AMGA PRESIDENT

Devonne Ellis

Hello, my gardening friends!

We are entering fall and those forgotten garden chores we keep putting off. Hopefully, you have your bulbs, new shrubs and vegetables planted. Don't forget to take care of those pesky weeds. A gardener's job is never done. Always start with a plan.

Speaking of plans, Master Gardeners learned how to take care of our gardens through the intern program. A wealth of knowledge came from instructors helping us learn valuable plant information we would later pass along to our communities. As Master Gardeners, we teach how to garden; we help people learn about their soil and the best plants we can grow in our area. Most of our instructors are extension agents, Auburn University Instructors, or other Advanced Master Gardeners. We also teach children in the Junior Master Gardener program. We grow the best plants for our area plant sales and teach the public how to plant them. We accomplish these projects working as a team. Yes, you all know this, but sometimes we forget how we all got started as Master Gardeners.

I want to thank each of you for being a part of this wonderful group of Alabama Master Gardeners. Keep sharing at Advisory Council of your group's accomplishments. This is how we all grow together by learning from each other.

I grow plants between the weeds! Devonne



AMGA VICE PRESIDENT

Debbie Boutelier

Even though the calendar is moving quickly toward fall, the summer heat continues to linger. But we know fall is coming because the nighttime temperatures are dropping. My vegetable and herb gardens continue to produce so I am spending quite a bit of time on food preservation, making wonderful goodies to enjoy throughout the winter and to give as Christmas gifts. There is nothing better than pesto in the middle of winter to bring the joys of summer into our meals. It's finally time to start planting the fall and winter veggies and cool-season herbs so the cycle continues. We are so blessed in the south to be able to garden year-round!

Baldwin County Master Gardeners have kicked conference preparations into high gear as they prepare to host our conference in 2024. It will be located in the beautiful City of Daphne from April 22 - 24, 2024. Their team is requesting Silent Auction items to be brought to the Advisory Council meeting in November. Registration information will be shared in late December or early January as Baldwin County prepares to share their "Paradise Found."

Autauga County is moving forward in their planning for the 2025 conference. Mark your calendars for April 3 - 5, 2025. Their team will be at the Baldwin County conference to give you a tease of what is to come.

I asked the question in the summer newsletter about where we will go in 2026. Well, that question has been answered! We will be headed to North Alabama as the Master Gardeners of North Alabama, Limestone County Master Gardeners, and Morgan County Master Gardeners have enthusiastically agreed to host the 2026 conference. The theme for that conference will be "Gardening to the Moon and Back." The dates will be May 6 - 8, 2026.

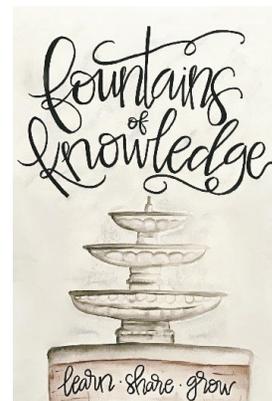
We have some great conferences to look forward to attending as Master Gardeners showcase the best Alabama has to offer.

Always remember, time began in a garden. *Debbie*

AMGA 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND BUSINESS MEETING

Sondra Henley

Fountains of Knowledge
2025 Conference, Prattville, AL
April 3-5, 2025 (Thursday, Friday, Saturday)
First Baptist Church of Prattville, AL
Details to come!



AMGA AWARDS

Julie Conrey, Chair

Welcome aboard our flight, Alabama Master Gardeners! It's wheels up as we fly towards the end of 2023. Here are a few things to keep in mind as we buckle up and move through the remaining months of 2023 and into 2024:

Now is the time to begin reminding MGs in your groups to log all service hours. The Reach for the Stars Program celebrates and awards specific levels of MG hours. Don't be left out! Please continue to encourage all your MGs to log all volunteer hours.

Do you love your MG group's newsletter? I hope so! The AMGA gives three awards for outstanding Master Gardener newsletters. If your MG association's newsletter has not received an award in the last three years, think about submitting your group's newsletter for an Outstanding Newsletter Award in 2024, to be awarded at the AMGA State Conference in Daphne, Alabama.

The AMGA also gives the Top Hours of the Year Award, the Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award, the Gary Murray Outstanding Service and Dedication Award, and the Mary Lou McNabb Alabama Master Gardener of the Year Award.

Check out information about all AMGA awards at <https://alabamamga.org/amga-awards>.

AMGA COMMUNICATIONS

AMGA Newsletter Editor

Terri Scheffler

Fall is in the air now – and not a moment too soon for us. Although we love the growing season in the Summer, we've never been so happy to see the Summer come to an end! Helping our gardens and lawns survive the heat and lack of rain was a challenge for all of us!

Our newest team member, Sheila Bolen, has jumped right in and already made great contributions to our team! Some of you may have already had contact with her during the creation of this newsletter. In fact, we are designating which articles/associations are to be routinely handled by each of us, so our local contacts will have a familiar person to work with. As always, we are very thankful for our copy editor, Patricia Patty, and proofreader, Carolyn Wade – their fresh eyes on your information keep us out of trouble. We are also thankful for our local Pathways' contacts, who take the time to report on their associations, sharing information and ideas with other local Master Gardeners!

AMGA ENDOWMENT FUNDS TRANSFORMATION GARDEN

Roger Clarke, Chair

ENDOWMENT FUNDS

The AMGA Endowment Funds have received only one contribution so far in 2023. Thank you, Covington County Master Gardeners Association, for your generous contribution.

TRANSFORMATION GARDEN

The Transformation Garden continues to be built at Auburn University.

AMGA purchased the naming rights for the pedestrian walkway and it will soon be a reality.

Thank you to AMGA for its generous contributions. Thank you to all the Master Gardeners who made that possible.

THANK YOU TO THESE MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATIONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS:

2022: Lawrence County and Morgan County,

2023: Autauga County, Capital City, Cherokee County, Chilton County, East Central, Lee County and Morgan County.

