



GARDEN BUZZZZZZ



Volume 29 Issue 5 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association

May 2020



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Message from:

Sandy Rosamond CAMGA President

Hello Everyone,

Are we still having fun? If I could get rid of nut grass I would have more fun. I cleared 2 raised beds by hand of nut grass (that I killed last year) for vegetables. It was just too much to clear the last two beds, so I poisoned it again. I have always wanted a cutting garden; so now I have 2 raised beds to plant a cutting garden in this year!

We will have our first Zoom monthly meeting at 10 a.m. on May 19. Mallory has set the meeting up and the coordinates are printed on page 6 of this newsletter on how to connect to the meeting.

Maybe in next couple months we can get back to normal. But isn't it great to have another way to communicate. I will be asking for reports from treasure, secretary, and projects for sure. Please email me if we need to discuss something..

Maybe we should have named our plant sale "Different Strokes for Different Times Plant Sale! But I will miss seeing everyone as usual. I had no idea how much I enjoyed the plant sale even though it was a lot of hard work. Save your ideas for our next sale. We are going to make make it a grand one.

Stay safe and buy lots of plants!

Sandy

*Sandy Rosamond
CAMGA President*



CAMGA Garden Buzzzz
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Message from Mallory
Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds,
Gardens, & Home Pests

Backyard Citrus is Growing in Popularity

Citrus has been grown in Central and South Alabama for years. The citrus belt spans from California along the Gulf Coast to Florida (USDA Zones 8-10), but recently I have seen an increased interest in citrus from backyard gardeners. With their evergreen foliage, fragrant flowers and delicious fruit, citrus can be a great addition to every garden or patio. And as an added bonus, with the exception of a few tangerine varieties, all citrus is self-fruitful meaning you can have just one plant to produce fruit.

With very few insect and diseases, the only drawback to citrus is the occasional cold winter temperatures where they will require protection. It is best to plant citrus in a large container so it can be moved indoors in the winter season during cold spells. For central Alabama, I recommend the Semi-hardy to hardy varieties. Semi-Hardy refers to citrus varieties that are hardy to temps in the mid to upper teens or low 20's. Satsumas or mandarins, kumquats and Meyer lemons are all considered semi-hardy in central Alabama.

The highest degree of success and greatest satisfaction in growing citrus in Alabama is often seen with satsumas. They withstand colder temperatures than the other forms of edible sweet citrus, produce more consistent crops over a longer period of time, and require less cold protection.

Satsuma is a mandarin. It has excellent cold hardiness and ripens its fruit well ahead of most freeze problems (September to November). Owari is the most popular variety and is generally available at retail outlets. Brown's Select is a very recent introduction from Louisiana that is somewhat similar to Owari in tree and fruit characteristics, but ripens its fruit at least 2 to 3 weeks earlier. Armstrong Early (also called Early Armstrong) is an old variety that has been grown for many years and is planted to a small degree. Fruit of this variety ripen extremely early (beginning in September), but the quality is not as good as Owari. When grown under warmer climatic conditions (such as Florida), fruits often retain their peak quality for approximately 2 to 4 weeks, after which they may become puffy and rough in appearance and lose flavor and juice content. However, under the cooler climatic conditions of Central and South Alabama, fruits tend to remain in good condition on the tree, retaining their juice and flavor for 1 to 2 months after reaching full maturity.

There are a number of hardy acid-type fruits available for homeowner use. These plants make attractive ornamental specimens and provide delightful fruits as well. The kumquat tree (not the fruit) is the most cold hardy of the commonly grown acid citrus fruits (it can withstand temperatures of 15 to 17 degrees F). The kumquat is one of the most widely used citrus plants around the home; it develops into an attractive shrublike tree that bears small orange-like fruit about 1 inch in diameter. Fruits can be eaten fresh, peel and all, or used in making jellies, marmalade, or candies. Several varieties are available, but only three are commonly propagated: Nagami, Marumi, and Meiwa. Meiwa, which produces round, sweet fruit, has become one of the most popular for home plantings.

