



## President's Message

By Linda Griebel

Wish we could store some of this rain we've been getting until we need it in the summer. It has enabled us to get lots planted. However, the weeds also are springing forth and creating wide swaths of green that we don't need. With the fluctuating temperatures and frequent rains, I'm still behind, but keeping at it. Do a little as often as possible...

In addition to flowers blossoming, needs for master gardener volunteers are increasing to staff tables at various events, such as Lanark, Southern Homes and Gardens, Wetumpka Plant Swap, and Farm City Day. There we will do what we do best = educate homeowners. Hopefully many members will sign up to go out to talk about gardening as well as to still help on our other projects. There are many demands on our valuable time, but I know everyone will help wherever possible. If you are available, email or call me and I'll put your name down to help.

The beginning bonsai class was very successful, with 17 members taking home finished treasures. I also know that several of our group are attending the Beekeeping 101 class – welcome, new beekeepers. In that regard, Jim Davis gave an informative talk on pollinators at the March meeting and he answered many inquiries about honey bees. Bees need all the human help they can get and we need the bees. I also enjoyed Maria Pacheco-West's presentation on ferns at the Lunch and Learn which was well attended. Seems the change to Tuesday has been beneficial to everyone who wants to come.

Things are progressing on the butterfly garden. There are still some perennials that have not been installed due to availability, but it'll be ready for an influx of fluttering visitors very soon. Thanks to Jane Mobley for the design and dedication in finding the plant materials and to the projects committee for taking this on. The butterfly garden will be a welcomed addition to our learning gardens for many years to come. And we do appreciate all of the regular volunteers who work in gardens around the area.

If you missed the AMGA conference in Cullman, it was a lot of fun and we learned some new techniques to apply to our own gardens as well as from which to teach others. It was time well spent. I have already shared a little quip I learned. Be sure to ask me about it when I see you – it's funny, but true about plantaholics like me.

I have been delightfully surprised at how quickly things are starting to bloom in my landscape when I was only gone for a few days. Seems that nature is bursting at the seams and I can't resist taking pictures of everything outside. The fragrances and sights are amazing, lots of color and a variety of greens and golds popping out. So, I'm headed out to accomplish what I may because I keep thinking of how rapidly the heat will show up in May and prevent me from transplanting for the sake of the plants.

See you in the garden. Linda



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## Message from Mallory

By Mallory Kelley

Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests



### **“The Carpenter Bees are Back”**

It is officially the sign of spring, the presence of Carpenter Bees hovering around wooden structures, most likely the eaves of your house. These carpenter bees are searching for mates and favorable sites to construct their nests. Male carpenter bees are quite aggressive, often hovering in front of people who are around the nests, but are harmless as they do not have the ability to sting. Female carpenter bees can inflict a painful sting but seldom will unless they are handled or pestered.

Carpenter bees are very large and look a lot like bumble bees, but the upper surface of their abdomen is bare and shiny black; bumble bees have a hairy abdomen with at least some yellow markings and are overall a little smaller than the carpenter bee.

Despite their similar appearance, the nesting habits of the two types of bees are quite different. Bumble bees usually nest in the ground whereas carpenter bees tunnel into wood to lay their eggs. Bare, unpainted or weathered softwoods are preferred, especially redwood, cedar, cypress and pine. Painted or pressure-treated wood is much less susceptible to attack. Common nesting sites include eaves, window trim, fascia boards, siding, wooden shakes, decks and outdoor wooden furniture.

Carpenter bees overwinter as adults in wood within abandoned nest tunnels and emerge in the spring, usually in April. After mating, this is where the trouble begins. The fertilized females then begin to excavate tunnels in wood and lay their eggs within a series of small cells. The female places a ball of pollen in each cell to feed the larvae which then emerge as adults in late summer.

The entrance hole and tunnels are perfectly round and about the diameter of your finger. Coarse sawdust the color of fresh cut wood will often be present beneath the entry hole. Female carpenter bees may excavate new tunnels for egg-laying, or enlarge and reuse old ones and the extent of damaged wood that has been used for nesting year after year may be considerable.

### **Control**

Carpenter bees prefer to attack wood which is bare, weathered and unpainted. Therefore, the best way to deter the bees is to paint all exposed wood surfaces, especially those which have a history of being attacked. Wood stains and preservatives are less reliable than painting, but will provide some degree of repellent versus bare wood.

If painting the wood structure is not an option, liquid sprays of carbaryl (Sevin) or a synthetic pyrethroid (e.g., permethrin or cyfluthrin) can be applied as a preventive to wood surfaces. The effectiveness of these insecticides are often only 1-2 weeks before they need to be reapplied. Tunnels which have already been excavated are best treated by puffing an insecticidal dust such as Sevin Dust into the nest opening. Aerosol sprays labeled for wasp or bee control also are effective. Leave the hole open for a few days after treatment to allow the bees to contact and distribute the insecticide throughout the nest galleries. Then plug the entrance hole with carpenter's glue, or wood putty. This will protect against future utilization of the old nesting tunnels and reduce the chances of wood decay.

Although carpenter bees are less aggressive than wasps, female bees protecting their nests will sting. Treatment is best performed at night when the bees are less active, or while wearing protective clothing.