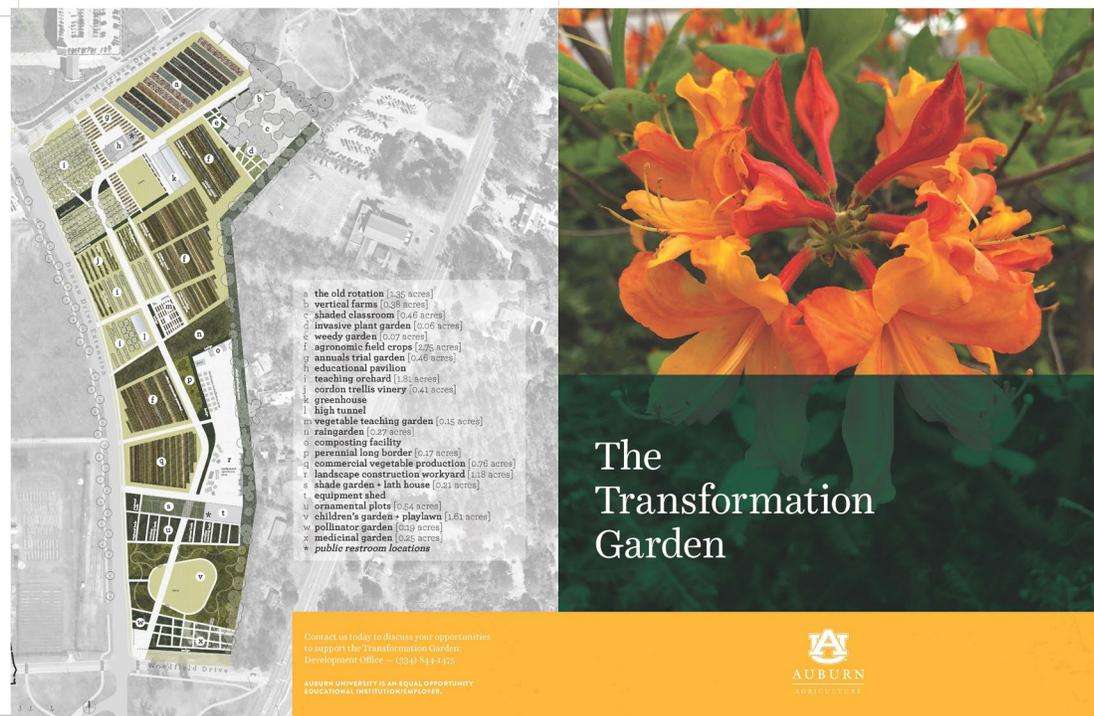
Thank you to Fletcher Harvey, Jefferson County, for his exceptional leadership and generous contribution to the garden.

WE ARE NOW JUST UNDER 60 percent OF OUR TOTAL PLEDGE.

Please consider a contribution or pledge. It's easy and it's tax-deductible!

My personal "dream goal" is that every County Association contribute to purchasing the walkway naming rights. Each giving what they can. I know that would make a profound statement of our support for this fantastic development.

I know some of you have questions. Contact me at 205-533-4961 or roger1944clarke@gmail.com. I have the answer and will be delighted to talk to you, your Association Board, or your Members.



Photograph courtesy of [Auburn University](https://www.auburn.edu)

AMGA MEMBERSHIP

Rose McCauley, Chair

Hello Master Gardeners! I am the new state membership chair (Dues Tracker) and I look forward to working with each of you.

Currently, our records show we have a total AMGA membership of 1,873. This total includes active and lifetime members. I do feel this number is low.

I reviewed the information entered into the Dues Tracker by each local association and found that it is not always complete. If you do not have someone entering information into the Dues Tracker, I would ask that you assign someone to do that task. Getting the correct members entered into the Dues Tracker will assure that the membership numbers we report are accurate. Dues Tracker is not a difficult program. I would be very happy to assist any association in getting their records corrected so the total membership reported balances with the dues payment sent to the AMGA Treasurer.

I am available at jrmprat@charter.net if you need Dues Tracker access or have questions regarding membership.

AMGA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Doc Scheffler

It's that time of year again when we announce the openings for the leadership of our organization!

In 2024, we have three (3) board member vacancies open, and one (1) nominating committee vacancy. All four (4) of these positions are three (3) year terms.

This is a wonderful opportunity to help our organization! You can learn more about what we do and be part of influencing what we can do. Imagine being able to share your dreams and aspirations for our great organization.

While we certainly are interested in your offering to serve, we also need your help in identifying fellow members that you think would be a great fit. If you know of some great folks, you don't have to do all of the recruiting work! Send us their names and we'll contact them and share with them what the positions offer and require.

Please feel free to contact us in the Nominating Committee with questions regarding the positions, including duties, time requirements, etc. For more information, or to volunteer or suggest someone, please contact Sondra Henley, Nominating Committee Chair, at 205 567 3333 or email Sondrahenley@gmail.com.



Photograph courtesy of Pexels.

AMGA PATHWAY NAME COMMITTEE

Michael Thomason, Chair

The committee needs your help! Consider this: generations to come will walk down a pathway on which you had a small part naming. Think about your children, grandchildren and future generations who attend Auburn University and walk down this pathway. AMGA wants a name we can be proud to see, one that typifies who we are and one that our future generations will be proud to say their kinfolks had a part in naming.

We are interested in your ideas for the name of the Pathway at the Transformation Garden. Please submit names for the garden pathway to the committee via the following email: mg2023mbt@gmail.com

Thank you,

Committee members:

Harriett Jackson

Mary Hamilton

Lyn Webb

Fletcher Harvey

Michael Thomason – Chair

AMGA PROJECT FUNDING

Sherilyn Osborne, Chair

It is time to plan for next year's projects. If your group needs funds to complete one of your projects, start thinking about making an application for Project Funding. As you make plans, keep a watch on the website for rules and any changes in the application process. Enjoy planning!

AMGA SPEAKERS' BUREAU

Susan Hagen, Chair

Master Gardeners fulfill their commitment to horticultural outreach, education, and service to the people of Alabama in several different ways: answering questions by phone and email, providing informational material at county fairs and city fairs, planting demonstration gardens, helping with community gardens, and holding workshops and plant sales. The list is as varied as gardeners' imaginations. And high on that list is giving presentations at meetings of all sorts of organizations. The purpose of the Speakers' Bureau is to help those organizations find reliable speakers.

If you have a program for outreach, whether you are a new speaker or an established presenter, please join the AMGA Speakers' Bureau (<https://alabamamga.org/amga-speakers-bureau/>) and help support our outreach commitment. If you don't have a program to offer, spread the word about the Bureau to other garden groups and civic organizations and help to promote reliable gardening information around the state.

