



GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 26 Issue 12 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association

December 2017



Message from:

Rhona Watson
CAMGA President



Finally the leaves are changing and my Japanese Maples are putting on an awesome show. There is lots to do in the yard this month, I have been enjoying the cooler weather, while spreading pine straw, and raking leaves. It is amazing how much pine straw makes the garden look neater and sets off the plants that are still blooming and the changing colors of the trees. I am working on my routine for making compost for next spring. I have a blower that mulches the leaves, and clean up the old foliage of vegetables to add green matter. I also use the mulched leaves, sphagnum moss and compost to make new beds for next year. The first seed catalog came in this week so I will also be working on my plans for next

year's garden, and the plant sale.

Jane Mobley did a very informative and interesting presentation on color in the landscape. It was perfect timing for me as I think about what I am planning for the garden next year. Thanks Jane for doing the research and putting together another educational, and enlightening presentation for our meeting.

Our annual Christmas Party will be on December 5th. This is our chance to thank all of our members for the work they have done all year. We can all be proud of the board members and committee chairs, and what we have accomplished. We are doing something different with the food this year. CAMGA will supply some delicious finger foods, and the members will bring sides and deserts. It should be a delicious combination, so please join us for some great food, and help celebrate the season with our members.

The day of the party will be your last chance to pay dues, and still be in the directory. You can contact Anida Wishnietsky, or Cathy Whigham if there are any questions. Also please get all of your hours recorded in the computer by January 1st.

One important change we are working on, is having teams in charge of the different areas so there is not as much responsibility on one person, and more people can participate. Mary McCroan, who does an awesome job overseeing the learning garden, has had volunteers for different beds and areas to spread some of the work.



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CAMGA Garden Buzzzzz
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Message from: Rhona Watson
CAMGA President — (Continued)



Robin Snyder, and Lee Ann Moran have been an effective team organizing everything that has to be done including food, presenters and tests for the Intern class. Several of the interns have commented the food was way above their expectations.

Next year Jane Mobley and Terry Chambliss have agreed to team up to lead the projects committee. Let us know what you are interested in so you can learn more and be a part of our success, in keeping the organization moving forward with new ideas

The picture this month is a Chinese Pistache. It is a medium size tree and very hardy in our area. The fall foliage turns a beautiful gold, the leaves turn color slower than most trees so it's beauty lasts for a lengthy amount of time. This tree is 11 years old, and I bought it to commemorate a wonderful German Shepard that had died, so it will always be Sam's tree to me.

December is the perfect time to start planning for next year, so look at magazines and seed catalogs and use your imagination.

MAKE YOUR FAVORITE GARDEN YOUR OWN

Rhona



**Rhona's beautiful Chinese Pistache Tree
In memory of her German Shepard—"Sam"**



Message from Mallory

Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds, Gar-
dens, Home Pests



Growing Camellias



Did you know that the camellia is the state flower of Alabama? I find this most fitting as we can grow this evergreen flowering shrub quite easily and there are varieties that bloom 3 out of the 4 seasons (except summer) in our Alabama climate. Not only are they easy to grow in Alabama, but did you know that the sweet tea we southerners love to drink comes from the camellia genus, a relative of the camellias we have growing in our landscapes.

Each year you may notice there are more and more varieties of flower forms, new hybrids, seedlings, and hardier species. Even though we can have camellias flowering in Alabama September through March, not every variety of Camellia is suitable to our climate (Zone 7-8) in central Alabama so do your research on varieties before purchasing.

Some camellias can be grown in full sun, although most grow and produce better flowers in partial shade where the blooms and foliage are protected from sunburn. A site under pine trees is ideal as they provide filtered light year-round for growth, winter protection and natural mulch from the pine needles.

Camellias do best in soils that are acid (pH 5.0 to 6.5) and do poorly in alkaline conditions (pH above 7.0). Camellias require only light pruning, if any, to remove dead wood and to thin inside limbs to increase air movement. The best time to prune is after blooming and before new flower and vegetative buds form.

As for problems on camellias, the most common is flower blight (also called petal blight) and tea scale. The flower blight is caused by a fungus that infects only the flower tissue of camellias and does not spread from flower to flower. It is characterized by brown spots on the petals that spread rapidly to engulf the whole bloom. Infected blooms fall to the ground where the fungus will overwinter until the following year. This fungus can lie dormant in the soil up to 4 years. When warm and humid conditions occur, small, dime-sized, brownish-gray mushrooms form and produce the fungal spores that will infect the blooms. A community effort is needed to collect these mushrooms as the spores can be carried by wind for half a mile or more. It is prevalent and most active in humid areas when the temperatures range between 45 degrees F and 70 degrees F when the camellias are in bloom.