## Calendar of Events

*April 2015*

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

			<b>1</b> <i>Lanark</i> <i>Work Day</i>  <i>Holtville</i> <i>Jr. High</i> <i>Work Day</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <i>Herb</i> <i>Walk</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <i>Governor's</i> <i>Mansion</i> <i>Work Day</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <i>Lanark</i> <i>Work Day</i> 	<b>9</b> <i>Learning Gar-</i> <i>den Work Day</i>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <i>Lanark</i> <i>Flora/Fauna</i> <i>Weekend</i>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <i>Governor's</i> <i>Mansion</i> <i>Work Day</i>	<b>14</b> <i>Lunch &amp; Learn</i> <i>on herbs Deb-</i> <i>bie Boutelier</i>	<b>15</b> <i>Lanark</i> <i>Work Day</i> 	<b>16</b> <i>Learning</i> <i>Garden Work</i> <i>Day</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <i>Governor's</i> <i>Mansion</i> <i>Work Day</i>	<b>21</b> <i>CAMGA</i> <i>Meeting with</i> <i>Suzanne Sikes</i> <i>on daylilies</i>	<b>22</b>  <i>Lanark</i> <i>Work Day</i> <i>Veggie</i> <i>Garden</i> <i>Workshop</i>	<b>23</b> <i>Learning</i> <i>Garden Work</i> <i>Day</i>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <i>Earth</i> <i>Day</i> <i>Plant Swap</i> <i>Recycle</i> <i>Center</i>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <i>Governor's</i> <i>Mansion</i> <i>Work Day</i>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> <i>Lanark</i> <i>Work Day</i> 	<b>30</b> <i>Learning</i> <i>Garden Work</i> <i>Day</i>		

## MARCH MINUTES

By Rosemary Mobley, Secretary



The March 2015, Central Alabama Master Gardener's Association (CAMGA) meeting was held March 17, 2015, at the Elmore County Extension Auditorium in Wetumpka, Alabama. Lee Borden, Vice-President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He introduced the speaker, Jim Davis, CAMGA member and Advanced Master Gardener in beekeeping. Lee noted that Jim is retired military, and in 2008, sold his business and began organic gardening on his land north of Wetumpka.



The title of Jim Davis's presentation was, "Honey Bees as Pollinators." Jim explained that his interest in honeybees came later in life. He noted that visiting and observing established beekeepers provided the "spark" for further research about honey bees. For centuries, beekeepers have raised honey bees, harvesting the honey they produce and relying on them to pollinate crops. Honey bees pollinate an estimated one-third of all the food crops we consume.

Using power point slides with fascinating photography (available at <http://bit.ly/camgabees>); Jim spoke about the complexities of the small insect. He responded to questions throughout his presentation. He shared unique facts about the honey bee's anatomy, such as: 1) The honeybee has two stomachs,

one as a repository for honey, and another to take in nutrients; 2) The honey bee has two sets of wings that hook together. During cold weather, honey bees cluster together, disengage their wings, and flap to stay warm; and 3) Honey bees produce beeswax from special glands on their abdomens.

Jim also shared that one worker honey bee produces about one-twelfth teaspoon of honey in her lifetime. Honey is made by honey bees from the nectar of flowers and plants. Karl von Frisch received the Nobel Prize for unlocking the communication code among honey bees, which he named the waggle dance. Workers find flowers, determine their value as a food source, navigate back home, and share detailed information about their finds with other members of the hive, using the waggle dance.

On a somber note, Jim explained that since 2006, beekeepers are reporting declines in honey bee population, anywhere from 30 per cent, and up to 90 per cent! Researchers have yet to find one single cause for these losses. Some proposed causes include chemicals, diseases, pests, viruses, poor nutrition, and stress factors. In light of this dilemma, something the public can do is plant pollinator-friendly plants—plants that are good sources of nectar and pollen such as red clover, foxglove, bee balm, and native plants. Jim referenced Alabama Cooperative Extension publication: ANR-0351, "Nectar and Pollen Producing Plants of Alabama: A Guide for Beekeepers."

After the break, Linda Griebel convened the business meeting at 11:17 a.m. Rick Ohlson announced that the Millbrook Farmers' Market will open in two months. He requested that members interested in volunteering to work at the CAMGA table get in touch with him.

Linda reported on some options for investing surplus treasury funds. Rhona Watson made a motion that a one-time contribution of \$1000.00 be made to the Alabama Master Gardener (AMGA) / Auburn College of Agriculture Endowment Fund. She noted that Mallory Kelly was a past recipient of funds from the endowment. Candy Jones made the second motion, and the motion was carried by all present. Next, Catese Chaffee made a motion that CAMGA contribute \$25 per intern to the Extension Services for 2015. These funds are for costs associated with the background check and are not carried on into perpetuity. Rhonda Miles made the second, and it was carried by all present. Linda noted that a committee will be formed to review additional spending options.





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Next, Lee Borden was recognized to give a report on programs. The April 21, 2015 CAMGA meeting will have Suzanne Sikes present on day lilies. In May, Sue Webb will present a program on native plants. He shared two web links as references. The first is a check out sheet for equipment-<http://bit.ly/camgaequipment>. Lee stated that the location of the equipment is shown in a photograph. The next link is a spread sheet of programs- <http://bit.ly/camgaprograms>. This link also contains an evaluation tab with results listed from previous meetings. Lee shared the results from January and February evaluations, which were positive, and distributed evaluations for the March meeting.

