



GARDEN BUZZZZZZ



Volume 28 Issue 3 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association

March 2019



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Message from:

Sandy Rosamond
CAMGA President



What a great CAMGA meeting that we had this past month! It was wonderful to see all your smiling faces. Congratulations to all of you that received awards. Thank you for the volunteer hours that you worked to earn them.

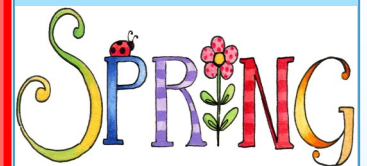
We have a place for everyone to volunteer. If you are having trouble deciding where to volunteer because of any kind of limitations such as health or time, please talk to me. I know we have a place just for you.

It has felt like spring for sure, but not just yet! Even though we can expect a few more cold nights, we need to be getting prepared for our plant sale. Planting seeds for vegetables, herbs, and flowers. We need them all. Thank you in advance for your support to make this plant sale a success and the best ever!



See you at our next meeting!

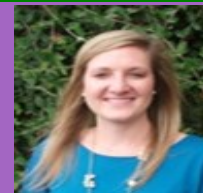
Sandy



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



Caring for Fruit Trees

The excitement of spring is in the air and that means, time to dig in the “dirt.” I have to admit, the bug has bitten me and I have been browsing the stores for the new plant that is “needed” in my landscape. In the spring time we often see the beautiful hydrangeas, azaleas, perennials and annuals, but also you may be enticed by fruit trees. Fruits can be a great addition to the home landscape if the proper conditions and devotion to caring for them are a priority.



First of all, let’s talk about the easiest fruits to grow in Central Alabama. If you are new to fruits in the landscape, start out with those that require the least amount of maintenance and care, such as: figs, pomegranate, blueberries (need acid soil), oriental persimmon and muscadines. These fruits rarely require spraying and very little pruning, except the muscadine. The muscadine needs a structure to grow on so that can be an initial investment of money and labor. In addition, the blueberries will produce best if there is more than one variety for pollination and the muscadines can be self-fertile or female. If you plant a female, you will need a self-fertile variety to accompany it.

Now for the more difficult fruits to grow such as peaches, plums, apples and pears. Peaches are self-fertile so just one tree will do, but all the others need another variety for pollination. Tree fruits require pruning and training year after year for best production. Beyond pruning, sanitation of the orchard or tree is very important in your success. Anytime fruit or leaves drop from the tree clean it up to prevent the spread of diseases. Heavy mulching all the way out to the canopy of the tree will also help prevent diseases while holding in moisture, suppressing weeds and adding organic matter.

Spraying is often required to have a healthy crop when it comes to fruit trees. Spray recommendation are to start spraying Captan (fungicide) as soon as the petals begin to open. Continue to spray every 10-14 days. Once the petals are falling to the ground and you no longer see bees visiting the flowers, start spraying Malathion or Sevin for insect control. Continue spraying every 10-14 days and it can be applied in conjunction with the Captan once the pollinators are gone.

Especially for fruit trees it is necessary to thin the fruit. For peaches, pears and apples you will want one fruit per 6”-8” with plums one fruit per 4”-6.” If the fruit is not thinned the tree will try to produce too many. The end result is all the fruit ends up being the size of a golf ball when ripe or the stress of too much fruit can cause the tree to abort the fruit, meaning drop it all at once. This usually occurs about a week before you think the fruit is ready to be harvested and suddenly every fruit is laying on the ground under the tree. Thinning the fruit will greatly increase the size of your fruit and prevent the weight of the fruit from breaking limbs. Hopefully this information will improve home fruit production.



CAMGA Minutes February 19, 2019 By: Deann Stone, Secretary



The meeting was called to order by Sandy Rosamond at 10:00 a.m. She welcomed all members.

Speaker: Linda Edwards introduced our speaker for today, Caylor Roling, with E.A.T. South. E.A.T. South provides education on farming and how food travels from the ground to your plate. The farm is located in downtown Montgomery, behind the Montgomery Advertiser building, connecting to the River Front Park.

They have raised beds, bee hives, chickens and ducks! Educational programs are provided for children and adults. Programs include: Good Food Day, Seedy Saturday, Farm in the City, Family Day, Can You Dig It! Summer Camp, Therapeutic Recreation Center and After-school Program, and Volunteer Projects and Events. A schedule for the year was provided.

Presidents Report: Sandy asked Linda to share information about the Camellia Show this Saturday in Auburn. If anyone is interested in carpooling, please meet at the Extension Office. Cecilia Ball will be our new publicity person.