Tea Scale insects are the most significant pests of camellias. They pierce the leaves and twigs and suck out the plant juices. This stunts and weakens the camellia and hurts the appearance of the foliage. Yellow splotches appear on the upper side of the leaves, while the underside is covered with a cottony mass. For control of scales you can use Horticultural oil sprays which should be reapplied often and must make direct contact with the scales or you can use systemic insecticides, such as imidacloprid which is an insecticide drench that is taken up by the roots and ingested when the scales feed on the leaves.

If you live in Alabama and do not already have a camellia growing in your yard, I encourage you to add one to your landscape. They can add beautiful color almost any time of the year.



CAMGA Minutes November 2017 Iva Haynie, October



The Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association held its regular monthly meeting on November 21, 2017 at the Extension Auditorium. The president called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. There were 32 attendees.

Jane Mobley, who stepped in to do the program because the scheduled speaker was sick, presented an excellent program on "Landscaping With Color."

After a break, the business portion of the meeting was conducted. The president noted that the L'Abbes had brought some peppers and egg plant to share. She also noted that dues and hours are due. The hours are due by December 31. Membership forms are available. If you have questions, see either Cathy Whigham or Anida Wishnietsky.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved by acclamation. Bill Quailes gave the treasurers report. The balance as of September 30 was \$9,715.91. There was income of \$304 and expenditures of \$126.96, leaving a balance at the end of October of \$9,892.95. The report was approved by acclamation.

There is a need to purchase tires for the wheel barrow and cart. Bonnie McCormick made a motion to approve up to \$150 for this purpose and Sally L'Abbe seconded. The motion carried.

The interns who were present were recognized and given an opportunity to state where they would like to be involved.

A sign up sheet was passed around to sign up to bring refreshments for the meetings for the next 5 months. The Christmas party will be held at Mulder United Methodist Church with the meeting beginning at 10 a.m. A sign up sheet was passed for attendance and help with set up, clean up and food.

Lee Ann Marona had asked for funds to purchase books for the library. The board approved \$300 for six months.

Rhonda reported on the Advisory Council. She said Charles Ray wants unusual insects.

The State Conference will be May 3-8 in Birmingham. You may apply in January. We need an item for the silent auction. Sherrie Schaefer has agreed to chair the plant sale. We will do some things a little different. We plan to make some planters and ask members what kinds of plants they plan to bring.

There is a bag of seeds in the library if anyone wants some.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Iva Haynie, Secretary

2018 Membership Form**Due: December 5, 2017***

Please give or mail this completed form and dues to Treasurer,
 Bill Quailes
 1060 Redbud Road
 Titus, AL 36080

**Dues are:**

\$ 20 for state and local (full active membership)

\$ 12 local *or* any dual member who has primary membership in another county

Please Print:

Name _____

____ Check if your information in the 2017 CAMGA Membership Directory is correct.

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____

Year of your Master Gardener Class _____ County _____

Checks should be made payable to CAMGA.

Amount Enclosed: Check \$ _____ Check Number _____ Cash \$ _____

____ Yes, I am a dual member. County of primary membership _____

*Your completed form and dues must be submitted by December 5, 2017, or you risk not being included in the 2018 CAMGA Membership Directory. If you wish to have a new picture in the directory, send to annfitzhil@gmail.com by December 5.

Name _____

To help in future planning, please provide the following information: (A) What topic(s) would you like to see presented at a meeting? Do you know a person who could present a program on this topic? (B) Also, indicate any idea you may have for CAMGA Projects.

(A) _____

(B) _____

Please check your interest and what you are interested in learning more about in our organization.

____ Financial ____ Excel ____ Power Point ____ Publicity ____ Garden Design ____ Leadership

____ Committee Membership ____ Speaking (Topics) _____

Other (specify) _____



November 2017 Lunch & Learn

By: Charlotte Hall



Holiday Plants and Bulbs Program *Presented by: Karen Webber*

Just in time for the upcoming holidays, Karen Webber gave a very informative presentation on holiday plants and bulbs. Karen, a transplant from Ohio, is a member of the Capitol City Master Gardener Association and you'll more than likely find her at the Shakespeare Gardens, Grace Episcopal Church or the Wynlakes Country Club. She is a for real horticulturist graduate from Ohio State, so this girl knows her stuff.