The next order of business was to approve the February minutes, as published in the newsletter. Gale Wheeler-Leonard made the first motion to accept the minutes, Bonnie McCormick made the second, and the minutes were accepted.

Rhona Watson gave the Treasurer's report for February, 2015. The balance as of January 31, 2015 was \$12,406.47. There was no Income for February. Expenditures for February were AMGA State dues-\$690.00, Bonsai Class-\$225.00, cards and stamps-\$28.40, Directory-\$30.24, and Library-\$13.88, which totaled \$987.52. This left a balance as of February 28, 2015 of \$11,418.95. Amanda Borden made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Jane Mobley made the second, and it was carried by all present.

Rhona switched to her Reach-for-the-Stars role, and presented a bronze star to Brenda Bernal and a gold star to Virginia Pruitt. These stars are representative of volunteer service hours. Congratulations to Brenda and Virginia!

John Barnes reported that the Projects Committee sponsored bonsai class was very successful. Rhona Watson led the class of 17, and Corky Butts shared his bonsai expertise as well. Attendees left the session with their own bonsai, along with "hands-on" experiences in pruning a bonsai plant with instructions for care. John announced events in April. These included: Flora and Fauna Festival at Lanark on April 11th, and Plant Swap at the Recycle Center as part of Wetumpka Earth Day, April 25<sup>th</sup>. In connection with the Lanark event on April 11<sup>th</sup>, Lois Pribulick will have a seed starting activity for children. She needed some volunteers to help her with this activity. Sign up sheets were available for these events and activities. Also, on Saturdays during the months of March, April and May, a CAMGA table with 2-3 volunteers giving out gardening advice, will be stationed at Southern Homes and Gardens, Vaughn Road, Montgomery. Another sign up sheet was available for this event. Marie Updike secured some year-old flower, vegetable, and herb seeds that will be designated for master gardener projects and any other Elmore County Extension 4-H project needs.

Mary McCroan requested an amendment to add, "and other garden supplies" to the previously approved motion of a \$50.00 monthly allotment for chemicals for the Learning Gardens. Nancy Tribble made a motion to accept this amendment. Penny Arceneaux made the second, and the motion was carried. Mary also shared that on the next Thursday workday, abelia plants will be added to the Butterfly Garden. She invited members to get collards from the vegetable garden after the meeting.

Amanda Borden stated that the starting time for volunteers to arrive at the Governor's Mansion has moved back to 8:00 a.m. Anyone new to this volunteer activity should contact Jane McCarthy by noon on the Friday before the Monday work day. She also noted that access to the parking area on Finley Avenue is denied for anyone with firearms in a vehicle. Amanda shared that the Montgomery Botanical Gardens Project will need volunteers to work on Monday afternoons. Contact Amanda Borden for more details.

Charlotte Hall spoke for the Lunch and Learn (L&L) committee. She shared that there were 29 attendees at the March session. Debbie Boutelier will present, "The Wonder of Herbs" at the April session. Charlotte shared that Jason Powell is scheduled for the June session. His topic is "Tough as Nails Plants for the South." The L&L committee is projecting more, "How To" programs for 2016.

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Some proposed ideas for sessions include plant photography and constructing birdhouses.

Carol Rattan announced that the Fund Raising/ Plant Sale Committee will meet after the CAMGA meeting. She thanked the president for drafting publicity fliers for the plant sale. There was a good response for Plant Sale volunteers, and the sign up sheet was re-circulated for any other interested volunteers. Linda added that all donated plants should be identified by name, color (if known), sun or shade, annual or perennial, and future size.

Jane Mobley reported that the scrapbook for 2014 is housed in the library. She urged CAMGA members to send photographs and articles to her for the 2015 scrapbook.

Marjorie Hannah thanked all of the members who brought refreshments to the meeting, and thanked members who helped with set up and clean up.

Mary Ann Hatcher reported for the Helpline. The Helpline is up and running for the current year. She noted that slots for interns should be filled as soon as possible.

Gale Wheeler-Leonard sent sympathy cards to Harry Dickerson regarding the death of his brother and to Linda Griebel for the death of her father-in-law. Get-Well cards were mailed to Charlotte Hall and to Tom Jaworowski.

Ann Hill announced that she had Directories for 2015 for CAMGA members who had not gotten one. She said that they would be in a box by the auditorium door until after the meeting.

Mallory Kelly spoke to the group, especially interns, about signing up online to work the Helpline. Interns are required to work twice, and currently June and July are the only months with unfilled slots. She also encouraged members to bring someone with them to the Lunch and Learn, as this is a good recruitment tool for new interns. Mallory announced some proposed workshops: Seed Saving with Dani Carroll in Autauga County on April 7 or 15, 2015, and Vegetable Gardening on April 22 in Elmore County. More news will follow regarding these workshops. Next, Mallory presented Maria Pacheco-West with Advanced Master Gardener Certificates in three areas: ferns, hydrangeas, and Southern heirloom gardens. Maria's gardening expertise is such an asset to the CAMGA community. Congratulations to Maria for these accomplishments!

Katrina Mitchell asked interested members to help volunteer at Holtville School Junior Master Gardeners in a spot vacated by Suzanne George. The dates are the first Wednesday in April and May, and the time is after school. They plan to build some raised beds. Contact Katrina for additional information.

Linda opened the floor for any other announcements. Janet Lewis shared that the Camellia Garden Club will sponsor a tree planting at the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Montgomery on March 17, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. and invited everyone to attend. Brenda Uhlig brought day lily, chrysanthemum, and iris plants to give away after the meeting.

