



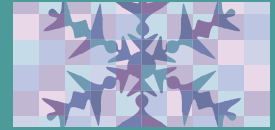
GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 26 Issue 1 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association

January 2017

Message from: Rhona Watson
CAMGA President



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

Our Christmas Party was a great success, thanks to all of the outstanding food everyone brought, and the ham and turkey, Sandy Rosamond found for us. It was great to get together, and celebrate all we have accomplished during the year.

Not much to do outside in January, so I satisfy my gardening itch by planting seeds in doors. First I make a plan to schedule when to start the seeds based on the time it takes each plant to be ready to go outdoors. Then I pull out the grow lights and start planting, a new batch every three weeks until March for the plants that only need 3 or 4 weeks.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Toby Hemenway who was scheduled to speak at our seminar in February. Although our seminar was cancelled, I would like to thank the team that was organizing the seminar. There were impressive plans for a day of information, food, decorations, and door prizes.

This year will be exciting with our learning gardens, and now our Farmbot. Lee Borden has agreed to head the committee, and there is a lot to accomplish before it arrives sometime in February. The Farmbot is a collaboration between CAMGA and the Extension office. We are splitting the cost of the equipment and the construction that needs to be done before it arrives. We are fortunate to have Johan Beumer heading up the construction of the fence and beds.

If you have not looked at our website lately it is very professional and up to date. There are informative articles on both Toby Hemenway, and the Farmbot, I encourage you to take a look. The website address is <http://camga.net/>

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CAMGA Garden Buzzzz

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Message from: Rhona Watson
CAMGA President — (Continued)



The picture this month is of a key hole garden. I learned about this in Toby Hemenway's book "Gaia's Garden". It is a way to save space, and the center path gives easy access to all the plants.

There are radishes and clover planted, as a cover crop to enrich the soil, where the vegetable plants will go in the spring. This is the first time I have tried a cover crop so we will see how that goes.

In the background is a "Red Dragon" Japanese maple, that I love. It is just as impressive in the winter with the structure of the branches, as when it has leaves in the summer. Even in the winter

YOUR FAVORITE GARDEN SHOULD BE YOUR OWN

Rhona

Message from Mallory

Mallory Kelley

Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests

Starting Seeds Indoors



Many home gardeners become discouraged starting their seeds indoors because the plants become weak, spindly, leggy or even die of diseases. It's not that difficult to grow good quality seedlings at home, but there are some important things you need to know before you begin to ensure success.

When asking yourself, "Is it time to sow seeds?" It is always better to lean on the side of being too late rather than too early. Keep in mind that you can continue to grow seeds throughout the summer to have a succession of vegetables in your garden rather than planting them all at once. When picking a start date to start seeds, calculate based on the average date of the last frost for your area. Then according to the seeds you are growing count back the number of weeks to when you should sow. Plants like beans, okra, carrots and corn should be seeded directly into the soil, but other plants like tomatoes, eggplant and peppers respond well to a head start indoors.

One advantage to starting seeds indoors is that you can order from a reputable source and select varieties that you would most likely not be able to find in the garden centers. From the "heirloom" varieties to the latest hybrids, starting seeds indoors opens a whole new world of plant varieties and types of vegetables to try.

Now that you have the seeds and know when to sow them, what should you sow them in?

Select containers that provide good drainage. If you use containers you have previously grown plants in, it is best to wash them in a 10% bleach solution to remove any fungi or bacteria. Then select a growing media that is sterile and free of weed seed. It is best to start seeds in a media that is labeled "Seed Starter Media." Always make sure to moisten the soil well before you sow any seeds and prepare all of your labels to identify your plants ahead of time.

Very few seeds need light to germinate so it is not necessary to provide light to the media and seeds until after they germinate. If the seeds are very tiny you may want to cover them lightly with vermiculite. As a rule of thumb, plant seeds a depth of two and a half times the diameter of the seed.

