

# HAPPENINGS

FALL 2024

Courtesy of [Pexels](#)

## AUTAUGA COUNTY MGA

Nancy Waggoner

Autauga County MGA members are preparing to host the 2025 AMGA Conference here in Prattville, April 3-5. Look for information as plans develop!

Recently, we were saddened by the deaths of two of our long-standing ACMGA members: Don Armstrong and Albert Striplin.

In June, several ACMGA members enjoyed a trip to Aldridge Gardens in Hoover. David Doggett, Jefferson County Advanced MG, took us on a wonderfully informative tour of the gardens. In late spring, star performers of the garden are still hydrangeas. David informed us that Alabama is ground zero for the discovery of new types of hydrangeas! We will be on the road again on October 4, when a group of ACMGA members will carpool to Opelika for lunch at Botanic restaurant and garden center.

At our June membership meeting, we hosted speakers from a local farm supply business that provides for the local home gardener as well as commercial growers. Our July meeting

speaker, Dr. Wesley Anderson, explained ways in which the home garden can be protected from wildlife destruction. Our August program was a festive pot-luck luncheon to honor our graduating interns! At our September meeting, Rhona Watson presented an excellent program on seed starting and plant propagation.

Our demonstration garden continues to produce fresh vegetables that are donated to the needy in our community. Our Prattville Garden is being prepared for a reception on the first evening of the 2025 conference.



(L-R) J.C. Schofield, Rose McCauley, and Darlene Blumentritt pick fresh produce from our Demonstration Garden. Photographer: Unknown



*91f+p9mkBNL.jpg (2560x1829) (clipart-library.com)*

## BALDWIN COUNTY MGA

Don Richerson

The Baldwin County Master Gardeners have enjoyed a wonderful summer filled with pests, fungi and weeds. Following our successful AMGA Conference in Daphne in April, each of us enjoyed getting back to what we enjoy - gardening and getting our yards perfect. Our July potluck luncheon was enjoyed by everyone.

The affair began with entertainment provided by several members describing the many types of Master Gardeners, with a masterful skit. Next, a video reviewing the arduous work by our members at the 2024 AMGA Conference by Loree Hadley was enjoyed by all attending. The Class of 2024 BCMG Interns were presented and 22 received badges and seven had over 100 volunteer hours. Several members received various badges and pins in recognition of their hard work. The awards continued with members Tanys Waldron and Myra Lassere receiving recognition for 15,000-16,999 hours and 20,000 hours of volunteering, respectively.

AMGA Top Hours of the Year was awarded to Mary Calvin who volunteered 1,573 hours to lead all AMGA members. What an honor!

As the hot doldrums of August came and persisted, we eagerly started our Autumn plants from seed and planned our garden plots. Paramount in our planning was the revamped Autumn Plant Sale and Fall Seminar. In addition, budget season is upon us and the election of new officers and Board members is eagerly anticipated in November. On to 2025 and the promise of even greater things!



Baldwin County Interns are now Baldwin County MGs. Photographer: Linda Bizzell

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## BLOUNT COUNTY MGA

Dee Scott

With summer rapidly coming to an end it's safe to say that the Blount County Master Gardeners have enjoyed a noteworthy summer growing season. In early summer our June Picnic, which included the BCMG membership, as well as, their families was held with many folks staying into the evening to enjoy each other's good company and conversation. Everyone said they will mark their calendars for this event next year. The Blount County Master Gardener volunteers were also very much a part of the Oneonta Business Association June Fling representing the Master Gardeners program and ACES by reaching out to the community with great information and gardening conversations at their usual information booth.

Updates to the new local Community Garden have continued all summer with the planting of summer crops in the three new stock tank type raised beds. Updates to the old irrigation system along with newly added drip irrigation produced a good yield of cucumber, okra,

eggplant and zucchini. Timbers and mulch will be added to the garden at some point to improve aesthetics and help prevent weeds.

The Lunch and Learn series, sponsored by Susan Hagen, Advanced Master Gardener, and Bethany O'Rear, Regional Extension Agent, has continued strong all summer long with great success and mighty membership participation. Susan and Bethany plan to continue the program into 2025.