Secretary's Report: Last month's minutes were shared in the newsletter. They were approved by acclamation

Treasurer's Report: Bill Quales presented the Financial Report for January 2019. The beginning balance was \$7,620.16, a revenue of \$209, expenses of \$501.16, leaving an ending balance of \$7,328. The report was approved by acclamation.

Projects Reports:

Senior Center Project: Sandy introduced Rhona Watson, who will lead our fairy garden project at the Senior Center in July. She shared a sample fairy garden. The training class on March 6 will be limited to 15 people. On April 11 trainers and other participants will meet, at which time some gardens will be made for the plant sale. You must bring your own pot. Suggestions were given for pot size. If you are interested in being part of the 15 trainers, give your name to Terry.

A drawing will be held to select the 15 participants. If you need holes drilled in your pots, please get them to the building behind the Extension meeting room no later than February 28. We cannot drill holes in ceramic pots! CAMGA is purchasing all supplies for the senior center. Rhona requested \$1000 for project. A motion was made to approve the request, seconded by Bill Quales. The motion carried.

CAMGA Minutes (Continued)

February 2019

By: Deann Stone, Secretary



Governor's Mansion - Jane McCarthy needs to know by next Friday if you are interested in participating in the work day so that your name can be on the security list. You receive a discount in the gift shop, if you work.

Lunch & Learn - Location will be at the Extension offices instead of the church since the tornado damage. March 12 is Hummingbirds with Fred Basset.

Helpline - A new tower is being installed in the Helpline Office. Helpline starts March 7. Mary Ann distributed a signup sheet for the Helpline. Only a few more names are needed!

Plant Sale - Coming up the first Saturday in May! Please start your seedlings and be prepared to bring plants for the sale. More information will be provided at the next meeting. We have a need for all types of plants.

Awards Day: Lee Ann Marona led the Award Day ceremony. In addition to recognizing member, Lee Ann shared how CAMGA "shined" in relation to other Master Gardener Associations.

CAMGA: Ranked 11th out of 35 in volunteer hours;
Ranked 6th out of 35 in educational hours;
Logged 8,500 total volunteer hours - 7,000 volunteer and 1,500 CEU hours;
75 members reported hours
Reported 12,415 contacts

Bronze Star, Silver Star, and Gold Star recipients received their awards. Terry Chambliss was given the Robin Award.

Other Items: Mallory announced that if you need a new name badge, please see Candy to complete required information. The new date for the Farm Field Day is May 22. More information will be coming soon.

State News: Linda Queen shared that the date has been extended for pictures at the state conference.

October 3, 2019 is the Fall Conference date. The 2020 Conference will be March 31 - April 1 in at the Mobile Renaissance.

Our next meeting is March 19, 2019 at 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deann Stone, Secretary



February 2019 Lunch and Learn By: Charlotte Hall



“Camellias – Dr. Charles Mitchell”

For our February Lunch and Learn program, Dr. Charles Mitchell, retired Auburn professor and member of the Auburn-Opelika Men’s Camellia Club, made a trip over from Auburn with a dazzling array of diversified, gorgeous camellia blooms. To say he brought a magnificent display would be a tremendous understatement. His blooms – all labeled on the backside of a leaf and in water vials – were simply outstanding. There were white ones, pink ones, red ones, variegated ones, single bloom ones, double bloom ones, peony form ones, anemone form ones, semi-double ones, small ones, compact ones, large ones. You get the picture. And if you missed seeing these blooms up close and personal, you truly missed a show! And if that did not set your camellia bloom salivary glands to overtime, Stewart Tomlinson came with several of his prize-winning blooms displayed in a proper transportation competition container.

The camellia is the state flower of Alabama and this year celebrates its 60th anniversary as Alabama’s official state flower. Dr. Mitchell told how the camellia dethroned our previous state flower, the goldenrod, which is found growing in the wild of every county in Alabama. After the state legislature made the goldenrod the state flower in 1927, the lowly plant received much criticism because of its alleged role in widespread allergies and hay fever. Even though goldenrod is not the culprit for allergies - ragweed holds that honor, it could not survive the false accusations and lowly weed perception. The story goes that some women in Butler County thought a wildflower like the goldenrod didn’t deserve to be the state flower and started action to have the flower changed. In August of 1959, the camellia ascended to prominence as Alabama’s state flower and in 1999, the Alabama Legislature specifically adopted the *Camellia japonica* as the state flower since there were so many varieties of the camellia, in general. This seems a bit ironic as the *Camellia japonica* is not native to Alabama. To offset this somewhat strange adaptation, the legislature then named a state wildflower. But, even then, the dethroned goldenrod did not get nominated, and that honor is now bestowed upon the oakleaf hydrangea. And you thought you were only going to learn about camellias!