For good germination, the seeds will need warm soil and humidity. To create the humidity place a clear plastic bag over the container or a clear lid to hold in the humidity. If you see water dripping inside it is too hot and wet and could cause disease problems so make sure to vent the lid or cover if it is too warm.

The best place in the home to put your container with seeds is on a warming pad to warm the soil or if you do not have a warming pad place the planted container on top of your refrigerator. Your seeds will need to remain moist and humid and should begin to germination in 10-12 days.



Message from Mallory
Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds, Gardens, Home Pests

Once the seedlings germinate you can remove the cover that you have over them creating the humidity and place them directly under lights as close as you can without touching for 14-16 constant hours to prevent them from becoming long and leggy. No fertilizer is needed until after the first set of true leaves appear. Then use a water soluble fertilizer at half strength every 2-3 weeks.

If you sow the seeds in very small cell packs or sow all of the seeds together in one container you would then need to transplant them into bigger containers as they grow. This transplanting should be done early and carefully to avoid damaging the plants delicate roots and stems. Then once your plants get larger and stronger and it is close to planting time outdoors you should begin to harden off your plants by taking them outside for a few hours a day and bringing them back indoors. This is done to prepare young plants for the harsher environments outdoors such as the full sun, wind, and varying moisture.

When the day finally arrives to plant outdoors, a cloudy day with little wind is the most ideal.

CAMGA Minutes December 2016 Anida Wishnietsky — Co-Secretary



The December 2016, Central Alabama Master Gardeners' Association (CAMGA) meeting was held December 20, 2016, at Mulder Church in Wetumpka. Rhona Watson called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. This was our annual holiday party/meeting.

PROGRAM: February 15th seminar with Toby Hemenway had to be canceled due to the main speaker being diagnosed with terminal cancer. The Civic Center returned our deposit and all admission money has been returned. See Janet Lewis if you have not yet gotten a refund of your purchased tickets.

BUSINESS:

Rhona announced that peanut butter and cash was being collected for the Elmore County Food Pantry today.

ACES 2017 calendars were being sold at cost for \$5.

Rhona reminded everyone to input their volunteer hours by the end of December to count toward stars/badges. To get stars you only need to be a local member but to earn a badge you need to also pay state dues.

Quail Hollow is offering Japanese maple grafting classes next year for \$195 which includes going home with ten trees you've grafted. For more info go to <https://quailhollowgardens.com> or contact Rhona Watson.

Anyone interested in long leaf pine seedlings needs to see Johan Beumer.

Rhona thanked Sandy Rosamond for bringing the ham and turkey.

An update on CAMGA members Phil Easter and Tom Jaworowski was given. They were missed at our December meeting.

The group was advised that Master Gardener Susan Mims passed away November 30, 2016.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Becky Ashurst gave the Treasurer's Report for November 2016. The balance as of November 30, 2016 was \$13,628.34. Total expenditures for November were \$415.32 and total credits were \$1302. The Treasurer's report was approved by acclamation. Becky reminded everyone that \$20 annual dues are due in December. Please make checks out to CAMGA. Also, **let Becky Ashurst know if you have a new email, address or phone number** so it will get in the directory.

MINUTES: The November Minutes published in the December Newsletter was approved by acclamation.



December 2016 Minutes Continued

Anida Wishnietsky— Co-Secretary

FARMBOT: Lee Borden is the CAMGA project lead for farmbot which is a joint project with the Elmore County Extension Office to test a robotic system for planting, watering, fertilizing and weeding a raised bed garden. Lee Borden and Mary McCroan explained that two of the three magnolia trees would be removed at Extension and a privacy fence would be put around the area where the farmbot would go as well as around a new quail hatching area. The farmbot would work one raised bed while next to it would be a control raised bed for comparison. At some point the farmbot would work both beds. Go to farmbot.io for more detailed information. Johan Beumer and his team will do the construction work. Katrina Mitchell will be installing webcams for security and will check on adding an insurance rider. There was a discussion on how to keep the area cool in the summer.