BCMG members are looking forward to Fall crops, pumpkin spice weather, and the Blount County Master Gardeners Fall conference on October 3, 2024.



Debra Hicks, BCMG, presenting Tea-cup Fairy Gardens with Succulents at BCMG Lunch and Learn. Photographer: Susan Hagen

## CALHOUN COUNTY MGA

Teri Gilbert

Calhoun County Master Gardeners ground crew work Tuesday mornings to weed, water, and mow the gardens on our home grounds at Cane Creek. The Sherron Pritchett Greenhouse at Cane Creek was closed for the summer and reopened September 9. Volunteers work in the greenhouse Monday mornings.

Our August *Third Thursday* Speaker was Jason Powell from Petals from the Past. His topic was "Who Can Take the Heat".

Coosa Valley Youth Services Attention Home/Tree Amigos meet Wednesdays 8:00-10:30. Volunteers enjoy mentoring and sharing their gardening skills with the youth.

Sassy Tails, an outreach program of the Back Country Horsemen of America, serves children with special needs. A sensory trail located at Camp McClellan Horse Trails was created with the help of CCMGA. EMGs Dick and Sarah Pritchett provide guidance with this on-going project.

At our August meeting, EMG Steven Langston, spoke on "Greenhouse Flowers". Steven, who

Works at Longleaf Botanical Gardens, showed pictures of some of the beautiful and unusual flowers located at the botanical garden's greenhouse.

Six EMGs worked with volunteers at Hobson City Community Gardens to prepare 15 raised bed garden boxes and plant an assortment of vegetables. CCMGA members weeded and harvested as the crops matured. As of August 20th, 625 pounds of produce had been harvested for 85 of approximately 265 local families.

A nominating committee has been formed, and elections will take place in November for CCMGA Treasurer and Vice President.



Skeeter Sims and two Hobson City volunteers at Community Garden. Photographer: Ruth Sarro.

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## CAPITAL CITY MGA

Mary Eleanor Hines

When football season is upon us, leaves begin to fall, and color creeps into the trees, then it's time to begin to winterize the gardens with cold weather plants. This includes CCMGA project gardens at Lilly's Garden, Montgomery Botanical Gardens, Rose-Morris House, EAT (Eat, Act, Transform) South and Blount Cultural Park which is located at the Shakespeare Festival Park in Montgomery.

We are proud of two of our members who have been recognized with outstanding volunteer work. Karin Carmichael was chosen Volunteer of the Year for her many hours of unselfish work in the Montgomery Botanical Gardens. Janell Diggs, CCMGA education chair, has earned her Advanced Master Gardener certificate for growing and cooking with herbs. She has also organized and presented several other educational projects.

We are pleased to have 22 interns sign up for the fall Master Gardener program.

Our plant sale chairman announced that the gross amount made at our spring plant sale was \$5,430.10 with a net profit of \$4,317.72. April 12, 2025, has already been set for our next plant sale. Committees are being formed and suggestions and ideas are discussed to make next year's sale bigger and better.



Karen Weber tending the Shakespeare Garden at Montgomery Botanical Gardens. Photographer: Karen Cochran.

## CHEROKEE COUNTY MGA

Bill Holland

Well, it certainly has been an interesting summer. The good news is we started the year with above average rainfall. Then the weather decided to turn incredibly hot and dry!! We did have a 1-2-week respite with some good rain. Then heat and dry were (are) back. I believe we have persevered in spite of these challenges.

The Centre downtown planters still look nice, even though they have taken the brunt of the heat and lack of rain. We have lost some plants but those will be replaced, and the planters will certainly look better than ever. The City Park has been a struggle also. From vandalized sprinkler systems to plants that were not equipped to handle the stress they received we certainly have had our challenges. In spite of the issues, the Park has looked the best ever.