Door prizes were awarded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m. Attendance at the meeting numbered sixty.

Respectfully submitted, Rosemary Mobley, Secretary

**SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS** by Judy May

The following CAMGA members received training at the March 5<sup>th</sup> Beginning Bonsai Class (hosted by the Projects Committee), taught by Rhona Watson with Corky Butts assisting: Amanda Borden, Janet Lewis, Cathy Whigham, John Barnes, Rick Ohlson, John Butler, Jim Davis, Cheryl Christian, Becky Ashurst, Terry Chambliss, Gale Wheeler-Leonard, Kay Norman, Rosemary Mobley, Bob Burgett and Jane Mobley.

Phil Easter did the 'Lunch and Learn' promo on 'Alabama Live' at WSFA-TV and a 'Spring Container Gardening' program March 19<sup>th</sup> for the Chat and Chew group at Mulder United Methodist Church.

Mary Long gave a Power Point program on Hydrangeas to the Montgomery Garden Club. She also helped give a program on flower arranging to Montgomery Federation of Garden Clubs. Marie Updike attended the Montgomery Federation flower arranging class for CEU's.

The March 10<sup>th</sup> Lunch and Learn program was by Maria Pacheco West speaking on Fantastic Ferns. Helping that day were Sandi Adkinson, Carla McCune and Deborah Kelso. There were 27 attendees, 19 of them Master Gardeners.

Attending the Projects Committee meeting this month were John Barnes, John Butler, Johan Beumer, Linda Griebel, Jane Mobley and Lois Pribulick.

Bringing food to the monthly meeting were Becky Ashurst, Pat Petro-Perryman, Virginia Pruitt, Cathy Whigham, Corinne Lauridson, Janet Lewis and Marjorie Hannah.

Jane Mobley did a presentation on 'Butterfly Gardening' to the Luverne Garden Club on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and again to the Millbrook Garden Club on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Staying for a Plant Sale planning meeting following the monthly meeting were Charlotte Hall, Gale Wheeler-Leonard, Peggy Turnipseed, Terry Chambliss, Carol Rattan, Linda Griebel, Lois Pribulick, Sally and Joe L'Abbe, Johan Beumer, John Barnes, Rhona Watson, Janet Lewis and Judy May.

Working in the Learning Gardens March 12<sup>th</sup> were Mary McCroan, Jane Mobley, Don Hoover, Lee and Amanda Borden. On March 19<sup>th</sup> it was John Barnes, Linda Griebel, Candy Jones, Virginia Pruitt, Rosemary Mobley, Jane Mobley, Terry Chambliss, Mary McCroan and Lee and Amanda Borden.

Working at the Governor's Mansion this month were John Barnes, Amanda Borden, Terry Chambliss, Jim Davis, Linda Griebel, Candy Jones, Jane McCarthy, Rhonda Miles, Rosemary Mobley, Sandy Rosamond and Connie Willis.

Working at Lanark this month were Ann Hill, Carla McCune, Norman Turnipseed, and Interns Darla Tiesling, Terry Chambliss and Peggy Gelpi.

## Spring Plant Sale – everything you need to know!

By Carol Rattan - Fundraising Chair



### Dates and Times:

**April 30<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, 5-7pm** – We are **receiving plants** at the barn near the vegetable garden only from those who can't bring them Friday or have more than one truck/car load of plants. **Please call me** to let me know you are coming so we know how many people need to work that evening.

**May 1<sup>st</sup>, Friday, 8-4 pm** – **Receiving plants, pricing, and loading** onto two enclosed trailers. Bring plants to the barn near the vegetable garden.

**May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Saturday, 8-12 pm - Plant Sale!** Set up of tables, tents, and signs is 6-7 am, unloading of plants and other sale items is 7-8am. Clean up begins at 12 pm.

### Other Information:

**Volunteering** – If you have not signed up to volunteer and want to help, please call me and let me know what you would like to do. I've not signed up specific people to bring wagons or tables, or to provide food for pricing day and/or sale day. If you'd like to do that, or work during price day, sale day (4 shifts – 6-8 setup, 8-10 sale, 10-12 sale, 12 – done clean-up), or provide a trailer or tent, please let me know. If you have a specific area you'd like to work, i.e., pricing trees, shrubs, perennials, info table, wagon monitor, plant expert, please specify. I am communicating with all volunteers through e-mail, and will need an e-mail address if you have one. If not, I will communicate by phone.

**Labels** - Plants you bring **must be labeled** – name (common – Latin name is optional), color, shade/sun, and mature size. See below for example! “Mini blind” labels are in a box in the MG room at the Extension office, and will be available at the next meeting. If you have extra “mini blind” labels, please ensure they are clean and bring them to share. Also, Rhona Watson has created some plant labels which you can modify and use for your plants, which is especially helpful if you have lots of similar plants to donate. The label files are available on our Yahoo site, or Rhona can send them to you if you can't access Yahoo.



**Pre-purchase** - Members who donate plants and/or work during pricing day may purchase plants on that day.

**No Half-Price Plants** – we will not reduce plant prices towards end of sale. Prices are already good! Left over plants will either be taken home by the person who brought them, or be donated to a worthy project/organization to be determined.