AMGA TREASURER

Cecilia Adams

2024 dues are due beginning October 1 - December 31. The Association Checks should be made out to AMGA and mailed to:

AMGA Cecilia Adams, Treasurer
PO Box 3031
Decatur, AL 35602



[Blount County Master Gardeners' Fall Conference](#)

October 12 @ 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

Locust Fork Baptist Church 30580 AL-79, Locust Fork, AL, United States

[27th Annual Urban Forestry & Horticulture Conference](#)

October 12 -13

Cross Point Church of Christ

1360 Cox Creek Parkway

Florence, Alabama

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Pesticide Recertification Class

8:30-2 pm

Friday, October 13, 2023

Conference

8 am-3:45 pm

[Daylight Savings Time Ends](#)

Nov 5, 2023

[The AMGA Advisory Council Meeting](#)

November 7 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Petals from the Past 16034 County Road 29, Jemison, Alabama

The AMGA Advisory Council will hold a meeting on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at Petals from the Past in Jemison, Alabama from 10 am to 12 pm. All Master Gardeners are encouraged to attend.

[AMGA Board Meeting](#)

December 5 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Petals from the Past 16034 County Road 29, Jemison, Alabama

The AMGA Board Meeting will be held at Petals From the Past, Jemison, Alabama on December 5, 2023, from 10 am to 12 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

[AMGA Dues](#)

October - December 31

EXTENSION UPDATE

Kerry Smith, State Master Gardeners Program Coordinator

- A national milestone connects us all – Extension MG's 50th anniversary. Thank you to Master Gardeners of North Alabama for hosting AMGA's Fall Seminar and a very special celebration.
- Service Report updates by the Extension Master Gardener Steering Committee. This will enhance our annual report with consistent information and show who benefits from these activities. Training webinars for all volunteers, **October 19 and 20**, both at 1:00 p.m. Register here, <https://www.aces.edu/go/ServiceReportTraining>
- Collaborations to celebrate around the state –
 - Native Alabama Milkweed project in Baldwin County
 - Grow More, Give More pop-up gardens and other GMGM projects
 - STEM and other school gardens
 - Lunch & Learn programs
 - Projects with churches, hospice, Habitat for Humanity, and other non-profits
 - Projects with community centers and civic events
 - Mentoring community gardens
 - Ask-MG at Farmers markets
 - Gardens and programs at historic sites, and history centers
 - Projects with youth centers, libraries, arboretums, public gardens, and municipal parks
 - The Chilton Research Center
 - And more!
- Thank you to everyone who has given input to and made decisions for our 5-Year Strategic Plan.
 - Since last summer, feedback from 1,141 voices – Extension personnel, Extension Master Gardeners, and community partners
 - Developing the Plan – 56 Extension Agents and Master Gardeners
 - Our Mission statement: "We improve the lives of Alabamians through research-based horticulture education delivered by a dedicated, trained, and involved Extension volunteer team."
 - Our Vision statement: "As Alabama Extension Master Gardener volunteers and ambassadors, we aspire to –
 - teach all generations
 - inspire a lifelong pursuit of research-based knowledge
 - serve as environmental stewards
 - draw all people to the joys of gardening"
 - See more, https://www.acesagmg.site/strategic_assessment_index.php

We appreciate all that you do for the mission of the Extension Master Gardener Program.

Kerry

Kerry, the Home Grounds team, and all of Extension.



REPLACEMENT BADGES

Emily Burchfield, ACES Volunteer Training Coordinator

Order Your Replacement Name Badge Online!



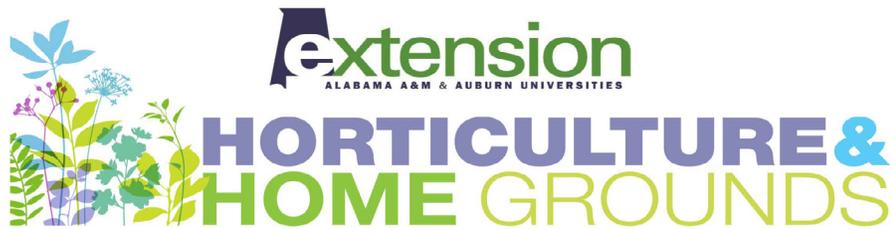
Is your name badge worn out or misplaced? Then we have some exciting news! You can place your name badge order online and receive it at your home address. This new ordering system is for replacement badges only. Volunteer Training Coordinator, Emily Burchfield will order replacement badges quarterly (Fall - October 31, Winter - January 31, Spring - April 30, and Summer - July 31). You may order at any point during the year. However, please allow up to 3 weeks after each quarterly order date to receive your badge. To place an order, follow the steps below:

1. **Form:** fill out the order form: <https://www.aces.edu/go/badges>
2. **Payment:** Once the form is submitted, you will be redirected to the payment portal in the ACES store. The cost for a replacement badge is \$10.
3. **Check your mailbox:** up to 3 weeks after each of the order dates.

For more information, go to <https://www.aces.edu/go/badges> or contact Emily Burchfield at erb0039@auburn.edu or (334) 707-6381.



Photograph courtesy of Pexels.



Become a Master Gardener Volunteer

Do you love plants? Do you love to volunteer your time? Then you are a great candidate for Master Gardener Intern Training! You do not have to be a garden expert. Simply come with a desire to learn and grow! This is a hybrid course requiring online and in-person participation. For more information visit: <https://www.aces.edu/go/mgv> or contact your County Extension Office.

Important Dates

Apply & Pay

November 1st—30th
Course Fee: \$150

Background Checks

December 1st—30th
Directions provided via Email

Spring Class Dates

January 18th—April 4th

How to Apply

1. Visit: <https://www.aces.edu/go/mgschedule> to view the County Training Schedule.
2. Apply here: <https://www.aces.edu/go/mgapply> or scan the QR code.
3. After completing step 2, follow the email instructions to pay the \$150 course fee.
4. Submit a background check.
 - **Please note:** Once a background check is submitted, only partial refunds of \$100 are available due to administrative fees.



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URBAN FORESTRY AND HORTICULTURE CONFERENCE

For more information, click [here](#).