The Post Office looks very good. Leesburg Town Hall continues to shine. The Senior Center was a success. Centre City Hall

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## CHILTON COUNTY MGA

Kerry Rush

While it was a mighty hot day this summer, members of the CCMGA enjoyed a visit to one of its own, the home of Lamar and Audrey Giles. Daylilies are Audrey's love and the opportunity to see their variety was enjoyed by all. July kept us close to home again as our monthly guest speaker, member Trisha Williams, shared a presentation on "Container Gardening". Practical, affordable, and easy to follow tips were supported by her superb photos of memorable container gardens. The month of August we enjoyed the lively presentation of Bionca Lindsey (Autauga MGA), as she spoke about "Let's Learn About Hostas". Her vivid descriptions and variety-filled photos made the sweltering day feel like we were in the shade! We look forward to our September program as we "Learn About Microgreens" from Capital City MG Janell Diggs.

Our Conservation Group continues to grow in purpose and dedication as they were privileged

certainly has improved. The Centre Ball Field is a lovely garden. Slackland Beach is a challenge!

Finally, a very nice dedication was held at the Centre City Park for all the benches that have been donated over the years in memory of loved ones. At the dedication, the Mayor presented the Master Gardeners with a certificate ..."thanking you for all you have done to improve our town"... .

In spite of everything, I believe we have had a very good three months. Thanks to everyone.



CCMGs Gene and Ginny Wilson receive a beautification certificate from Town of Centre  
Photographer: Becky McMichen.

to participate in a speaking engagement at Aldridge Gardens in Birmingham. The group was among members of the Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance (APAC).

From our commitment to emphasize public relations and increase awareness, we are excited to share that the CCMGA has secured the opportunity to publish a monthly article in our local newspaper, *The Clanton Advertiser*. Topic possibilities include highlights from our monthly meetings, how to plan and grow an herb garden, fall garden preparation, and of course, how to attain and enjoy the wonderful benefits of Master Gardener Certification.



(L-R): Betsy Smith and Bionca Lindsey.  
Photographer: Audrey Giles

## CLAYBANK MGA

Debi Breedlove

Claybank Master Gardeners have persevered through one of the hottest summers in recent memory to continue several established projects and even begin a few new ones. Volunteers have racked up dozens of hours this summer.

The Dothan Area Botanical Gardens is the local horticultural center of the Wiregrass and CMG felt they wanted to help the gardens by supporting one of the pocket gardens. With the assistance of DABG Director William Holman, members decided that the Gregory Meditation Garden would become their next project. The pocket garden is a beautiful, shaded area with benches and lush grass and a lovely entrance with ceramic pots and a gazebo, but the area was badly overgrown due to the loss of most of their staff this summer and it needed some fresh plantings. After cleaning the area, the group planted hydrangeas in large containers and plan to put more plants in garden beds. Several workdays and truckloads of

## CULLMAN COUNTY MGA

Ellen Hall

After months of work on an outdoor classroom at the Wildflower Garden at Sportsman Lake, the contingent of our EMGs with building experience has completed the requirements for the grant we received. The deck is built, seating added, steps and handicap access completed. Additionally, the area has been prepared for landscaping, with storm drainage ditches and new topsoil spread. Any EMG with a tractor or backhoe has been called into service.

Cullman County's new MG class began August 8, with 18 enthusiastic interns from 4 different counties. There is already a project lined up for them: landscaping around the new outdoor classroom deck.

Following on the heels of CCMGA's by-laws revision earlier this year, our new Policy and Procedures Manual is about to be distributed for review and subsequent vote.

Like much of the state, some parts of our county had less than an inch of rain from

debris later, the Meditation Garden is ready for anyone who needs a quiet, contemplative area to sit and think, read or pray.

DABG hosts thousands of people every year from every state in the union and dozens of foreign countries. It is the home of Wings of Wonder, the new seasonal butterfly house and Gardens Aglow, a Christmas light spectacular which has become one of the major fundraisers for the facility!



(R-L): Susan Rigsby, Mickey Breedlove, Janet Shinaberry at Dothan Botanical Meditation Garden. Photographer: William Holman.

July 28 – until September 13 when the bands of rain from Hurricane Francine brought us over 5 inches of rain in 24 hours. Gardening has been quite challenging this summer. Some of our EMGs have spent hours watering our Demonstration Garden since we are currently without a working irrigation system.