The first plant that Karen discussed was the ever-popular poinsettia, and Karen helped to dispel an old myth about poinsettias being poisonous. This plant is indigenous to Mexico and is a photo periodic plant. Learning something new all the time and this term means that the plant has a physiological reaction to the length of day or night. It has gorgeous red and green foliage and there are new varieties being developed which offer a wide range of colors, including variegated types. The poinsettia has colored bracts which can be red, orange, cream, pink, white, green or marbled. These are not flower petals but are actually leaves of the plant. The plant requires abundant light during the day, which is why it grows so well in Mexico, but requires a lot of darkness for them to change color – at least 12-14 hours of darkness. The poinsettia derives its common English name from Joel Roberts Poinsettia, the first United States Minister to Mexico, who introduced the plant to the United States in 1825.

Another popular holiday plant is the kalanchoe which is a succulent that grows best in well-drained and well-aerated potting soil, such as 60% peat moss and 40% perlite. It requires long nights to bloom and it is poisonous to dogs, if digested. This succulent has vibrant blooms that are long-lasting and bright. They also come in different colors.

A bulb that is popular at Christmas is the amaryllis bulb. It is a large bulb and can be bought before Christmas in a kit for forcing the bulb to bloom at Christmas time. It can then be planted outside in the yard for future blooms. Amaryllis bulbs are sold in winter months for its ability to bloom indoors. The blooms are extremely large on a single stalk and also come in a variety of solid and variegated colors – from vibrant red, orange, pink, white and multiple variations.



November Lunch & Learn Program
presented by Karen Webber



November Lunch & Learn Continued By: Charlotte Hall



Another bulb that is popular for growing indoors for the holidays is a narcissus or paper white bulb. To force these bulbs to bloom inside, fill a 3-4 inch deep bowl or other shallow container (without drainage holes) with pebbles or other decorative stones. Pack the paperwhite bulbs into the container and push them down into the stones so that the tips stay upright. They will grow and bloom with nothing more than the water and pebbles. Bulbs can later be planted outside, also.

Seasonal cactus plants are also grown for their blooms at holiday time. Some bloom at Thanksgiving and others at Christmas while others may bloom at Easter. The easily adaptable houseplant is not only easy to grow but also propagates with ease. It will tolerate low light conditions but will produce blooms more readily if exposed to brighter light. However, too much bright sunshine can burn the leaves. The plant requires frequent and thorough watering. During its active growing period in spring and summer, keep the soil slightly moist. Allow the Christmas cactus to dry out some between waterings - but never completely dry. Do not let it sit in water either.

Other holiday favorites are cyclamens which have gorgeous blooms but are hard to grow. Karen suggests just purchasing them for their blooms and enjoying them until they finish blooming and then just move on. Orchids are beautiful holiday plants and come in a variety of colors such as white, purple, yellow, pink and many other variegated ones. To bloom, orchids need filtered bright light. The potting mix should be very dry before the plant is watered. Some orchids bloom winter into late spring - such as the common Phalaenopsis, which is also one of the easiest orchid to grow.

Other holiday plants include Norfolk Island pine, holly trees, nandina, and also the herb rosemary when it is snipped into a Christmas tree shape.



Join us for our last program in 2017 on December 12th when our own Judy May will tell us more about Orchids.

We can learn about the Phalaenopsis mentioned by Karen as a favorite holiday plant. Join us as we close out our year and prepare to usher in 2018 with a new slate of interesting speakers and topics.



Governor's Mansion Report November 2017 By: Amanda Borden



At the Governor's Mansion, most of November was spent decorating the Hill House library for Christmas. As with last year's Christmas preparations in the Mansion sunroom, we used mostly natural materials and hand-crafted decorations. Toward the end of the month, Kathy Quinn made it outside to weed and lay pine straw in the Herb Garden. The Mansion, Hill House, and grounds are all beautified and ready for the Christmas season.



Shown above: Amanda Borden, Allyson Ludington, and Jane McCarthy trim the tree.





Governor's Mansion Report November 2017 By: Amanda Borden



Christmas at the Governor's Mansion

*Decorations made by the volunteers who work at the
Governor's Mansion.*

*Volunteers were: Amanda Borden, Melanie Barry, Allyson Luddington,
Sandy Rosamond, Amy Richardson, and Jane McCarthy*





SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

November 2017

By Judy May



The Lunch and Learn November 14th was Holiday Plants and Forcing Bulbs by Karen Weber. Twenty Nine people attended, twenty four of them Master Gardeners. Attending were Sandi Adkison, Charlotte Hall, Cathy Whigham and Bill Quailes.