Most camellias came from Asia. They are an evergreen flowering shrub in the family Theaceae. Dr. Mitchell said that there are over 2,000 different varieties of *Camellia japonica* and some can grow as very tall trees. The most common camellia variety is the tea plant or *camellia sinesis*, which are always white-flowered. Camellias like well-drained, acidic soils. They thrive best in partial shade, particularly under pine trees where they did not compete for water as they would when planted under hardwood trees. They do not grow well in chalky soil or other calcium-rich soils and do not survive droughts well. They prefer moderate to regular watering. Camellias tolerate sun but direct sunlight can burn the leaves or cause the leaves to turn yellow. So ideal conditions would be well-drained soil, light shade (shelter from the hot afternoon sun), high tall trees (pines, particularly), acidic soil and mulch.

Camellia japonica grows in a variety of flower forms: single (flat, bowl or cup-shaped), semi—double (rows of large outer petals, with the center comprising mixed petals and stamens), or double (peony form - convex mass of irregular petals with hidden stamens, anemone form – one of more rows of outer petals with mixed petaloids and stamens in the center, rose form – overlapping petals sowing stamens in a concave center when open and formal double – rows of overlapping petals with hidden stamens).

February 2019 Lunch and Learn (Continued) By: Charlotte Hall



Propagation of camellias can be accomplished through seeds, cuttings or layering and grafting. Cuttings and layering ensure an identical plant, and the waiting time for plants is not as long as from growing seeds. Air layering is another way of propagating camellias.

Even under the best of circumstances, problems with growing camellias can occur. Petal blight, the scourge of camellia growers, causes the blooms to turn brown. This is a fungal disease that generally occurs in spring and is usually due to abundant moisture. Infected flow-

ers usually drop from the shrub. Dark brown veins in the petals are indications of petal blight. Pull and dispose of blooms and treat with a foliar fungicide. Canker disease includes the wilting of branches along with gray colored blotches. The infected bark will split and give way to pinkish cankers. Branch tips may also die back. Once infected, prune and destroy cankerous branches. Well-drained soil planting helps prevent canker. Leaf gall is another fungus problem due to abundant moisture. Leaves develop small greenish-white galls on the undersides which turn brown. Remove affected leaves and spray with fungicide. Root rot is a fungal disease which causes leaf yellowing, poor growth and wilting followed by death of the shrub. This is from over watering, also, and prevention is the key to avoiding this problem. Camellia yellow mottle leaf virus causes irregular yellow patterns or mottling on the leaves which may turn completely yellow. There is no cure for yellow mottle.

Other problems include scale bugs, sunscald, bud drop and sooty mold. Scale bugs are the most serious pest that attacks camellia plants. The tiny insects attach to the underside of leaves. Horticultural oil is recommended to smother scale and their eggs. Sunscald is the result of too much direct sunlight. Scorched leaves do not usually recover, and the shrub may need to be moved to a shadier location. Bud drop occurs when plants receive too much or too little water, insufficient light or extreme cold temperatures. They may also suffer from nutrient deficiencies or mite problems. Unopened buds drop off plant before blooming and turn brown. Sooty mold is common in summer and into fall. Often the result of sucking insects, like aphids and scale, the black coated leaves will eventually drop. Apply a horticultural oil as for scale bugs.

Even though the above-mentioned problems may seem daunting, don't be intimidated. Planting in proper conditions usually eliminates a lot of the problems. And, after all, all plants have their own set of pests and problems. That's why Dr. Mitchell and his group call it the Men's Camellia Club because the camellia, once established well, requires little care after that. And from the blooms displayed by Dr. Mitchell, the rewards greatly outweigh the problems.

I am sure that everyone is aware of the tornado destruction to the First Presbyterian Church in Wetumpka where we had just started having our Lunch and Learn meetings. We've returned to our previous meeting place at the Elmore County Extension Center until further notice.

Next month on the 2nd Tuesday, March 12th at noon, Fred Bassett, licensed hummingbird bander, will speak on Hummingbirds. Drinks will be provided. Don't forget it will be at our old venue on at 340 Queen Ann Road. Hope to see you then as we learn more about the captivating and amazing hummingbird.



Governor's Mansion Report January 2019 By: Amanda Borden



During February, volunteers at the Governor's Mansion pruned the roses under the dining room windows, weeded across the front of the mansion, and pruned the sasanqua camellias under the kitchen windows and south side of the Guest House. During "work week" at the end of the month, a larger group of volunteers pruned the roses in front of the Mansion, renewal pruned dwarf crepe myrtles and Mexican heather, and lightly pruned the side lawn French hydrangeas. They pruned Japanese maples, transplanted ferns, did some camellia air layering, and planted in containers.