Looking ahead, October promises to be a busy month with the crop registration and MG booth at the Cullman County Fair and a fall plant sale on Oct. 11-12.



CCMG President Richard Carpenter speaks to 2024 MG interns onsite regarding outdoor classroom project. Photographer: Kira Sims.

## **EAST CENTRAL ALABAMA MGA**

Sheila Bolen

East Central Alabama MGA (ECAMGA) has enjoyed a hot and busy summer. We have enjoyed visiting the gardens of our members and seeing how they plan, plant and care for their gardens. In August we visited the gardens of member Linda Barnes and enjoyed an educational tour and then a sack lunch with fellow members.

At our July meeting Robert Bar gave a presentation on Carnivorous Plants of the Southeast. Who knew there were so many and the many ways they can be “shown off” in a garden. Love that they grow well in pots!

Plans are in the development stage for ECAMGA to work with Kiwanis on creating a pollinator garden and walking trail loop at Kiwanis Park in Wedowee. This is a major undertaking for the Kiwanis and there is a 5-year plan to create the loop. Lots of clearing the trail then creating the garden and labeling trees/plants along the trail are ahead.

While school was out for the summer, we still had plants growing in our school garden. Volunteers went over regularly and kept the gardens watered and weeded.

Susan Turner and Trude Taft hats off to you!



ECAMGA members at the home of Linda Barnes.  
Photographer: Martha Burnett.

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## **JACKSON COUNTY MGA**

Bill Caudill

Jackson County Extension Master Gardeners stayed busy this summer.

I think all who attended enjoyed the annual Ice Cream Social we held up at Gorham’s Bluff on July 11<sup>th</sup>. There was plenty to eat and several interesting ice cream choices to taste.

On August first John and Gail Horning gave the members a great picture show covering the previous Elkwood Manor Tour and Lunch.

September fifth found us listening to every word Chris Schultz said as he discussed “Raised Beds and Organic Gardening”. We had several questions.

On August 20, 2024, Regional Extension Agent Lilly Oaks did an evening presentation at the Scottsboro Public Library. Her topic was “Fall Gardening: Know Before You Grow”. She covered prep for fall gardening, what to grow, and how to grow it. There are other events planned at the library.

As I compile this report the Jackson County Fair is in full swing. From September 10-14, JCMGA volunteers man the Flower House where Jackson County residents enter their exhibits for judging and prize awards. We direct visitors, answer questions, and distribute MG information.

We plan to have our annual member plant swap on October 3, 2024 at the Graham Farm and Nature Center starting at 10:00 AM.

We’re developing plans for how to identify what should be done, how to recruit volunteers, and set schedules to ensure proper maintenance is done for the Vernon Bush Trails and Gardens at Jackson County Park.

## JEFFERSON COUNTY MGA

Fletcher Harvey

Despite spells of seemingly excessive heat and often torrential rains in the midst of possible drought, Jefferson County Master Gardeners have weathered their various storms, and forged ahead.

The Birmingham Botanical Garden's Fall Plant Sale, propagated and populated by many Master Gardeners, is behind us, and thanks to Susan McNamara, our fall bulb sale is underway.

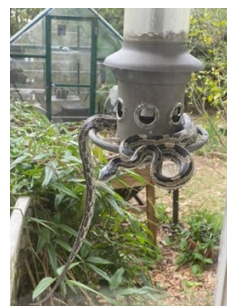
In July we had a visit from Stone Hollow Farms followed by a field trip to the farm itself.

In August we had a program from our own Cameron Strouss. Cameron spoke on "Edible and Medicinal Weeds Every Gardener Should Know." A Certified Herbalist and Master Gardener, Cameron has been a forager for fourteen years and a recognized clinician for nine.

September saw the return of Hayes Jackson long time Extension Agent and Director of

Longleaf Botanical Gardens in Anniston. He gave us an update on the development of Longleaf interspersed with entertaining stories of his plant collecting passions. Hayes is self-diagnosed as suffering from "horticultural ADHD."