PROGRAMS: The January program organized by Sandy Rosamond will be a surprise.

ACES: Mallory Kelley pointed out that the 2017 Lunch and Learn schedule was out and asked everyone to invite new people to attend since this is a good way to recruit for the new master gardener class. There are still spots open in the upcoming Montgomery class. If you ordered badges, Mallory will bring them to the January meeting. Mallory also reminded everyone to get their hours recorded since volunteer hours justify the master gardener program.

SWEARING IN OF 2017 OFFICERS: Candy Jones swore in the officers who were present: Rhona Watson, Sandy Rosamond, and Rhonda Miles.

2017 Officers are: President - Rhona Watson, Vice-President - Sandy Rosamond, Secretary - Iva Haynie, Treasurer - Bill Quails, and Advisory Committee Representative - Rhonda Miles.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m. Thirty eight attendees were at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Anida Wishnietsky, Co-Secretary

Lunch and Learn Program December 2016 By: Carla McCune



“Christmas Decorating Maria Style”

Our last Lunch and Learn for 2016 was terrific with Maria Pacheco-West from Lanark showing us that we can make our homes beautiful for the holidays or anytime with fresh greenery, berries and flowers right from our own yards.

She began by showing us how to use an oasis or a frog to arrange our greenery. Her first arrangements were done using an oasis. She explained the importance of allowing the oasis to become completely saturated with water prior to starting to fill it with any of the cuttings. She also suggested submerging the fresh cut greens/flowers in warm water and re-cutting the stems while submerged, she stated this allows them to absorb more of the water which will prolong their life and thus that of the arrangement in which they are used.

Maria used a variety of greens, berries, vines, and various other wonderful items found on the grounds and in the gardens of Lanark to put together lovely arrangements that would enhance any holiday décor. She told us her favorite berries are those of the holly (female has the berries) for the longevity and pretty greenery. Her next favorite would be nandina.

She loves the berries and the foliage. And last is pyrocantha. The pyrocantha loses its berries quickly and the shrub as Marie puts it is “pokey”. It has long thorns that make it uncomfortable to work with. Among her favorite greenery is the variegated pittosporum. It is sturdy, long lived, has great color, and lends itself to being a great backdrop of color and texture. She also showed us many wonderful ways to use boxwood, Rosemary, wax myrtle, Texas sage, gold and yellow chrysanthemum, pine cones and of course the southern favorites magnolia and camellia among many others. She also pointed out this year due to our lack of frost the woods may have some beautiful red huckleberry foliage for us if we look carefully.

Another particularly lovely red tipped plant Maria uses in arrangements that grows prolifically at Lanark is photinia. This plant gets very large, is easily grown and is the mother plant to the hybrid we know as “red tip”. This plant’s stems are green with red tips in fall and spring that add color to arrangements.

Maria says there is nothing wrong with using spray paint! A little mist of spray paint can enhance an already lovely texture or color, perhaps one that has begun to fade a bit. So, there is nothing wrong with a little artificial “pick-me-up” in natural arrangements!

Some of the surprises Maria had on her list of useful Christmas greens included elaeagnus. She likes it for its lovely gray green color on the front of the leaves and the silvery gray color on the back of the leaves. It is also handsome, tall, and sturdy as a back drop in large arrangements.



Lunch and Learn Program (Continued)

December 2016

By: Carla McCune

Another surprise Maria had in store for us was a vine known as smilax! The bane of many gardeners' existence! Might as well use it for something worthwhile! Maria described using it over a doorway or on a mantle, perhaps misted with a little bronze or silver spray paint. It actually sounded rather romantic. Who knew?!

A question from an attendee prompted a grand discussion on rooting camellias and the required precautions and uses of rooting hormone. Maria was very generous sharing her knowledge and experience with the group about raising camellias from stems to blooms.