27TH ANNUAL
**URBAN FORESTRY &
HORTICULTURE CONFERENCE**

REGISTER ONLINE!



- Pesticide Recertification
OCTOBER 12
- Horticulture Conference
OCTOBER 13

HAPPENINGS

Fall 2023

Courtesy of Pexels

AUTAUGA COUNTY MGA

Sondra Henley

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association is pleased to announce the winner of our 2025 Alabama Master Gardener Association's Conference Logo Art Contest. The winning drawing by Jesaca Wilson depicts the theme of Fountains of Knowledge, Learn, Grow, Share.

Jesaca Wilson has been a resident of Autauga County since 2015. Originally from Pensacola, FL, she transplanted here with her husband's job. Travis and Jesaca have been married for 21 years.

Jesaca homeschools their four children, ages 8 to 20. She has been a professional photographer for the last 10 years and is currently employed as the studio manager for P'zazz Art Studio in downtown Prattville. She also teaches children and adult art classes at P'zazz.

Jesaca is a member at Glynwood Baptist Church, where she holds the position of Women's Ministry leader. She loves to serve others and strive to shine the light of Jesus in all that she does.

ACMGA is proud to host the 2025 AMGA Conference in Prattville, AL, April 3-5. First Baptist Church Prattville will be the hosting site. Everyone is welcome to attend, but registration is required after January 1, 2025.



Jesaca Wilson. Photographer: unknown

BALDWIN COUNTY MGA

Mary Calvin

Baldwin County's semi-annual awards banquet was held at Foley Civic Center on July 12. All eleven interns from the Class of 2023 received their certificates and badges. Three also received bronze stars for 100 service hours, along with four other master gardeners. Awards were also given for those reaching 300 (7), 500 (4), 1000 (9), 2000 (5), 3000 (1e), 12,000 (1) and 15,000 (1) hours. The AMGA retiring President, Myra Lassere, received a Rainbow Platinum Star for 17,000 hours and a beautiful flower arrangement. Thank you to all our hard-working volunteers.

This is also the occasion where we welcome our scholarship winners and their parents. This year BCMG gave \$11,000 distributed among 4 college students. We continue to learn during the hot summer months. This year we've had speakers on Bees and Beekeeping, Birds of Southern Alabama, and Handling Venomous Snakes.

Fifteen of our members joined Mobile County Master Gardeners taking part in AMGA's Master Gardener College Leadership Training Workshop. Five more added the Master Environmental Educator title to their volunteer credentials.

We are looking forward to working in the greenhouses again as it cools off.



Class of 2023: George Donchez, Keith Cardwell, Mickey Ezell, Patty Rowland, Dolores Hammack, Terry Delker, Julie Cox, Karon Pennington, Liz Young. Not pictured: Lee Brady, Diane Roberson-Hill. Photographer: Linda Bizzell

BLOUNT COUNTY MGA

Irene Latham

In August, Blount County was excited to welcome its 22nd class of interns. In an effort to strengthen bonds between gardeners and help ensure healthy growth of the group, this year we introduced a Mentor program. Under the direction of Susan Hagen and Bethany O'Rear, each of the fourteen interns was "matched" with a BCMGA member. Some members requested to be paired with friends/neighbors, while other pairs were randomly assigned. Mentors were encouraged to participate in the weekly classes alongside their interns and to make themselves available to answer questions and offer support throughout the training months. A luncheon to kick-off the Mentor program was held Thursday, August 24 at Cleveland Community Center. BCMGA provided lunch for the group, and Mentors and interns were able to meet one another. The room was filled with laughter and conversation as gardeners got acquainted and conversed about basic plant botany (the ACES topic of the day), the summer heat and

its effect on plants, and upcoming gardening-related events. While the Mentor program is still being developed, plans are in place for Mentors and interns to celebrate together the intern's successful completion of the Master Gardener course at the December meeting. Until then, Mentors will check in on interns and continue to share information about upcoming field trips, conferences, AMGA resources, and possible community projects. Most of all, each Mentor is committed to offering her intern a friendly face, helping everyone to feel a greater sense of comfort and belonging.



BCMGA 22 class of interns (2023) with mentors. Cleveland Community Center, Photographer: Irene Latham

CALHOUN COUNTY MGA

Tim Kaylor

Tim Kaylor, the Calhoun County MGA Vice president, spearheads the Lunch and Learn Program to find innovative and inspiring subject matter experts. He said, "We've been very blessed with attendance at our Lunch & Learn presentations. At each presentation, we had 35-45 people in attendance with some participants from our local community and many of our loyal Master Gardeners. Our annual Lunch & Learn programs are scheduled from April through September." The public is invited to attend these activities without charge as part of our public outreach. Participants bring their lunch and have an excellent opportunity for fellowship, camaraderie, inspiration and to exchange ideas. Members may use these sessions on their annual accrual of Continuing Education Units. Kaylor said, "Our last Lunch & Learn was the September presentation and our guest was Christopher Lang, a speaker with the Alabama Humanities Alliance presenting *Huntsville - The Watercress Capital of the World: The Dennis Family Dynasty*".

Calhoun County MGA updated their bylaws as part of ongoing organizational rejuvenation. The primary changes were to provide Executive Board representation for each of the four primary, permanent Calhoun County project areas. They are the Longleaf Botanical Gardens, Cane Creek Greenhouse, Cane Creek Grounds & Landscaping, and the Tree Amigos youth program.



Hydrangea Presentation by David Doggett, Photographer: Tim Kaylor

CAPITAL CITY MGA

Mary Elanor Hines

Here we are at the end of another hot summer with clean-ups in the gardens and fall planning in the works. CCMGA is grateful for the dedicated volunteers who kept the gardens looking as pristine as possible. These gardens are Lilly's Garden, EAT South, Montgomery Botanical Gardens, Shakespeare Garden and Rose Morris House Garden. EAT South has already reported that the beds have been cleaned and cleared of summer growth and new plantings are in place. In early August the EAT South chairman, Henry Lucas, reported that he had picked and shelled ten pounds of peas for Grow More Give More. We are proud of this distribution of fresh vegetables

to the needy in our community, as well as the creation of beautiful displays of natural color and plant variety in the many gardens tended by CCMGA members.