Unlike many of my friends, I do not have a squirrel or chipmunk problem. One possible reason is the visitor to my yard that we photographed earlier this summer. He/she is a gray rat snake, non-venomous but smelly and aggressive. My experience is that "chicken snakes" are as mean as the devil!



Photographer: Fletcher Harvey

## LAWRENCE COUNTY MGA

Dena Morris

LCMGA members have been busy in Cullman and Athens serving as Teaching Assistants and mentoring the new Intern classes. We had a Meet and Greet lunch the first day of class which also gave each participant a chance to mingle with everyone involved at the two locations. We have nine interns from Lawrence County in the current training program. I have great news concerning one of our ongoing projects! Lawrence County Signature School (LCSS) has received grants for the Reflective Garden from AMGA and Alabama Mountains Rivers & Valleys Resource Conservation & Development Councils (RC&D). Our Phase I build day is planned for October 1st. LCSS Outdoor Classroom has received recognition in the local newspaper, The Moulton Advertiser, and Alabama Wildlife Magazine. Construction continues at Pond Springs, which means our work is paused until further notice. East Lawrence Elementary

School is planning a workday for the new school year planting fall vegetables and plants.

We all made time for play in July as LCMGA were volunteers at The Moulton Lions Club Truck and Tractor Pull. We attended a Trash Panada's Baseball Game in Madison for Ag Day at the Stadium. Marti Johnson member of LCMG conducted a class on Kokedama also known as Lazy Person's Bonsai.



(L- R): Wanda Birge, Rosilene Carter, Susan Hester, Marti Johnson, Dena Morris, Ida Elliot, Lisa Winters. Photo by Donna Shanklin

## LEE COUNTY MGA

Shelley Aistrup

The Lee County Master Gardeners Association accepts grant applications for horticulture projects each year in fall. Projects must be non-profit in nature and provide significant benefit(s) to the citizens of Lee County, Alabama. In 2024, three recipients received grants from our Association.

- A project by OGrows Community Garden that involved a series of gardening workshops in which community members learned innovative gardening techniques for small spaces and poor soil. Attendees went home with resources to help them grow their own food and attract native pollinators to their gardens. The grant provided for five demonstration 4' x 12' no-till plots (two vegetable plots, one native wildflower plot, one edible flower and dye plant plot, and one butterfly host plant plot), a

straw bale garden, several small containers for small-space gardening and a vermiculture bin on site.

- Fox Run School's project allowed students in the after-school club, Project Grow, to build a garden at the school to educate them about sustainable practices that can help their families, the community, and the environment. The goal was to provide fresh produce to the Food Bank of East Alabama by the end of the 2024 growing season.
- The Opelika Chamber 20 Under 40 Service Project created an outdoor learning environment at the Opelika Learning Center with a circular-shaped bench, trees, tables and shrubs.

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## LIMESTONE COUNTY MGA

Bobbi McFadden

During the 2024 AMGA Conference, Limestone County Master Gardeners (LCMG) were recognized for pounds of produce grown and donated in 2023 from our Grow More Give More Garden. LCMG ranked third in the state with over 1,500 pounds! Our garden, known as "Mr. Henry's Charity Garden", is located on South Hines Street at the home of Marsha and Henry White. Mr. Henry has been recognized as an honorary Master Gardener and he and Marsha are always available to lend a hand to the other volunteers. The current volunteers include LCMGs Mary Ballard, Peggy Johnson, Marcy Smith, Denita McElyea, Kathy Cook and Wes and Teresa Brown, the Garden Program Managers. Also volunteering are Barry and Patricia Croley, MG interns.

In the summer months, green beans, peas, tomatoes, squash, zucchini, okra, watermelons, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers and pumpkins

(new) are grown. In the fall, a variety of greens are grown. To date for 2024, the volunteers have harvested and donated over 900 pounds of produce!

All the produce grown and harvested is donated to local food distribution centers such as Limestone County Churches Involved and Women Empowering Women. All the LCMGs are excited to see what the final harvest for 2024 will be.



Mr. Henry's Charity Garden. Photographer unknown.