One subject Maria was eager to share with our group was a recent discovery of hers on how to keep our neighbors, the deer, from eating (to a nub) the sweet greenery we use in our arrangements! She was excited with her new discovery of Milorgannite. This product comes from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She has used it on her current winter vegetable garden and NO deer have touched it unlike past years when they have eaten it to nothing! Thus far she recommends it highly!



***“Christmas Decorating
Maria Style”
Presented by Maria Pacheco-West
December 2016 Lunch & Learn***

All together “Christmas Decorating Maria Style” was a wonderful way to end our 2016 Lunch and Learn series. We look forward to hearing from Maria again in January when she shares a month to month look at how to maintain the garden.

Thanks to all who have joined us for our 2016 adventures in our Lunch and Learn Garden. We look forward to seeing all of you and your friends in 2017!

Happy New Year from the Lunch and Learn crew!



Governor's Mansion Report For December 2016 By: Amanda Borden



At the Governor's Mansion in December, all thoughts turned to preparing for the Christmas tours. The Monday morning gardening group was asked to decorate the sunroom for the tours. Members of the group met at Jane McCarthy's house to construct the decorations. All were made using natural materials, as follows: Chestnut balls, okra pods, cotton bolls, gourds, pine cones, smilax, acorns, magnolia leaves, hickory nuts, oak twigs, butterfly vine pods, cast Iron leaves, yucca leaves, Virginia cedar branches, nandina branches, and palm leaves.



(L-R) Allyson Ludington, Amanda Borden, Jean Szabo, Kathy Quinn, Mirenda Tatum, Sandy Rosamond



Later the group gathered in the sunroom of the Mansion to install the decorations, returning weekly to replace dried-out greenery. They enjoyed having the opportunity to see their handiwork during the Governor's Christmas reception on December 14.

(L-R) Mirenda Tatum, Melanie Barry, Jean Szabo, Peggy Funk, Kathy Quinn, Amy Richardson



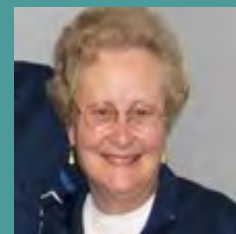
(L-R) **Row One:** Peggy Funk, Jane McCarthy, Sandy Rosamond. **Row Two:** Elliot Ludington, Oliver Ludington. **Row Three:** Amanda Borden, Bradley Ludington, Allyson Ludington, Mirenda Tatum, Jean Szabo, Jean Smyth



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

For Month of December 2016

By Judy May



Present for the Projects Committee meeting December 12 were John Barnes, Mary McCroan, Linda Edwards, Laurie Weldon, Janet Lewis, Jesse Miles, Leslie Bingham, Sharon Potts, Rhona Watson, Johan Beumer, Lee Weldon and Katrina Mitchell.

The Lunch and Learn Program December 13th was “Decorating Maria Style” with Maria Pacheco-West presenting. There were 19 attendees, fourteen of them Master Gardeners. Assisting were Sandi Adkison, Debbie Kelso, Carla McCune and Bill Quailles.

Volunteers at the Governor’s mansion this month were Melanie Barry, Amanda Borden, Jane McCarthy, Amy Richardson and Sandy Rosamond.

Mary McCroan did a Lunch and Learn program in Montgomery on December 7 on “Selection and Care of Gardening Tools”. Approximately 30 people attended.

Helping Maria at Lanark this month were interns Paul Richardson, Cheri Cook, and Lanell Tatum who helped with some winter projects. Ann Hill, Carla McCune and Leslie Bingham, Peggy Gelpi and Don Hoover helped with weekly garden chores.

Maria has some big winter projects planned and would love your help. Transplanting Spider Lily and Daffodil bulbs, pruning and rooting roses, digging up plants from the woods for spring plant sale and pruning and rooting many other plants including camellias is on Maria’s agenda. Come help Maria and take some new plants home. Just call 657-9414.

We owe a special thank you to Carol Rattan for arranging for our Christmas meeting/luncheon at Mulder Memorial Church, and to those who set up and decorated.