We are pleased to have presented the second half (\$2,500) of our donation to the Transformation Garden in Auburn.

Our Speakers' Bureau committee stays busy with gardening presentations to local organizations. These volunteers are greatly appreciated by the community for sharing their knowledge to clubs and organizations learning about different phases and aspects of gardening.

CENTRAL ALABAMA MGA

Cindy Augustine

The Central Alabama Master Gardener's Association (CAMGA) has been busy this Spring and Summer. The first Saturday in May, CAMGA had its annual plant sale, which was highly successful. This year we received a grant that allowed us to improve and expand our learning garden, including new fencing and trellis work. CAMGA created a brick memory patio at the Elmore County Extension office, where CAMGA purchased bricks in memory of deceased members, and others paid for bricks as a memorial to someone they knew. In August, we graduated four interns from the 2023 class and welcomed new interns into the 2024 class that began in August. Lastly, in August, several members participated in a fairy garden wreath class to learn how to make the wreaths, as this will be a project for senior adults later in the year. CAMGA had a busy and eventful few months!



CAMGA members making Fairy Garden Wreaths. Photographer unknown

CHEAHA MGA

Debby Mathews

Since the Heflin Community Garden opened this spring, the Cheaha Master Gardeners have been continuously working in our 8 demonstration raised bed gardens the last few months. Cheaha Plant Farm supplied us with quite a variety of tomato and pepper plants to plant and tend. The Tabasco peppers and the Mad Hatter peppers have been prolific!

Rattlesnake beans, Kentucky Wonder beans, and two varieties of okra are other summer classics that were tended and harvested. Our excess produce (most of what we harvested) was donated to HEARTS (Helping Every Area Resident to Succeed) of Cleburne as our *Grow More, Give More* program. We are proud to report that our little group donated 300 pounds of produce to HEARTS!

Our gardening success resulted from the dedication of our members to weekly assignments, as we each took a day of the week to water, scout for insects, weed and harvest. Garden beds are being cleaned up and replanted

now with cool season crops like greens. We are most grateful to the City of Heflin and the Water Works and Sewer Board for installing water lines to the city garden and providing some awesome hoses to make it possible to raise healthy produce.



Here are some produce beauties we took to HEARTS. Zephyr zucchini was a favorite!
Photographer: unknown

CHEROKEE COUNTY MGA

Bill Holland

Late summer / early fall is always one of the more interesting times of the year. Our gardens have had their run and are preparing for the fall color (except for some hydrangeas, spirea and other late blooming shrubs). Our members have done an excellent job of working through the heat and humidity of this summer.

We continue to make progress with the Centre City Park. With Ginny and Gene Wilson's leadership, we have managed to improve the beds, get rid of lots of weeds (which immediately started coming back!!) and install the wall beds / steps at the entrance to the pavilion. All in all, a good day's work by lots of our members!!

Even with the oppressive heat and humidity, Debbie Foley and her team have done an excellent job of working at the greenhouse, making sure that the plants are doing well and just "having fun" (to paraphrase Debbie).

As I am writing this note, we are preparing for Leesburg Day. In addition to plants, we will also have arts and crafts for sale this year. Leesburg

Day has historically been a good opportunity to meet folks from the community.

Our members are the ones who have made these projects successful. We have had good participation at all our monthly meetings. Our project workdays have had a good turn out – even in the heat of the summer. I can truly say that our members are the ones who make the difference in our association!



City Park Pavilion. Photographer: Patti Ford

CHILTON COUNTY MGA

Kerry Rush

WE MOSTLY SURVIVED . . . The Chilton County Master Gardener Association experienced the same heat complications the rest of the state did but hopefully, we've come out ahead! Thanks to all our volunteers for our three main commitments, The Demonstration Garden at the Chilton Research and Extension Center, the Clanton Extension Office beds, and the Clanton Recreation Center's newly installed landscaping, we have overwhelmingly survived this summer's high temperatures. This summer has also provided an opportunity for the CCMGA to extend its fundraising efforts by tagging plants sales along with the CREC's Friday Fruit Sales. With regard to outreach, two significant volunteer opportunities for the CCMGA this season included landscaping and irrigation at the Butterfly Bridge (Children's Advocacy Center) And landscaping for a Habitat for Humanity home in Clanton.

The CCMGA's Monthly membership meeting programs have included presentations on "*Square Foot Gardening*" and *What the Amish Can Teach About Gardening*". Coming up, the CCMGA will again play a vital role in the Master Gardener's Helpline,

with an every Friday commitment, as well as participating in the Alabama Beekeepers Association Fall Conference in Clanton. We are excited for our September meeting's program as Patrick Thompson (Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance) will be presenting on our Conservation Group's participation and commitment. For the future, solicitation for the Spring Master Gardener class has begun and we look forward to new membership



Planting landscape material at Habitat for Humanity house in Clanton August 12, 2023. Susan Cleckler, Chip and Leslie Durham, Pat Farmer, Trisha Williams, Hugh Nichols. Photographer: Audrey Giles

CLAYBANK MGA

Debi Breedlove

Claybank Master Gardeners have been "busy bees" this summer, completing several community projects. The group selected plants, painted benches, amended soil and created a pollinator garden at Vivian B. Adams School in Ozark, a facility that serves school age students and adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities.

Early this summer the CMGA gave the rose garden at The Holman House in Ozark, a much-needed facelift. In addition, a small garden bed in front of the Ozark Post Office was cleaned out and master gardeners replaced weeds with blooms for the public to enjoy. Members are looking forward to cooler fall temperatures to maintain and take on other projects improving the beautification of Ozark and Dale County.

In late August the group gathered early one morning to assist the Ark of Oz, Chapel of the Rose Ministry, to clean out and shape up their rose beds and crepe myrtles. In addition the members enjoyed meetings featuring

programs on "Growing a Salsa Garden" by Extension Horticulturist Megan Jones, "Growing Summer Bulbs - Featuring Caladiums for South Alabama" by Debi Breedlove, MG and "How to Grow Citrus Trees in the South Alabama Garden" by local nurseryman Stan West, owner of D & J Nursery in Dothan.