Working at The Governor's Mansion this month were Amanda Borden, Melanie Barry, Allyson Luddington, Sandy Rosamond, Amy Richardson and Jane McCarthy.

Maria says helping her at Lanark this month were Don Hoover, Peggy Gelpi, Leslie Bingham, Judy May, Sheila Pearson, Carla McCune, and interns: Sue Brazill and Linda Jarniecki all helped me keep the gardening work on a roll! Thanks to all of you.

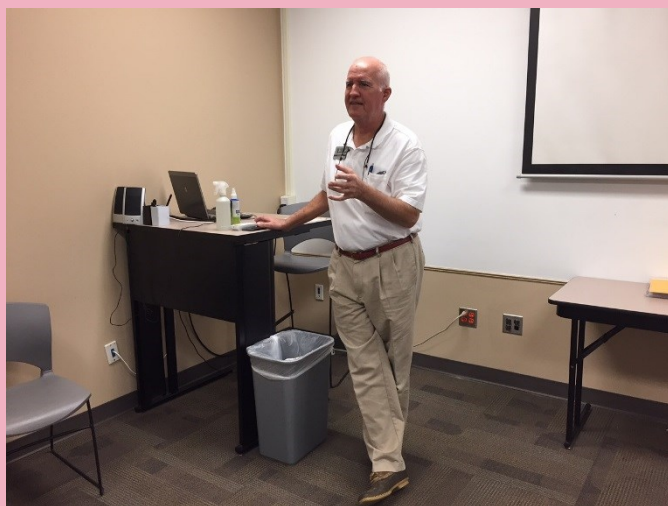
The following members provided food for the interns on November 9, It's Soup! Robin Snyder, Iva Wells, Leslie Bingham, Fred Frye, Judy May, Terry Chambliss, Virginia Pruitt, Marie Updike, Sherri Schaefer and Deann Stone.

Jane Mobley did the November meeting presentation on Landscaping with Color on the 21st. Mary McCroan and Jane did the Pruning presentation for the intern class on November 9th.

Lee and Amanda Borden both presented to OLLI at AUM during November, Lee's topic was Backyard Fruits and Amanda's was Sustainable Landscape Design.

Members who brought refreshments to the CAMGA meeting this month were Freda Frye, Candy Jones, Katrina Mitchell, Marie Updike, Barbara Wallace, Mary McCroan and Robin Snyder.

Lee and Amanda Borden presented programs at the OLLI meeting at AUM in November



UPCOMING MEETING



I'll Be Home For Christmas - A Vintage Holiday Celebration

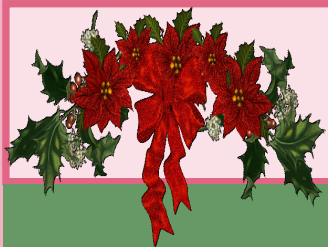
The Christmas holiday is coming soon and we invite you to join the Central Alabama Master Gardener's Association in celebration on Tuesday, December 5 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Mulder United Methodist Church in Wetumpka.

At 10:00 AM we will have the monthly CAMGA business meeting and follow with our Christmas dinner and celebration. We look forward to you and your guest joining us. The Mulder United Methodist Church is located at 3454 Firetower Road in Wetumpka.

**Note that this meeting will replace the December CAMGA meeting that is normally held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.*

CAMGA will be providing plenty of hearty hot hors d'oeuvre. Please contact Robin Snyder if you have not signed up to bring a side dish.

We need a few volunteers to assist with set up on Monday December 4 from 2 PM—4:00 PM and also clean up on Tuesday after the party.



Calendar of Events

December 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Governor's Mansion Work Day 9 a.m. to 12 Noon	5 CAMGA Vintage Holiday Celebration — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mulder Methodist Church, Wetumpka	6 Lanark Workday 8 a.m. to 12 noon	7	8	9
10	11 Governor's Mansion Work Day 9 a.m. to 12 Noon	12 Lunch & Learn 12 noon to 1 p.m. — Elmore Co. Ext. Auditorium	13 Lanark Workday 8 a.m. to 12 noon	14	15	16
17	18 Governor's Mansion Work Day 9 a.m. to 12 Noon	19	20 Lanark Workday 8 a.m. to 12 noon	21	22	23
24	25  Merry Christmas!	26	27 Lanark Workday 8 a.m. to 12 noon	28	29	30
31		The Elmore Co. Extension Office will be closed Dec. 20 thru Jan 2, 2018 for the holidays.				