Projects Committee Minutes By: Terry Chambliss



Project Meeting – February 12, 2019

Those present were Rhona Watson, Johan Beumer, Cecilia Ball, Candy Jones, Jane Mobley and Terry Chambliss.

Dates were scheduled for the following activities:

March 6th--Fairy Garden Training in the Extension barn from 10-12:00.

March 15th—Outdoor Classroom at the Middle School from 10-12:00

March 28th—Learning Gardens Workday from 8:30-11:30.

April 11th—Fairy Gardens for the Plant Sale

Fairy gardening with the seniors was discussed. The Seniors are now meeting at Cedar Woods Community Church on Hwy 231 going towards Wallsboro. Mary Ann Barrett, who runs the Center, said they will post a sign up sheet in May and will give us a date for the event in July.

Rhona Watson brought several of her fairy gardens as examples. Shallow planter donations will be requested. Johan Beumer volunteered to drill holes in the planters if needed. He needs them by Thursday, February 28, for the March 6th training. They can be left behind the shed at the Learning Gardens.

Rhona will discuss fairy gardening at the next CAMGA meeting. It will be emphasized the volunteers will be expected to be trained, make fairy gardens for the plant sale, work with the seniors and possibly beyond which may include participating in make and takes. Because of the widespread interest in this volunteer activity, it was decided to draw names for the 15 participants that will be needed.

Supplies and prices were discussed, including pots, gravel, figurines, moss, stones, plants, mirrors, soil and sand. Rhona and Jane Mobley will visit nurseries for indoor and outdoor plants. Candy volunteered to get the pro mix. Indoor plants will be used for the senior planters while the plant sale planters will include a combination. The committee is planning for sixty five at \$15 each. A funding request for \$1000 will be made at the next meeting. Fifteen of the 65 will be for the plant sale anticipating making around \$10 on each planter.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Chambliss



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

February 2019

By: Judy May

The Lunch and Learn Program February 12 was Dr. Charles Mitchell speaking on Camellias. There were 48 attendees, 34 of them Master Gardeners. Assisting were Sandi Adkison, Charlotte Hall, Cathy Whigham and Bill Quailles.

Rhona Watson did a presentation to the Blue Ridge Garden Club February 13. There were 13 members in attendance.

Rhona Watson, Barbara Wallace, Amanda Borden and Jane Mobley attended a Japanese Maple grafting workshop in Auburn on February 15.

Amanda Borden did a presentation on Loving Your Veggies to Autauga County on February 14.

Terry Chambliss and Jane Mobley did a presentation on Cleavers to an Herb class on February 12. There were 12 present.

Judy May did a presentation on Orchid Basics to the Millbrook garden Club February 13. There were 17 present. A special thank you goes to Sandi Adkison for coming and setting up the audio visual equipment.

Attending the Projects Committee meeting February 12 were Rhona Watson, Cecelia Ball, Candy Jones, Jane Mobley and Terry Chambliss.

Working at the Governor's Mansion this month were Amanda Borden, Anne Carr, Linda Cater and Jane McCarthy.

Signed up to work at the Mansion during Spring Work Week are Cecelia Ball, Leslie Bingham, Amanda Borden, Anne Carr, Linda Cater, Terry Chambliss, Linda Edwards, Cheryl Fitzgerald, Charlotte Hall, Jane McCarthy, Betty Plaster, Sherri Schaefer, and Robin Snyder.



CAMGA Library News

By: Dee Turberville

Month by Month Gardening in Alabama

Two of the South's premier gardening experts, Robert Polomski and Felder Rushing, authored Month by Month Gardening in Alabama in 2002. The regional title has information tailored to issues that affect Southern gardens.

Twelve categories of plant types are covered: (1) annuals and biennials (2) bulbs (3) herbs (4) houseplants (5) lawns (6) perennials (7) roses (8) shrubs (9) trees (10) vines (11) water gardens (12) vegetables. The seasonal guide has quality photographs, good charts, and several plant lists from which to choose. The authors include specific recommendations and step by step instructions to follow for each month of the year. The monthly format is helpful if you like to journal.

When should I prune my roses? When should I plant trees and shrubs? Month by Month Gardening in Alabama takes the guesswork out of your gardening and insures you success at digging in the dirt of Alabama.

Alabama Gardening Calendar ACES web address:

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/lawn-garden/alabama-gardening-calendar/>



March Gardening Tips

By: Jane H. McCarthy

What I try to do in March...