Claybank Master Gardeners take a much-needed break. (L-R): Janet Shinaberry, Iris Halbert, Debi Breedlove and interns Leah Richardson and Darlene Enke. Photographer: unknown

COFFEE COUNTY MGA

Jacque Hawkins

Coffee County Master Gardener's Association Members' latest project is the identification of trees growing along the 1.2 mile loop trail at Johnny Henderson Family Park in Enterprise. The initial meeting of members interested in contributing to the project was recently held at the park with a map of trees once growing along the trail. Once trees have been identified, identifying markers will be placed close to the trees in a manner to not hinder the maintenance crews and a new map will be prepared. The park was opened in July 1977 and is used daily by individuals, families, and groups.



Initial volunteers L-R: Jacque Hawkins, Paula Allman, Donnie Byrd, Maggie Sickler, CCMGA President and Forester Rodney Penuel, Brenda Evans. Photographer: Pat Moates.

CULLMAN COUNTY MGA

Ellen Hall

Our MGs are playing catch-up on clean-up at our rain garden and demonstration garden; July surprised us with an excess of rainfall here in Cullman County (11.65 inches measured at my house), followed by record-breaking heat in August. So many weeds...

After we assumed responsibility for the Wildflower Garden (WFG) at Sportsman Lake Park in Cullman last year, MG Ben Johnson got involved with the revitalization efforts and remembered how much our former CEC Tony Glover wanted an arboretum in Cullman County. Wondering if the WFG could qualify, Ben pursued the idea with Tony, Members of the Tree Commission, some Extension and Forestry folks, then followed through with the application process. As of July 17, we now have an accredited Level 1 Arboretum at Sportsman Lake Park; it is the 7th accredited arboretum in the state. We hope this will open the door to some grants for improving the paths and labeling the trees. In August, we had a picnic at Sportsman Lake and walked through the trail paths of the WFG, beginning the placement of labels with QR codes of the appropriate trees.

On October 4, we have the County Fair crop registration; MGs receive fruits, vegetables, honey and other field crops such as cotton, gourds and sunflowers. We assist the judges with recording the winners, who receive ribbons and cash prizes from the fair committee.

Our fall plant sale is Saturday, October 21, at the North Alabama Agriplex from 10-3:00.



Robin Pruetz labels loblolly pine in Wildflower Garden. Photographer: Ellen Hall

DEKALB COUNTY MGA

Donna Elrod

It is with great pleasure we announce that this year's Auburn Scholarship has been awarded to Ms. Jessica Westmoreland. Jessica, a senior at Auburn University, is the recipient of the 2023 scholarship awarded by the Master Gardeners of DeKalb County, Alabama. She is majoring in Agriscience Education, maintains an excellent grade point average, and serves as the president of Future Agriscience Teachers (FAST) at Auburn. In 2020, Jessica was named the Distinguished Young Woman for DeKalb County. She lives with her family in Rainsville and is an honor graduate of Plainview High School.

A big Thank you to the Scholarship Committee for the time and energy that went into making this important decision.



Scholarship Winner From L-R: MG's Susan Long, Dottie Pierce, & Lynda Lee Purvis, Scholarship Winner Jessica Westmoreland, MG's Charlotte Howell & Mary Shurett. Photographer: Mary Barr

EAST CENTRAL ALABAMA MGA

Sheila Bolen

East Central Alabama MGs have been touring various members' gardens this summer. In June we toured Marcia Houze's vegetable farm. July was member Trude Taft's straw bale gardens. She has certainly got a way with straw bales. She had some at the School of Blooms, Wedowee Elementary's school garden, and the number of tomatoes, squash, and cucumbers they produced was mind-boggling. August had us driving to Petals From the Past and getting a tour from Jason. As always, Jason gave an educational and fun tour of their gardens and greenhouses. September will have us back to meetings at our usual place with a presentation from Chip East on Cool

Weather Gardening. We are all in need of rain so PRAY FOR RAIN!

It's hard to believe 2023 is going by so fast but I guess we're all ready for some cooler weather to head our way.



Petals tour with Jason. L to R - Marty and Lee Culver, Trude Taft, Jason Powell, Vickie Stapler, Beth Grukin, Vicki Carr, Stephanie Yates. Photographer unknown

ETOWAH COUNTY MGA

Carol Link

On June 13, Etowah, Calhoun, and Cherokee County Master Gardener Associations traveled by bus, to Huntsville Botanical Garden. Afterward, we visited Earth Touch Nursery for a bit of shopping.

ECMGA participated in National Pollinator Week, which is celebrated annually June 19-25. A group of MGs set up a table at Noccalula Falls, to spread the word that pollinators are essential for the production of food, and everyone should take part in protecting bees, butterflies, moths, and other pollinators.

At our July meeting, the guest speaker was Josh Burnette, a TVA Watershed Representative. In August, the guest speaker was Extension Agent, Eric Schavey, who brought an abundance of tomatoes for attendees to have tomato and/or BLT sandwiches for lunch.

A new Fall Master Gardener class is underway at the Etowah County Courthouse, which now houses The Etowah County Cooperative Extension Office. Dr. Brian Brown, Home Grounds

Regional Extension Agent is the facilitator with help from a couple of Etowah County master gardeners.

ECMGA's fall plant sale will be conducted on September 16 and 17, in conjunction with the annual Art on the Rocks, at Noccalula Falls. Our offerings will include two hundred trees, a dozen knockout roses, some hydrangeas, many airplane plants, several cacti, some hanging baskets, and a variety of houseplants.



Master Gardeners of North Alabama plant, maintain, and harvest a vegetable garden inside Huntsville Botanical Garden. When harvested, the vegetables are donated to the local food bank. Photographer: Regina Ford

JACKSON COUNTY MGA

Bill Caudill

On July 13, we gathered at Gorham's Bluff Swimming Pool area for our Annual Ice Cream Social. Sub sandwiches were provided, and everyone brought a dish and lots and lots of ice cream. Yum! See picture below.

The September meeting found us listening intently to Christie Woodruff, Board Member of North Alabama Zoological Society, explain why and how they are working hard to establish a zoo and all that goes with it. An ambitious project for sure. For info see www.nalzs.org.

We are participating in this week's Jackson County Fair. We decorated the gates, set up a booth, and are manning the Flower House. We direct visitors through the different classes of flowers exhibited and are available to answer questions.