Meyer is the most cold hardy variety of lemon. The fruit ripening period usually lasts for several months beginning in late summer. Good crops of large, practically seedless, juicy lemons are produced. Ponderosa, is another variety of lemon that is commonly grown in Florida that produces exceedingly large fruits and can also be grown as a container plant.

Message from Mallory (Continued)

Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds,
Gardens, & Home Pests



Limes are among the most cold-sensitive of the common acid-type citrus fruits. However, the Mexican (also called Key or West Indian) lime, famous for the Key lime pie, can be grown as a container plant when provided with inside protection during the winter.

As mentioned previously, citrus fruits can be grown successfully in the home grounds with little or no control of insects and diseases. Fruits produced without pesticide sprays may be very poor in external quality as a result of damage by several mites, insects, and fungal diseases. Although they may look unattractive on the outside, external damage usually has no detrimental effect on internal fruit quality. And the appearance of the tree may suffer, but seldom will trees be critically damaged by most citrus pests.

So, if you are looking for a low maintenance, conversation piece, think about adding citrus plants to your landscape or patio. Not only will you love their incredible fragrance when in bloom, but it's so much fun to watch them grow and share with your neighbors, friends and family.

CAMGA PLANT SALE UPDATE

By: Robin Snyder

Hello fellow master gardeners...

Many have questioned over the last month just what the plans for conducting our annual plant sale were going to be. As I would prepare to give you all an update it seemed that the forecast and the rules of conduct seemed to constantly be changing in our uncertain environment. Not that we claim to have any incite as to where this virus is going to be taking us, but we have finally made a decision to postpone our public sale until the fall.

We will choose a date and make our plans as we get closer to that time and know how society is to be conducted. Please continue to propagate and nurture any plants that would be appropriate for that fall sale. In the meanwhile we are going to hold a members only sale in May so that we can make available the vegetables, annuals and any other plants that you folks don't want to nurture through the Alabama summer.



We will accept delivery of the plants at the extension from 8:00 AM until 3:30 PM on May 12 and 13. Please have the plants labeled and priced and place them under the awning of the barn area. We will have areas labeled for various plant types. The sale of the plants will be on May 14 and 15 from 8:00 AM until 3:30 PM. Sandy and Deann have sent by email to each of you a system for signing up to attend the sale at a designated time.

The current rules for any activity taking place at the extension limit the gathering to 10 individuals and each person must wear mask and gloves. We must enforce these rules to be allowed to use the facility and grounds. If you have any questions please contact Sandy or I by phone or email.

This sale is self serve and you need to keep track of your purchases and submit your payment by check to Deborah Kelso (our treasurer) at 215 Coosada Lane, Coosada, AL 36020. Also, it would be nice if folks donating plants would check back at the completion of the sale if you wish to take home your leftover plants.

As my Mom used to tell me...Life is what happens while you are busy making plans. We will get through this tough time and perhaps be better for it. I hope you are all able to enjoy your own yards and gardens right now and we certainly should have no excuses for not getting our spring cleanup and prep all finished in a timely manner.

Take care and stay safe...
Robin Snyder



Message from Deann Stone CAMGA Secretary

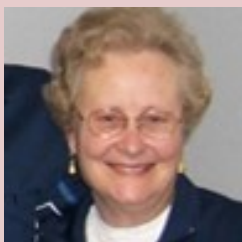
YEA!! It is finally May! I've really enjoyed the spring weather and hope you all have, as well. I've kept busy working in my garden and in my yard (as well as playing with my new grand-daughter, Molly). The weather has been great for getting an early start in my vegetable garden. I already have cucumber, peppers, and tomatoes! Of course, they are all very small, but I can see them and can't wait until time to harvest!

I've also been saving my eggshells to use in my garden. I read that if you bake them on 200 degrees for about 20 minutes, they will crush easier and can be used to keep soft bodied pests from eating your young plants and that the eggshells help prevent blossom end rot! I've had issues that blossom end rot in the past, so I'm really hoping this works!