**Aprons** – Eight bright colored aprons have been ordered and will be worn by members working at the sale who have extensive knowledge on plants to provide information to customers.

**Books and Yard Art** – We will also take donations of books and yard art/garden items to be sold at the plant sale. Please bring these on pricing day Friday.



## LUNCH AND LEARN BY CHARLOTTE HALL



Maria Pacheco-West introduced us to the fantastic ferns of the plant world at our March Lunch and Learn program. From the common ones to the more exotic ferns, Maria's presentation enlightened us all to the spore producing phenomenon which has been discovered in fossils that are estimated to be millions of years old.



Ferns are any nonflowering vascular plants (those that have water-conducting vessels) and possess stems, true roots, and complex leaves. However, they differ from other plants by the way in which they reproduce. They differ from seed plants in that they reproduce by spores and do not produce flowers or seeds. They spread by rhizomes. Some varieties have spore stalks instead of producing spores on the backside of the leaf. Ferns have the ability to produce both sex organs on the same gametophyte and thus self-fertilize and disperse by spores. The fern's leaf, known as a frond, originates in a furled position and is known as a fiddlehead.

Ferns are extremely diverse in nature and in size alone they can range from less than an inch to huge tree ferns that can grow to more than 50 feet. Ferns adapt to many conditions as one might find ferns in crevices of bare rock, open bogs, marshes, forests and other shady areas. Most ferns are found in warm, moist places, but some varieties can tolerate drier conditions. The resurrection fern is an example of one that endures less moisture than other ferns. It loves to grow on wood such as tree trunks. When the fern dries, it appears to be dead. But when moisture is added to the mysteriously dead appearing fern, it comes back to life – hence the name resurrection fern.

Cinnamon ferns enjoy wet and shady areas and are unique because the back of their leaves have white cottony material on them. They are a marsh plant. To transfer a cinnamon fern, it is best to dig when the fiddleheads are tight and relocate them to a similar wet and shady area.

Winter ferns are native to this area and live all year long, as a lot of ferns are dormant in winter. The winter fern can handle drier conditions and have spores on the tip of their leaves. They look a lot like the many ferns that are bought at local nurseries and especially the Kimberly Queen variety. Holly fern may also be called winter fern as it does survive the winter season but is different from the true winter fern.

Veined chain fern may grow in sunnier locations but does like a lot of moisture. It produces many spores by growing its spores on spore stalks instead of the backside of the leaf. Mariana tri-fold fern is a fast-growing, deciduous fern that gets very large, likes sun and lots of water but will not survive sitting in water. It also naturalizes well from thick spreading rhizomes. It has pale-green fronds.

Ferns such as the Boston or Kimberly fern must be taken in for the winter as they are not cold hardy. These ferns should be divided in the fall by cutting the root ball into fourths. Put in the garage for the winter, leaving the leaves alone. In the spring, plant each into new pots, water and feed. Fish emulsion is an excellent food for ferns as it does not burn. Epsom salts is another excellent food source – one tablespoon to one gallon water will furnish the much needed magnesium for good growth.

Many varieties of ferns are indigenous to this area and are not invasive. However, the Japanese climbing fern is considered to be invasive and should be avoided. It was introduced into Florida in the 1930s as an ornamental plant. It now has reached the southern area of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. As a menace, it is able to engulf shrubbery and ground covers by forming a dense canopy of vegetation.

And if this was not enough wonderful information about ferns - different varieties, growth patterns, life cycle, thriving conditions - Maria gave us a leg up on those not attending. She told us how to really impress our friends with our botanical savvy. Maria explained how to identify a veined chain fern from a sensitive fern. These two are commonly confused. Upon close examination, veined chain ferns have alternate leaves and sensitive fern has opposite leaves. Veined chain ferns also have non-spore stalks and sensitive fern produces spore stalks. So, now if you know someone who knows what a veined chain or sensitive fern looks like, impress them by distinguishing the two different varieties!!

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Also, join us next month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, April 14<sup>th</sup> for a presentation on the Wonders of Herbs with Debbie Boutelier – an expert with over 6000 volunteer hours as a master gardener. You never know what impressive information she might impart that you could use to impress your friends - again!!



Maria giving program on ferns

**See the other Master Gardener Lunch and Learn Programs in our area EVERY MONTH from 12:00-1:00, Bring a Sack Lunch, Drinks Provided:**

#### **April and May's Topics and locations:**

**Montgomery:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of EVERY month, Armory Learning Arts Center on Madison Ave. For more information: (334)270-4133.

**April: Creative Twists on Container Gardening**  
**May: Beneficial Pollinators and Native Bee's**

**Wetumpka:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of EVERY month, Elmore Co. Extension Office, 340 Queen Ann Road For more information: (334)567-6301.

**April: Wonders of Herbs**  
**May: Luscious Lawns**



**Prattville:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of EVERY month, Christ Lutheran Church, 2175 Cobbs Ford Road For more information: (334)361-7273.

**April: Growing Backyard Tomatoes**  
**May: Hydrangeas**



CAMGA  
Lunch and Learn  
Committee

## **Programs Update by Lee Borden**

On March 17 our own "bee guru" Jim Davis told us all about bees and the essential help they provide in pollinating our gardens. We learned that the average honey bee dies after 21 days when her wings literally wear out and she drops to the ground. We learned that the worker-to-be spends the first few days of its life as a "hive bee," caring for the queen and brood and regulating the temperature of the hive. We learned that the average bee produces 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey.