The butterfly habitat is operating in Jackson County Park. We have had some ups and downs getting things right but have seen a decent number of butterflies. We had some trouble maintaining a good food source at times. Thanks

to Wilma Brockett for the concept and directing operations.

We will be having a plant swap at the October meeting. I usually find something interesting at these meetings.

Wow, it's fall garden time. Come on collards!



Ice Cream Social. Photographer: Wilma Brockett

JEFFERSON CO MGA

Fletcher Harvey

It has been a daunting year! With an excruciating cold spell in January, a late spring, and summer of record-breaking heat and humidity, even the most stalwart skeptics began to talk about climate change. But community gardens survived and flourished. Helplines were answered, and Master Gardeners continued to do what they do best. They gardened!

During the hottest months along with the normal community outreach projects and planning for plant sales and seminars, Jefferson County Master Gardeners enjoyed three especially enjoyable programs. In July, we played host to Dr. Todd French, a microbiologist from Mississippi State University, who spoke about the art of growing mushrooms. Several participants purchased mushroom growing kits. We are eager to hear of the results of their labors.

In August our own Phyllis Clay, an Advanced Master Gardener, presented a very

interesting program on basil. Did you know that there are 76 recognized species of basil? Phyllis emphasized that basil, with religious and medicinal applications, is not just a culinary herb.

Rounding out our summer, Doug Unkenholz, President of the Alabama Bonsai Society, discussed bonsai gardening with the assistance of several beautiful examples from his own miniature forest.

We are looking forward to our reunion program in mid-September, celebrating ourselves and the cool breezes of Fall.



Phyllis Clay draws a lucky number for a door prize, a basil plant from her garden. Photographer: unknown

MARSHALL CO MGA

Jo Druen

Marshall County Master Gardeners are using best practices as prescribed by ACES. Half of an acre plot of land has suffered from nematodes for several years. After much discussion and consideration, it was decided to close most of the garden to mitigate the issue or to at least reduce the nematode populations, as the picture below indicates. The process of covering the lot with clear plastic started in April 2023 and remains covered for the 2023 season. The produce that would have been planted on this now covered lot is used to help Marshall County CASA feed the homebound. Last year, 2022, the garden produced over 5,000 pounds by the end of July. Due to the circumstances, a new area was plowed up and planted. The garden is actually working at about half-capacity and has produced over 4,000 pounds during the

same timeframe - great planning by the committee! Everyone is looking forward to next year and anticipating a much more substantial harvest.



Marshall County Master Gardener's Garden. Photographer: Jo Druen

MOBILE CO MGA

Cindy Findlay

I left off last quarter with a sneak peek of our 'Crew22'. Crew 22 is our Intern class of 22, who, during a monthly luncheon they share, developed a community project. The Mulherin Custodial Home has been in Mobile since 1952 and is dedicated to providing a home to people with cognitive disabilities. All residents live onsite. Crew 22 chose the Mulherin Home to design and plant a garden. They have developed the landscape plan with a rose, shade, and ornamental gardens. Regular workdays to implement the community project have been selected to get this up and off the ground - or in the ground.

Marsha Stolz, MCMG, is the MCMG in charge of our Demonstration Garden (a.k.a. Dream Garden). She has been very busy rounding us up to help water, replant and keep our Dream Garden alive! July and August were so hot, we had many days over 100 degrees Fahrenheit! But our MCMGs showed up for our Dream Garden!

Our 2023 Intern Class began in August and we have a great group of gardeners this year. They are already helping water the Dream Garden!

October begins our busy time of year. Our 2023 Greenery Sale starts to gain momentum, with workdays planned throughout October and November. Also, in October, we have a trip to Auburn planned! Some of our stops include Freight Farms, Roof Top Gardens, and an Arboretum tour. A long but fun day!



MCMG Crew 22 enjoy their monthly Luncheons.
Photographer: unknown

MORGAN CO MGA

Julia Chennault

The Morgan County Master Gardener Association spent much of the summer cleaning and organizing our greenhouses and storage trailers. We acquired a third trailer and filled it with everything necessary for our annual plant sale - signs, boxes, barricades, etc. We also purchased some much-needed shelving units and additional shade houses, which will help to keep our plants healthy.

Continuing activities are our Ask A Master Gardener booth at two local farmers markets and the support of outdoor classroom gardens at several local schools with volunteers and grants. Additionally, one of our members delivers plants or flower arrangements to hospice patients each month.

Several of us survived a hot, muggy August morning in a large hay field where we dug some native treasures. We potted up over 50 plants - Passion Flower Vine, Green Comet Milkweed, and Butterfly Weed. They are doing well so far, and we think the sweat equity will pay off in the future.

Many members attended various educational sessions in the area besides our monthly Lunch and Learn programs. We like to learn, and our field trips are the best! In June, we visited the certified Monarch Garden of Sandra Smith in Baileytown and were enthralled with the passion that she has for nurturing the monarchs in all the stages. In August, we went to a hummingbird banding event in Killen, another fascinating experience. And in September, a shade plant grower gave us a tour of her greenhouses.



Some of the crowd of MCMGA members learning from Sandra Smith (center, bending over looking for eggs) all about Monarch Butterflies and plants that nurture them.
Photographer: Rita Baker

PIKE CO MGA

Nell Haigh

Pike County Master Gardeners have experienced a very hot summer, and worked early and late to stay out of the heat. In the spring of 2023, we were awarded a grant to revitalize the herb garden at the Pioneer Museum of Alabama. One of the specific tasks was to document culinary and medicinal herbs in the form of a printed brochure for visitors to the Museum.

Master Gardener David Dye met with Project Chairman Judy Russell, Museum Director Barbara Tatom, Communication Chair Leigh Calk, and President Nell Haigh on the site to review herbs, their uses, survival rate, and plans for expanding the garden. The meeting was held inside the museum due to the heat and followed by viewing the site for surviving/thriving

herbs in the garden. A printed brochure will be available to museum visitors specifically interested in the culinary and medicinal application of various herbs.

The Pioneer Museum of Alabama is a source of regional history, and the Pike County Master Gardeners have a vested interest in helping maintain the outdoor educational spaces for the visitors from all over the United States.