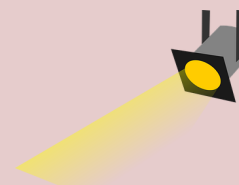
We've also hung several bird houses in the trees surrounding our garden in hopes they will help eat something that may eat my vegetables before I do. And, I also planted some bees balm, hoping to attract more pollinators.

Looking forward to the day when I can take the minutes of our packed meeting! I miss seeing you all! Happy Spring! Enjoy your family and your garden!

Deann K. Stone
Secretary, CAMGA



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS April 2020 By: Judy May



On April 7, Lee and Amanda Borden presented on "Vegetable Gardening Basics" as part of the Alabama Smart Yards webinar series.

***May 19, 2020 CAMGA Meeting
Will be held by Zoom at 10:00 A.M.***

This is a SECURE meeting room as it is paid for through Auburn University so there are no security issues as people may have seen on TV recently in using it. Also, you can download the zoom app on your phone and then enter the numbers at the bottom of the URL as an easy way to join. AND...for those not real tech savvy you can even just call in using the telephone number!

Mallory Kelley is inviting you to a scheduled Auburn University Zoom e-meeting. If you're a new participant, we have a quick start guide here: <https://aub.ie/zoomquickstart>

Topic: Central Alabama Master Gardener Association Meeting

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/6392310534>

Connect using Computer/Device audio if possible.

Or Telephone: Meeting ID: 639 231 0534

Dial: +1 312 626 6799 (US Toll)

or +1 646 876 9923 (US Toll)

Or an H.323/SIP room system:

H.323: 162.255.37.11 (US West) or 162.255.36.11 (US East)

Meeting ID: 639 231 0534

SIP: 6392310534@zoomcrc.com

Lessons from the Learning Garden

By: Mary McCroan



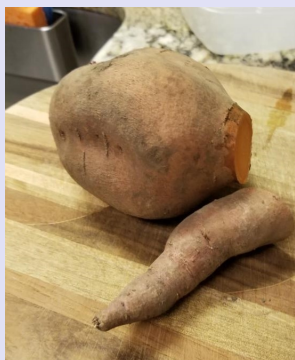
I hope that all Master Gardeners are doing well in these interesting times. And they are also uncertain times. We have already experienced shortages in the supermarket and we aren't sure about what is to come. So this is a great time to talk about growing your own food.

First--Swiss Chard in the Learning Garden has done great this year. It has really enjoyed the warm winter, cool spring and lots of rain. I grew just one last year, and although typically a cool weather annual, it over summered under the shade of the asparagus. It gets tough and less tasty in the hot weather, but this fall it came out with succulent and delicious new growth. This year, I planted the entire bed and we now have Swiss Chard coming out our ears. So what do I do with it. Well, cut a few stalks from as many plants as I want. Then, take them home and separate the stalks from the leaves. Cook the stalks with some onion in a little oil over low heat until tender. How long you say? Well until the nibble you take is tender enough for you. About half way through you can add the chopped up leaves. Or you can cook those separately. Yummy! Add a little vinegar if they seem to need a little something extra. I was also advised they would be better cooked in bacon fat (isn't everything?), but I didn't have any. Coconut oil worked just fine.





Lessons from the Learning Garden (Continued) By: Mary McCroan

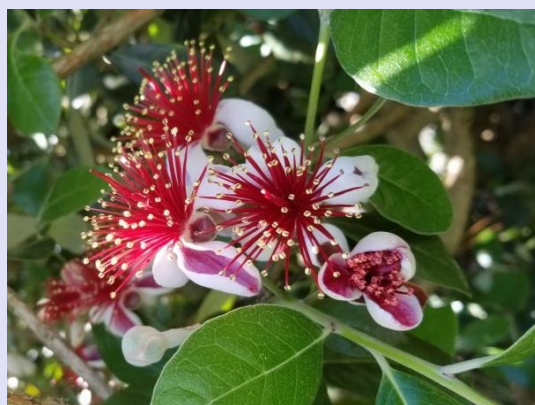


2nd--last year we planted eight varieties of sweet potatoes. I don't really like sweet potatoes cooked the traditional way. I like them better boiled and then mashed with butter, salt and some half-n-half. But to each her own. The really good news about sweet potatoes is that they are easy peasy to grow and after harvest they keep in a protected spot--unheated garage for me--all winter. The picture is of one we harvested last October and cooked up just a couple of days ago.