We learned that bees keep warm during the winter by disconnecting their wings and vibrating in a big ball, constantly rotating from the inside to the outside and then back to the inside. And we learned that bees communicate with each other about pollen sources using a "waggle dance" that tells the other bees (1) where to go in relation to the sun, (2) how far to travel (taking account of any headwind), (3) the quality of the find, (4) how much energy the trip will take.

Here are your ratings for the March meeting:

- Interesting topic? 4.92 out of 5.
- Presentation Quality: 4.97 out of 5.
- Business meeting useful? 4.44 out of 5.

Our tentative program schedule is online and available for your review at <http://bit.ly/camgaprograms>. Just remember that it is tentative!

While you're there, click at the bottom of the screen on the tab labeled "Evaluations" and you'll see the results of the evaluations you submit each month. If you're a numbers junkie, you can even "keep score" from month to month.

**April 21.** We welcome Suzanne Sikes, who will usher us gently into the fascinating world of daylilies. Several years ago Suzanne, a master gardener, took over the business her mother-in-law had built as an award-winning developer of several new hybrid daylilies. She's had extensive OJT (on-the-job training) since then, and she will share with us what she's learned about how to use daylilies, tips for helping them grow and thrive, and how to blend multiple varieties to extend their season.

**May 19.** Sue Webb will join us to talk about incorporating native plants in our landscapes.

Our projection equipment - computer and projector - have their own Google calendar, visible at <http://bit.ly/camgaequipment>. The computer and projector sit idle most of the time, and we love for CAMGA members to use them to make their gardening presentations. Contact me at [lee@divorceinfo.com](mailto:lee@divorceinfo.com) if you would like to use them. I'll make sure you know where to find the equipment and have the information you need to build your presentation, connect the equipment, and use it to help you communicate better with your audience.



# Learning Gardens

We did a little cleanup around the Shade Garden and got three holes dug for the Abelia shrubs that are part of the future butterfly garden. We also got the Abelia shrubs planted, worked on the water/shade garden, did some weeding around all of the gardens, planted some seeds, and built a trellis for early peas, etc. The herb garden and rain garden in particular benefited from some focused attention. One of the raised beds had a good cover crop growing--what to do. Pull it? Turn it under? As an experiment, we decided to pile some fresh soil on top of it. Much the same effect as turning it under, but with the added advantage of topping up the soil in the raised bed. Thanks to everybody! Mary McCroan



Lee Borden installed a trellis in the vegetable portion of the Learning Garden last week. Amanda planted some peas the week before, so it won't be long before a trellis will be needed.



Butterfly garden



Terry Chambliss working in rain garden



## CENTRAL ALABAMA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION SPRING PLANT SALE



**SATURDAY, MAY 2, 8:00-12:00**  
**TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**PARKING LOT**  
**5375 U S HWY 231, WETUMPKA, AL**



Great prices and plant selections:  
Annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, vegetables, herbs  
House plants, garden items, and soil test kits available  
Gardening questions answered by on-site Master Gardeners

### Small Fruit and Grape Workshop with Muscadine Pruning and Vineyard Trellis Installment Demonstration



**Thursday, April 2 at 2:00 pm**

**Chilton Research and Extension Center (CREC), Clanton, AL**

A small fruit and grape workshop with hands-on muscadine pruning and vineyard trellis installment demonstration will be held at the Chilton Research and Extension Center (CREC) this Thursday, April 2 at 2:00 pm.

#### Topics and speakers include:

Muscadine Pruning and Trellis Installment Demonstrations – Jim Pitts  
Disease Management in Grapes and Other Small Fruits – Kassie Conner  
Blackberry Production Update – Gary Gray  
Muscadine and Hybrid Bunch Grape Production – Elina Coneva

This meeting is free and open to the public.

The CREC is located at 120 Co. Rd. 756, Clanton, AL 35045.

For more information, contact Gary Gray (334) 539-2128, Elina Coneva (334) 750-0752 or the CREC at (205) 646-3610. We hope you can join us, Gary  
Regional Extension Agent, Commercial Horticulture  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System  
C. Beatty Hanna Horticulture and Environmental Center  
2612 Lane Park Road  
Birmingham, AL 35223-1802  
(334)539-2128 - Cell

Hi there!

Please consider, after you have given your extra pots to CAMGA for the plant sale, to let me have any of your extras.

I ask for pots about every three years for the Lanark plant sales as well as to just use for general propagation.

You can bring them to the AWF office and ask for me or drop them off in my office or take them (if you know where it is) to my holding area for pots. Thanks so much, in advance, for any pots that you can spare! I promise to put them to good use!

Maria



CAMGA members, Marie Updike and Mary Long helped present a flower arranging class to the Montgomery Federation of Garden Clubs. Two instructors from Phenix City, Barbara Anthony (left) and Martha Burkhalter (right) instructed the class on elements of design and making a creative line flower arrangement. Mary brought a line design to display and Marie brought flowers and vase and made an arrangement during the class. The Montgomery Federation is trying to encourage more people to get interested in entering designs in the fall flower show at the Alabama National Fair and developing a love for flower arranging.

**HELPLINE NEWS MARCH 2015**

By Mary Ann Hatcher



Interns Joyce Vella and Don Hoover assist clients over the phones.