Herb Garden Brochure Committee meeting at Pioneer Museum of Alabama in Troy. Seated (L-R): Brochure Chairman David Dye, Communication Chairman Leigh Calk, Project Committee Chairman Judy Russell. Photographer: Nell Haigh

SHELBY COUNTY MGA

Kate Vogel

Jason Powell from Petals from the Past spoke to the Shelby County Master Gardeners in July on *Soil Management*. In August Dr. Dan Jones, retired UAB botanist, spoke on *Ferns in the Garden*. For the September meeting Betsy Smith, Chilton County Master Gardener and VP of the Herb Society of America, spoke on *The Gift of Herbs*.

Between the Shelby County Retired Citizens picnic, an "Ask a Master Gardener" event at Lowe's in Alabaster, and a booth at Helena Market Day in June, almost 100 people stopped to see what we had, talk about their gardens, and learn what Master Gardeners do.

The pop-up community garden in Wilsonville, initiated by member Barbara

Williams and funded by an Extension grant, has been set up and planted.

An initiative from our members Teresa and Larry Riddle has made a great contribution to the Pelham community. It now includes other Shelby County Master Gardeners and residents who have organized and teamed up to learn together through a garden club. They have been clearing invasive plants and QR-coding natives and wildflowers along the walking trail behind the Pelham Library. They researched and added a bluebird trail as well.

SCMGA sponsored an educational session in July for the seniors at the Mary Ellen Estes Senior Community Center at Heardmont Park. Our nine interns have accepted a group project (with MG assistance) to assist in getting the area behind the Community Center ready for raised bed gardens for their seniors.

SHOALS MASTER GARDENERS

Lisa Maples

Fall is always an exciting time. When you are young, it's the new school year and new clothes. Back with friends and getting to have new experiences. Football games and band practices. As we get older, we can get a bit jaded if we aren't careful. While spring renews and reminds us of fresh starts, fall is a good time to open ourselves up for quiet reflection and pause to see the beauty of the changing season. It's fun to know the scientific reason the leaf falls off. That is where our education comes in handy. We can impress the grands with tree wisdom!

This Master Gardener group has been busy with projects (even in the heat.) The Habitat House finished up and Ivy Green got a touch-up. We assisted the Colbert County Extension office with Tomato Sandwich Day, made a fun trip to University

of Tennessee at Martin, and got to enjoy Taylor Reeder's company again.

The Calvary Learning Center garden classwork is going strong. Sally McGuire, Paula Kelly, and Cynthia Kershaw continue to share their gardening knowledge with the littles.



(L-R): MG's Sally McGuire, Penny Townsend, Michael Wilson, Lisa Maples, Viva Vaden, Dwight James at Habitat House. Photographer: Habitat Staff

TALLAPOOSA CO MGA

Calvin Johnson

If you wish to host a fun MG meeting, try demonstrating, preparing, and eating an Italian three-course, herb-based meal with full member participation! The TCMGA did just that recently and left fulfilled, with new herb recipes and delicious menu options! MG Marian Edel thrilled three dozen members with an authentic show-and-tell program in which members cut, sliced, blended, and cooked herb dishes for their own luncheon enjoyment in a two-hour program. Edel's six or seven basic herbs were plucked from her expansive garden to produce three courses, a Bruschetta appetizer, a pasta and meatball main course, and an Italian Ricotta cheesecake dessert garnished with even more herbs.

In the entire process, Edel used a large variety of herbs which she nurtured in her home herb garden. Herbs selections for the demonstration included basil, oregano, parsley, garlic and olive oil. Accent ingredients included fresh tomatoes, pecans, Italian bread, homemade pasta (cavatelli), meatballs with several different cheeses, as well as Parmesan. The herb demonstration was indeed a treat, producing a feast!

The first course included Bruschetta, a slice of Italian bread topped with tomato bits and Mozzarella cheese, heated to perfection. The main course featured member-made tiny rolled-up bits of pasta which were boiled on-site to the taste of individual members, then topped with a gravy of tomato sauce spiced with a pesto of basil, oregano, parsley, garlic, and olive oil. The herb garnish on the dessert completed a delicious monthly luncheon of Edel's featured "Cooking with Herbs from the Home Garden, Italian style."



(L-R): MG's Don Parrish, Marian Edel, and Mary Neilsen prepare Italian appetizers for fellow MG's. Photographer: Calvin Johnson

TUSCALOOSA CO MGA

Dan Sutton

On September 2, local MGA members volunteered at the Fosters Farmers by providing a Fall Gardening guide, staffing the Ask a Master Gardener table with ACES brochures, fielding gardening questions and directing attendees to the help desk phone number. We continue to work in the community gardens at the University Arboretum and Jeremiah's Garden, with produce going to local food banks. Our volunteers also help maintain the flower garden at the non-profit Hospice of West Alabama every other week. We began establishing a Demonstration Garden adjacent to the Tuscaloosa County Extension Office with a groundbreaking in early August. A

Pollinator Garden and Vegetable Garden are planned for that location, focusing on edible and attractive landscaping. Dan Sutton and Wanda Smith were on hand at the September 5 AMGA Board Meeting to accept the proceeds-sharing check as the result of Tuscaloosa County MGA hosting the 2023 AMGA Annual Conference.



(L-R): Dan Sutton, Deborah Boutelier, Wanda Smith. Photographer: Devonne Ellis

WIREGRASS MGA

Kelley Bexley

While July is our “no meetings” month, we were certainly not idle. In addition to working continually with growing plants for our upcoming Fall Plant Sale, we continued teaching classes at Aunt Katie's Community Garden. The kids of Hawk-Houston had fun learning about chickens, plant propagation, and careers available to them in the agriculture world. It was a joy for us to interact with this bright, engaged group of youngsters.

We also organized the annual watermelon tasting event at Landmark Park. The ongoing heat did not prevent nearly a hundred people coming to the park to enjoy a cool taste of watermelon.

Landmark Park also requested our assistance in teaching some folks interested in volunteering to help maintain the Farmstead at the Park. We talked about pruning, planting, and harvesting in the Kitchen Garden.

A whole day was also spent with students from the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, who had a community service day. While groups worked in various areas around the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens, we had several students helping us pull weeds, cutting back overgrowth from trees, and cleaning up around fence lines. It was so good to have so much help!



Learning about composting at Aunt Katie's Garden. Photographer: Janice Shirley



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Got Questions?



We've Got Answers



Photograph courtesy of Pexels.

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