## MARSHALL CO MGA

Jo Ann Druen

Marshall County Master Gardeners are proud to introduce the students in the 2024 Fall Session of Alabama Master Gardeners Association: Roger Newman, Jane Jinright, Elaine Thomas and Jeremy VanMaanen. The classes are being held at 9:30 am each Thursday from August 8 through November 13 at the RSVP-Marshall County location with labs in the afternoon at various locations including CASA Garden, Guntersville State Park, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Aldridge Gardens and Sunset Farmers Market. We are looking forward to helping them develop as Master Gardeners and to the new perspectives they will bring to us "old-timers".



(L-R): Students Roger Newman, Jane Jinright, Elaine Thomas, Jeremy VanMaanen.  
Photographer: Elaine Hild

## MOBILE CO MGA

Cindy Findlay

Although we always have work in the heat of June and July, Mobile County Master Gardeners (MCMGs) love the fall! Our Demonstration Garden, aka DREAM Garden, always needs watering and weeding! A gardener's work is never done.

June 8 was Global Awareness Day, an event held in downtown Mobile. Carol Dorsey, MCMG, headed up the day with several other MCMGs. She also headed up volunteers for the June 3-27 Summer Literacy Camp, held at George Hall Elementary School in downtown Mobile. Both events were successful.

In August, we welcomed our new class of 21 interns from various professional backgrounds all eager to become master gardeners. On August 1, Jackie Jenkins MCMG, our Intern Mentor Coordinator, hosted a wonderful Meet & Greet brunch for the interns and their mentors. Then, on August 8, Jack LeCroy sent them headlong into soils!

On August 22, Penny Smith, from the Ornamental Horticulture Research Center in Mobile, demonstrated plant propagation to our

interns. A bus trip destination for other counties...just food for thought! Penny gives a great presentation.

Moving into Fall, our annual Greenery Sale and all the events that go into that will be happening. We also have a Bus trip to the beautiful Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, MS. So, like I said in the beginning, what's not to like about Fall?



Penny Smith giving her propagation talk & demonstration. Photographer: Cindy Findlay

## MORGAN CO MGA

Julia Chennault

We have been busy all summer in our greenhouses, dealing with the extreme heat, as well as water and power outages. Through it all, we've kept most of the plants alive! Our first fall plant sale is planned for September 21 at the courtyard garden of Hospice of the Valley in downtown Decatur.

We continue to be a community presence with monthly plant donations to local hospice patients, our newspaper articles and a farmer's market booth. Many of us met recently to begin planning our part of the 2026 state conference, which will be held at the Westin in Huntsville.

We love our field trips. Notable this summer was our visit to the backyard oasis of members Barb and Mark Brown, where we enjoyed watching their hobby train move through a large and wonderfully landscaped terrain.

Our free Lunch & Learn programs are offered to the community monthly, except in December and January. The summer programs included mussel shell art, growing Shiitake mushrooms

and native plants for North Alabama. Fall sessions will focus on invasive species, chestnut and chinquapin trees and other native species, and winter sowing.

Announcements will soon be sent to area schools regarding our grants and scholarships.



It takes a lot of muscle and expertise to keep our greenhouses functioning! (L-R) Mike Keck, Gary Kulaw, and Norris Johnston are creating a good soil mixture. Photographer: Barb Brown

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## PIKE CO MGA

Buriece Gracey

Despite the sweltering heat of summer, the Pike County Master Gardeners remained dedicated to community service. We relished the opportunity to gather flowers and create beautiful arrangements for a local nursing home. Every Friday throughout June, July, and August, we delivered twelve fresh arrangements, hoping that the residents and their guests found as much joy in them as we did in crafting them.

We discovered a way to enjoy each other's company while escaping the summer's scorching temperatures. During our break from formal meetings, we engaged in various craft activities that brought us all closer together. In June, we embarked on a creative journey to learn the art of cyanotypes, utilizing special paper, dried flowers, and the sun's rays to produce stunning images. July saw us crafting pollinator poles and whipping up homemade vanilla. As summer drew to a close in August,

we embraced our creativity once more by making dried flower bookmarks and whimsical plant pots.