LEARNING GARDEN

By: Mary McCroan



Gardening in December has been a quiet affair with a little weeding, some cutting back of perennials and a pretty nice reward for earlier effort in the form of yummy harvests of collards, broccoli, turnips, cauliflower, etc. The mild fall weather has been very favorable toward delicious fall veggies as pictured this page.

So far everything has survived the few frosts that we've experienced. No surprise that the collards are so sturdy. But happily, so far our newest experiment--the rhubarb--is doing well also.



Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming Pruning Workshop
Green Thumb Nursery
February 18th at 10:00 a.m.
4211 Troy Highway, Montgomery, AL
334-288-1414

"To prune or not to prune". The end of February and first of March is a great time to prune most, but not all of your trees and shrubs. Charles Harwell will give a hands on demonstration of pruning various plants. Plan to attend this free workshop.

Submitted by: Master Gardener Marie Updike

Don't Forget To Pay Dues!

Just a reminder if you haven't paid your dues, the cost for (State & Local) dues are \$20.00
 Local Dues only are \$12.00
 (Interns do not have to pay)

Please make checks payable to CAMGA

Mail to:
Becky Ashurst
775 Morgan Trace
Wetumpka, AL 36093

Master Gardeners Association

LUNCH & LEARN 2017

2ND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

12:00-1:00 P.M.

FREE PROGRAMS

Elmore County Extension Office
340 Queen Ann Road, Wetumpka 36092

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 10 January | Monthly Gardening at a Glance
Maria Pacheco-West
Advanced Master Gardener |
| 14 February | Pruning Pointers
Dr. Chip East, Horticulturist, ACES |
| 14 March | Gardening without Injury
Bill Jackson, PT Solutions |
| 11 April | Backyard Tomatoes
Mallory Kelley, Horticulturist, ACES |
| 9 May | Propagating Plants
Rhona Watson
Advanced Master Gardener |
| 13 June | Hydrangeas
Rhonda Flowers, Aldridge Gardens |
| 11 July | Name that Tree- Tree Identification
Patrick Cook, Autauga Forestry
Commission |
| 8 August | Preserving your Garden's Bounty
Janet Johnson,
Food Preservationist, ACES |
| 12 September | Fall Gardening and Harvest
Lee and Amanda Borden, Advanced
Master Gardeners |
| 10 October | Sweet & Sour Facts of Citrus
Dr. Arlie Powell, Petals From the Past |
| 14 November | Holiday Plants & Forcing Bulbs
Karen Webber, Master Gardener |
| 12 December | Orchids
Judy May, Master Gardener |



Deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Susan Mims. Susan passed away November 30, 2016. Susan became involved in the Master Gardener Program in 2000 and served as President of the Central Alabama Master Gardener Association in the year 2004. She will be missed.

Calendar of Events

January 2017

Sun

Mon


Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1 <i>Happy New Year!</i> 	2	3	4 <i>Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</i>	5 <i>Elmore County Extension Office Learning Gardens Workday 8 to 12 Noon</i>	6	7
8	9 <i>Governor's Mansion Work Day 8 to 11 a.m.</i>	10 <i>Lunch & Learn Elmore Co. Extension Office 12 noon to 1 p.m.</i>	11 <i>Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</i>	12 <i>Elmore County Extension Office Learning Gardens Workday 8 to 12 Noon</i>	13	14
15	16 <i>Governor's Mansion Work Day 8 to 11 a.m.</i>	17 <i>CAMGA Meeting 10 a.m. to 12 noon — Elmore Co. Extension Office</i>	18 <i>Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</i>	19 <i>Elmore County Extension Office Learning Gardens Workday 8 to 12 Noon</i>	20	21
22	23 <i>Governor's Mansion Work Day 8 to 11 a.m.</i>	24	25 <i>Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon</i>	26 <i>Elmore County Extension Office Learning Gardens Workday 8 to 12 Noon</i>	27	28
29	30 <i>Governor's Mansion Work Day 8 to 11 a.m.</i>	31				