Sharon Potts deserves special recognition for her contributions behind the scene of the Helpline. She began to work with the Helpline in the Spring of 2008 emailing and calling volunteers week after week throughout the growing season. Sharon's efforts were of immense help to Amanda Edwards, chairperson through the 2012 season; and then to myself, current chairperson. She let us know whether volunteers responded or were unavailable to work for the upcoming week so alternate plans

could be made. She has done this throughout personal and family health issues. Thank you, Sharon, for your contributions to make the Helpline a success.

The Helpline started busily and has remained that way responding to calls about weeds, pruning, fruit trees, and lawns. Sharon Cleary, Don Hoover, Joyce Vella, Terry Chambliss, Rod Douglas worked the Helpline as Interns. Ricky Hatcher worked as a Master Gardener. Serving as Advisors were John R. Barnes and Mary Ann Hatcher. Sharon Potts was our Appointment Reminder. Thank you all!



March through August the Alabama Cooperative Extension System offers a Gardening Helpline for the general public each Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. This helpline is operated by Master Gardener volunteers who use research based information to best answer all of your gardening questions.

**If you know someone with home garden questions, tell them to Call 1-877-252-GROW (4769)**



## Photos from the 2015 AMGA Annual Meeting and Conference Cullman, Alabama March 23, 24, 25

Rhona at roundtable panel



Rhona and Beck



Becky and Bonnie  
with terrariums made  
at conference



Banquet



Day session



Charlotte  
won auction



Mallory





***Congratulations, Rhona Watson*** who has been awarded, *Advanced Alabama Master Gardener Certification*, in the program of “*Seed starting and Harvesting*”.

Even before earning her “Master Gardener” certification in 2005, Rhona was interested in plant propagation, especially seeds. She has said, “I like seeds because you can grow different plants that are not available locally.” She is especially well versed in “*seed starting and harvesting*”, as it is a subject she has thoroughly studied and practiced for years. This passion, has allowed her to earn the title of *Advanced Alabama Master Gardener* in the subject. Hopefully, you have heard her presentation on “seed-starting” at our CAMGA and other local Lunch & Learn events, or attended her presentation

and hands-on seed-starting class.

While living in Florida, she once grew Orchids in trees, where she and her husband developed a misting system to water the beautiful plants where they were growing – up in the trees. Currently, she has a cold frame, greenhouse, Japanese garden and bonsai’s, along with many other plants of interest in her personal gardens.

There are other gardening interests that have captured her attention as well as can be seen through the classes she has taught to other Master Gardeners and to the public. Rhona learns from a combination of experiences and has attended classes, researched and prepared her own PowerPoint slides for presentations on seeds, plant propagation, bonsai, composting, and Japanese Gardens. Making the classes as much fun and as informative as they are, is a special gift she possesses and shares with the rest of us.



## PLANT SALE REMINDER

Start vegetable seedlings so they’ll be ready for our plant sale on May 2. If started now they will be a good size and will be ready to set out. Also dig perennials and put them in pots so they will look fresh and vigorous. We hope to have the best sale ever this year!!

## Governor's Mansion Report by Amanda Borden

CAMGA volunteers at the Governor's Mansion got the month of March off to an auspicious beginning by working together on several major projects: Cutting down crepe myrtles and an overgrown yaupon holly (necessary to open a portion of the grounds to sunlight); pruning roses and Japanese maples; and relocating azaleas and hydrangeas. Also during March volunteers cut back sago palms in the pool area and weeded the herb garden, the boxwood bed bordering the driveway, and the bed in the southeast corner of the grounds.



### NEW TIMES!

**Mondays  
8 a.m. - 11 a.m.**

(Don't forget to sign up the Friday before)

L-R: Attending the work day were Jim Davis, John Barnes, Terry Chambliss, Jane McCarthy, Peggy Funk, Rhonda Miles, Candy Jones, Daphne Nations, Linda Griebel. (Not pictured: Connie Willis)



John Barnes, Amanda Borden, and Rosemary Mobley transplant azaleas.



Jim Davis and Lee Borden cut down a Yaupon Holly.



## Featured Plant of the Month - APRIL By Jane Mobley

### Felt Fern



I don't know about you, but I usually find it hard to get excited about ground covers. They are really beneficial in preventing erosion and limiting weeds in many of our yards, however, especially in the yards that tend to be sloped. (Can you say impact of an impact crater?) And, when those yards are also shady, ground covers are almost a must. A new find has gotten my attention lately, and I hope that it will interest you. That find is the felt fern, *Pyrrosia hastata*. I think that I like it so much because it is rather strange looking.

The felt fern is a fern, but it does not resemble one much. The fronds are 6-8 inches wide and up to 16 inches in length. They are stiff, dense, leathery, and often trilobed. The top of the blade almost looks waxed. The underside of each blade displays a mat of brown hairs, hence the "felt" in the name. This fern is hardy in zones 8-10.

This is an evergreen fern that can survive the dry. Although it prefers rich, evenly moist soil, it is drought tolerant and heat tolerant. Survival on rocks is possible if the fern gets summer watering. It can be grown in part shade to full shade, but bright shade is best. Variegated forms add interest in the shade. It is grown in clumps for foliage and has no flowers as it is a fern. Propagation is by division of the rhizomes. The plant grows to 14 inches high and 24 inches wide. Growth is slow. One neat characteristic is that it really likes to grow uphill and will grow much better if placed in such a site.