In July, a group of enthusiastic master gardeners embarked on an exciting field trip to the Dothan Area Botanical Garden. Our visit included a guided tour of the beautifully landscaped grounds, where we took the time to admire the enchanting butterfly habitat, further deepening our appreciation for nature's wonders.



Making Pressed Flower Bookmarkers. (L-R): MGs Jane Stroud, Judy Russell. Photographer: Unknown.

## SHELBY CO MGA

Kate Vogel

Dr. Michelle Wooten, Assistant Professor, Distance-Accessible Astronomy Education at UAB, spoke to the Shelby County Master Gardeners Association on September 13 on *How Artificial Light Impacts Plant Health*.

Rather than our usual monthly meeting, SCMGA members met on August 8 to welcome the new interns and provide them with a potluck lunch.

Debbie Boutelier, AMGA Vice President, spoke on

*Sustainable Gardening and Native Herbs* on July 12. Also in July, John Vanderford, Extension Coordinator, posted that SCMGA had contributed \$94,400 in community value hours and philanthropy.

President Elizabeth York spoke about *Cool Weather Gardening* at a Lunch and Learn at the Extension Center in Columbiana and again to the Alabaster Senior Citizens.

Plans are being made to host the AMGA Fall Seminar September 16, 2025, in Columbiana.

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## SHOALS MGA

Dwight James

As the leaves turn and the air cools, it's time to embrace the beauty of the harvest season. This past week, we have in Northwest Alabama received more rain in two days than we did in the entire month of August. We are thankful for not only the changing of the seasons but the much-needed rainfall!

One project our group participates in each summer is helping the Colbert County Extension staff with their annual Tomato Sandwich Day on the courthouse lawn. To our surprise, U.S. Representative Robert Aderholt came and brought with him British House of Lords member Ross Kempzell. Kempzell is touring the U.S. as part of the British-American Parliamentary Group.

As summer ended, several projects were completed. The final clean-up/clean-out day at Ivy Green in Tuscumbia was completed under the watchful eye of Michael Wilson, project chair. Also, early in our affiliation with the Arc of the Shoals, our greenhouse suffered some wind damage to the roof. While it worked through the Spring growing season, it was

apparent it wasn't going to be an easy fix. Our biggest surprise came this past week when one of our local retailers donated all their leftover "seed starting supplies" to the Shoals Master Gardeners. What a windfall and blessing! We are excited with this generous gift, and look forward to utilizing all of the pots, seeds, seed-starting medium and other much needed supplies this upcoming Spring.



Shoals MGs with British House of Lords member Ross Kempzell (L) and U.S. Representative Robert Aderholt (R). Photographer: Caroline Aderholt



Courtesy of [Cliparts PUB](#)

## ST. CLAIR CO MGA

Pam Garrison

It has been a long, hot, dry summer. I am so appreciative of the 2 plus inches of rain at my house over the last few days. The lawn, trees, shrubs, vegetables and flowers are soaking it all in. Hopefully, many others around the state are benefiting as well.

With all the heat and dry weather our Master Gardener group has not done any summer projects. The date for our spring plant sale has been set for April 11-12, 2025.

Our meetings continue year-round, and we have had some great speakers. In July our presentation came from two members of the Gateway Community Garden in Pell City. They discussed the history of the garden and its

impact on the area. The planning, planting, growing and harvesting is all done by volunteers. The food produced is delivered to food pantries and the Senior Center. The August presenter was Nelda Faulkner, who spoke on the topic of orchids. Nelda began with an orchid her husband gifted her in 1976. That orchid is still alive and doing well in her greenhouse! She grows several 100's of them and gave us tips, such as using cypress bark and perlite for the growing medium and watering them with lukewarm water early in the day. She also informed us that there will be an Orchid Show at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens September 20-22. September's speaker is sharing ideas to decorate our mailboxes for the holiday season.