Well, I am back again... Sandy didn't fire me, so I'll proceed with the tasks recommended for March.

Planting in March is what we all want to do, but be forewarned there are some limits. Try to avoid planting when the soil is excessively wet, limit yourself to planting container grown plants, know Montgomery's average last frost date is 16 March, and remember the soil is still too cold for some plants (tomatoes, peppers, caladiums, okra, cotton, etc.). You can plant strawberries, blackberries, grapes, dahlias, gladiolas, clematis, figs, and azaleas (good chance to plant varieties based on their flower color).

You should be finishing up your rose pruning by mid-March. Drop the canes down to 18-24", remove dead wood and crossing branches, and cut above buds that are directing outward. Climbers need the old canes removed, as they bloom robustly on new wood. This pruning may seem pretty drastic, but the next step is to apply rose fertilizer (follow all directions) at the end of March. Then just step back and wait. If you are trying to grow hybrid tea roses that require excessive care and chemicals, just admit defeat and start loving and growing the old-fashioned heirloom roses. These are the roses that have been growing for years with no human interaction on old homesteads and cemeteries...tough as nails.

Your spring blooming hydrangeas (French hydrangea/*H. macrophylla*) bloom on old wood, so only remove any broken or dead branches. Summer blooming hydrangeas (Limelight and Annabelle/*H. paniculata* and *H. arborescens*) bloom on new wood and they could be pruned down to 2'.

At the end of March when you start your rose fertilizing schedule, you can include your gardenias. Gardenias are heavy feeders, so double the amount of the fertilizer the directions call for.

Common Fig trees can be fertilized now with good organic fertilizer. My figs are in very sandy soil that leaches and requires more fertilizer. I apply chicken litter (coop debris) 2-3 times a growing season. But too much nitrogen can lead to the fruit not ripening properly. NOTE: Common figs are **parthenocarpic**, which means they do not require pollination by fig wasps to create a seedless fruit (syconia).

Prep your beds for spring planting by adding 1-3" of organic material, but avoid tilling. Repeated tilling has negative effects on the soil (it compromises the structure, accelerates erosion and runoff, etc.) and more importantly you release dormant weed seeds. Top your beds with 4-6" of mulch and the weeds will be less of an issue.

When you have questions, understand that the internet is an invaluable source of information, but not all information out there is science based. The land grant universities and the extension services can provide invaluable information. Pay attention to the '.edu' sites and choose those that are geared to the southeast US. Perplexed by toxic plants?...go to Cornell's Poisonous Plant List.



Reach for the Stars

By: Lee Ann Marona
Reach for the Stars Program Coordinator

“Reach for the Stars” Awards

Congratulations to CAMGA members who reached new Lifetime Hours milestones in 2018! Members reaching 1000+ hours will be recognized at the March meeting.

Bronze Stars 100-299 Hours:



L to R: Carolyn Hope Placeway, Betty Plaster, Dee Turberville, Cindy Beumer, Linda Queen, Cecelia Ball, and Sheila Radford.
Not pictured: Allyson Andrews

Silver Stars 300-499 Hours:



L to R: Linda Jarzyniecki, Patricia Petro-Perryman, and Lynda Edwards. Not pictured: Sarah Holland and Carol Pugh

Gold Stars – 500-999 Hours:



L to R: Bill Quailes, Leslie Bingham, and Lee Ann Marona. Not pictured: Deborah Kelso, Katrina Mitchell, and Ricky Hatcher



The January Robin Award



Terry Chambliss

Calendar of Events

March 2019

Sun

Mon

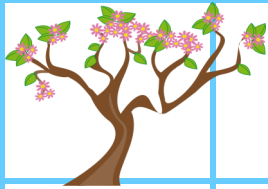
Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat



					1	2
3	4 Governor's Mansion Work Day 9-12 noon	5	6 Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon	7 Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon Master Gardener Helpline	8	9
10 Day Light Saving Time Begins	11 Governor's Mansion Work Day 8-11 a.m.	12 Lunch & Learn 12-1 p.m. Elmore Co. Extension	13 Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon	14 Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon Master Gardener Helpline	15	16
17	18 Governor's Mansion Work Day 8-11 a.m.	19 CAMGA Meeting 10-12 noon Elmore Co. Extension	20 Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon First day of Spring	21 Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon Master Gardener Helpline	22	23
24	25 Governor's Mansion Work Day 8-11 a.m.	26	27 Lanark Workday 8 to 12 noon	28 Elmore Co. Ext. Office Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon Master Gardener Helpline	29	30
31						