3rd--the white stuff that looks like a rattlesnake rattle is called rattlesnake weed or Florida betony (*Stachys floridana*). This is a weed that grows around our roses at the Extension. It is VERY invasive which means that it is easy to grow, but that if you plant it in your garden you will never get rid of it. But it is eatable and even fairly tasty.



And last up is the Pineapple Guava. It has also enjoyed our Spring weather and I've never seen so many flowers on it. We might have a real bumper crop of fruit this fall. It is a great landscape plant and makes a wonderful hedge or screen, the flowers and fruit are eatable, deer don't like it and most insect pest are not attracted. What's not to love!





Projects Committee Update

By: Terry Chambliss

Greetings from the Project Committee!

We hope everyone is well during this difficult and historic time but enjoying the extra time in the yard.

As you know it may take awhile to get back to normal. We hope to be able to do some of the projects that were still in the planning stages. These include:

September—Make and Take

Suggestions were small fountain, leaf bird bath, hypertufa, wooden bench, terracotta pot art, pot painting, stepping stones, Christmas ornaments and body care products.

October -----Member Plant Swap

November—Craft Day for the Dickens Christmas

Sachet bags. We need dried herbs such as lemon balm, mint, lavender, etc.

Cotton boll ornaments—We need cotton bolls and dried rose buds.

December---Dickens Christmas

This will involve a day for decorating the tree, two days of community participation and a day for un-decorating the tree.

It is doubtful we will be doing the project with the seniors this year.

I do apologize for not letting Judy May know the participants at the propagation workshop with Rhona on March 6. They were Cheri Youngblood, Jane Duke, Cindy Augustine, Carolyn Love-Dorsey, Sandra Bowen, Rhonda and Jesse Miles, Ann Carr, Cecelia Ball, Marilyn Knapp, Linda Edwards, Robin Snyder, Dee Turberville, Linda Queen, Candy Jones and Terry Chambliss. It was very informative and so well organized. And of course, Robin brought snacks and water. Thanks ladies.

Jane has almost completed the landscaping plan for the Presbyterian Church.

*Respectively submitted,
Terry Chambliss*



CAMGA Library News

May 2020

By: Dee Turberville

Creating Sanctuary

Now that we are sheltering in place, we have added time to create our personal garden sanctuary in our own backyard. This special place is where we can be in harmony with nature – where we can nurture our heart, mind, body and soul.



In *Creating Sanctuary*, Jessi Bloom, an ecological landscape designer and natural living expert, includes traditional plant wisdom to help you find a deeper connection to the outdoor space you have, no matter the size. You will learn how to design a healing space, how to discover the power of 50 sacred plants, and how to create recipes and rituals that soothe and calm.

With beautiful photos by Shawn Linehan, the first third of the book, *Creating Sacred Space*, focuses on how to create a garden sanctuary of 8 profiled havens. The last two sections, *Botanical Alchemy* and *Nurturing Self*, cover how to use plants for your health and your home. Within the first section, Jessi Bloom asks you to think about what you want most out of your garden: gathering space, art, light source, an entrance, etc.?

1. What are the needs in your garden? 100% necessary.
2. What are your wants? Would be nice to have...
3. What are your desires? No plans yet but might happen one day!

For example, in my back yard that borders a path for golf carts, I need plants for (1) both sun and shade that are (2) deer resistant, pollinator friendly, and (3) and will add more privacy.

Botanical Alchemy has a list and description of plants that are good for natural sanctuaries, some are herbs, some are woody plants. *Nurturing Self* looks at how to use your garden and plants for healing (herbal recipes) and rituals, such as creating an altar for meditation, creating space for exercise or journaling and for life-event ceremonies (a pet memorial). Plan to create your own personal oasis of renewal and rejuvenation with this 2019 engaging guide, *Creating Sanctuary*. Nature is Nurture!