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## TALLAPOOSA CO MGA

Calvin Johnson

Tallapoosa County's activities were varied and hands-on in nature, including interesting speakers, and a July outdoor meeting while buying beautiful plant pots. Manager Chloe Hellen of The Potting Shed in Auburn gave a demonstration of "Trimming and Dead-Heading Fall Plants." It was a huge success, with an extensive Q&A session. She addressed our problems as well as challenges, solving many on the spot. Later, we purchased an assortment of ceramic pots, soils and chemicals, and even special pruning shears tailored for the trimming needs we had in mind.

September will feature Adv. MG Dianna Fortier from Lee County. She will describe her favorite topic, "The Making of a Moon Garden." This is a new concept for many, and we expect that it will entail taking detailed notes, explanations and photos. She will challenge our creativity and imaginations to go in a new direction with home garden ideas. Our September meeting is always a favorite, since it involves swapping plants and cuttings from our own gardens with written instructions from members to ensure nurturing!

On Saturday, October 5th, our members will participate in Dadeville's annual Fall Festival, a

full day of meeting and educating the public, as well as recruiting new members. We also hand out free soil sample kits with specific instructions for testing by the Auburn University Extension office.

Our final meeting in November concludes with an annual member luncheon and the installation of new officers for the coming year. What a terrific year we had in 2024!



Potting Shed Manager, Chloe Hellen, describes plants to be trimmed in Fall for a new season's growth. Photographer: Calvin Johnson

## TUSCALOOSA COUNTY MGA

Dan Sutton

We were delighted to have Extension's Kerry Smith and Alabama Master Gardener Association President Devonne Ellis visit our association on July 9. They were given a tour of some of the programs our group supports by members Wanda Smith and Dan Sutton. The Tuscaloosa County School System ("TCSS") Educational K-12 Farm was the first visited, with a tour led by Extension Coordinator John Cameron of the 100+ acre site. Additionally, a tour of the Extension Education Garden, Stillman College Community Garden, Tuscaloosa River Market and Jeremiah's Garden was provided. Afterwards, they attended our monthly meeting.

On September 10, we were honored to host the Plant Alabama *Garden Seminar* at the Extension Office. This program was coordinated by Russell Wood of the Alabama Nursery & Landscape

Association with speakers Harvey Cotten and Davy Wright addressing a variety of topics - from introducing new varieties to gardening techniques such as raised beds and introducing a variety of hydrangeas and succulents.



(L-R) Devonne Ellis, Wanda Smith, Kerry Smith and John Cameron. Photographer: Dan Sutton

## WIREFRASS MGA

Kelly Bexey

It's been a good, busy summer for the Wiregrass Extension Master Gardeners. We enjoyed our annual six-week summer educational program with youth from the Hawk-Houston Youth Enrichment Center. Anywhere from 16 to 25 boys and girls walked from their center to Aunt Katie's Community Garden each Wednesday to learn from our Master Gardeners about plant basics, plant propagation, the difference between fruits and nuts, gardening with chickens and about careers available to them in agricultural and gardening fields. This year students enjoyed a field trip to the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens and its Wings of Wonder to learn about pollinators and the plants and flowers they need to survive.

This summer also found us at Landmark Park during the park's summer camp teaching enthusiastic youngsters about the three "B's" - Basics of plants, Bats and Birds! The kids enjoyed learning how plants grow, what fascinating creatures bats are, and then built their own bat houses, as well as learning about birds in their own backyards and how to identify them.

Our Lunch and Learn monthly programs continue to be well-attended with programs on bats, composting and landscaping. This year's annual Watermelon Tasting was held in conjunction with

Landmark Park's old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration. Despite the heat, everyone had fun and enjoyed the cool watermelon.

Finally, the Master Gardeners at Dothan's Successful Aging Initiative Conference were able to answer many garden-related questions, as well as provide information about the MG certification class in the spring.

We are all looking forward to cooler weather and our October plant sale!



This cute little guy was seen in the Backyard Bird classroom at Landmark Park. Call your local extension if you see this bird in your backyard! Photographer: Jan Shirley



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Got Questions?



We've Got  
Answers

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Have a  
wonderful  
Fall!



Courtesy of [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com/)

**NEXT ARTICLE FOR PATHWAYS DUE DECEMBER 15, 2024**

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