Mine have been planted just under a year, and they have survived the winter chill just fine. The only thing that I noticed was a slight browning on a few of the fronds after the coldest nights. I am looking forward to watching them spread.

## HERB WALK

Don't forget that this coming Saturday, 4/4, the day for our herb walk with Darryl Patton at Lanark. We start walking at 9am; so, be there a little before 9. Maria will lock the gate when we start walking. Don't be late! We will pull over on the road in front of the gate until she unlocks it for us to enter. Then we will pull in and park at the big house.

Wear long pants and shoes to tromp in the mud. You might want a hat, sunscreen, or bug repellent. A camera and notebook and pen would be nice. Bring a couple of snacks and water to drink while we walk for 3 hours. Having a backpack on might be the best idea for carrying snacks. At 12 we will eat lunch and have a question and answer time. Bring your lunch if you want to take part in that. Maria will have cold water at lunch. The bathrooms will be open.

Looking forward to seeing you there! Jane

## STARS & ADVANCED MG & BONSAI CLASS



Maria Pacheco-West with Advanced Master Gardener Certificates in three areas: ferns, hydrangeas, and Southern heirloom gardens.



Bronze star to Brenda Bernal and a gold star to Virginia Pruitt. These stars are representative of volunteer service hours. Congratulations to Brenda and Virginia!



Bonsai class taught by Rhona Watson



# Grafting

## Workshop

***"Grafting Fruits and Nuts and Anything in Between"***

Hosted by the  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

**Thursday, April 16, 2015**  
**Alexander City, Alabama**  
**9:00-11:00 a.m.**



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**LEARN HOW TO GRAFT FRUIT TREES,  
PECANS, AND ANYTHING IN BETWEEN**

**THIS WILL BE A HANDS-ON ACTIVITY!**

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To sign-up or for more information, contact the  
Tallapoosa County Extension office at 256-825-1050.  
There is No Cost to attend, but pre-registration is  
required by Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Directions to grafting workshop**

**From Alexander City**

Travel West on highway 22. Turn right on 259 and travel to the 9 mile marker. Turn left onto Coosa 12 and travel 300 yards. Turn left onto Holloway Mill Road (Neighbors Road) for ½ mile.



## All Bugs Good and Bad 2015 Webinar Series

Please join us for this webinar series for information you can use about good and bad insects. Webinars will be on the first Friday of each month at 2 p.m. Eastern.

- February 6** Pesticide Strategy: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly  
*Kaci Buhl*
- March 6** Fire Ant Management Using Baits  
*Dr. Lawrence "Fudd" Graham*
- April 3** Common Termites of the United States: Biology, Behavior, and Management  
*Dr. Robert Puckett*
- May 1** Beneficial Garden Helpers  
*Dr. Kris Braman*
- June 5** Insect-borne Diseases Affecting People  
*Dr. Nathan Burkett-Cadena*
- August 7** Management of Japanese Beetles and Other White Grubs  
*Dr. Juang-Horng "J.C." Chong*
- September 4** Bees, Wasps and Hornets - They're All Different  
*Dr. Charles Ray*
- October 2** Keep Ants and Cockroaches from Ruining Your Holidays  
*Elizabeth "Wizzie" Brown*
- November 6** Let's Beat the Bug! New Things to Know about Bed Bugs  
*Dr. Stephen Kells*
- December 4** Wildlife in the Backyard - a Double-edged Sword  
*Dr. Scott Hygnstrom*



For more information on the series and how to connect to the webinars, visit: [extension.org/pages/72197](http://extension.org/pages/72197).



Citations for pictures: top banner: Jim O'Leary, BugPics, bugwood.org; Jerry A. Payne, USDA-ARS, bugwood.org; Nader Younis, TN State Univ.; USDA-ARS Photo Unit, USDA-ARS, bugwood.org; David Cappaert, Michigan State University, bugwood.org; Stargis McKeown, Georgia Southern University, bugwood.org.

## **Note from Ann Hill: Directories are ready for pick up!**

**Members who still need to pick up their directories in the CAMGA Office at Extension:**

Sandi Adkinson, Melanie Barry , Jerry Belcher, Bob Burgett, Sandy Casey, Robin Culver, Sheldon Darnell, Richard Hall, Karen Hammac, Don Hoover, Dale Hurst, Wanda Ivey, Debbie Kelso, Sally & Joe L'Abbe, Janet Lewis, Corinne Lauridson. James May, Pat McCuller, Melissa Nannini, Barbara Olds, Virginia Pruitt, Sherry Scott. Betty Stricker. Darla Tiesing. Marie Updike, Sheila Ward, and Jo Weitman.

**IF YOUR NAME IS LISTED ABOVE PLEASE COME BY THE EXTENSION OFFICE TO PICK UP YOUR DIRECTORY. THEY ARE IN A BOX IN THE CAMGA OFFICE. CHECK FOR YOUR NAME ON THE PRINTED LABEL ON YOUR DIRECTORY SO YOU PICK UP THE CORRECT ONE. THANK YOU!**

**CAMGA *Garden Buzzzz***

**Mary Long— Editor**

858 Jackson Street

Elmore, Alabama 36025

plantlady@elmore.rr.com



## **NEXT MEETING**

**APRIL 21**

**DAYLILIES WITH  
SUZANNE SIKES**

**10 A.M.  
EXTENSION OFFICE  
AUDITORIUM**