



GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 28 Issue 8

Central Alabama Master Gardener Association

August 2019



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Message from:

Sandy Rosamond
CAMGA President



Happy August!

This cool spell has been a welcome relief from our usual hot and humid weather. But never fear, August is here and it will be a hot one.

As trained Master Gardeners of Alabama however, we know to make proper plant selection, soil preparation, water conservation, mulching and etc. to give our gardens the best chance of surviving.

I hope your gardens and landscapes survive the hot month of August. Fall is coming soon!

Stay Cool!

Sandy



CAMGA Garden Buzzzz



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

Work Now to Ensure a Healthy Crop of Blueberries Next Year

Blueberry season is quickly coming to an end in Central Alabama. We usually have blueberries through July, but with our mild winter and early spring temperatures the blueberries are about fizzled out. With that said, it is now time to start thinking about next year. A little maintenance now will ensure a healthy blueberry crop next year.

The most important thing you can do any time of year for a blueberry is water and weed control. Now that the plants are finished making berries the plants will begin to put their energy into making new shoots and branches. This is exactly what you want as the new growth between now and Fall is where the biggest and best berries will be next year. For optimal branch growth the plants will need water, mulch and a little boost of fertilizer. Make sure not to fertilize after mid September or the new tissue will be susceptible to frost damage.

Generally, blueberries need fertilizing twice a year, once in early spring and again as the berries fade away. Use a Urea based fertilizer or a fertilizer labeled for Azaleas/Camellias as this will help acidify the soil as blueberries like a low pH of 4.5-5.2. Have a soil test done if you have not had one in the past three years to know what nutrients are lacking and what the pH is.

Pruning blueberries now will multiply your berry production next year. As your plants start to grow long straight shoots/canes, clip these a little lower than where you would like to have the fruit next year. This means, if you want the fruit to be chest height, clip those canes about a foot lower. The more you clip (especially the long canes) the more branching you will get. The more branches you get, the more fruit you will have from those branches next year. Also remove any dead or diseased branches while you prune. Plant more blueberries this fall and remember to plant different varieties of “Rabbiteye” to prolong your season as different varieties produce at different times throughout the summer. Plant blueberries in full sun with a moist, well-aerated, well-drained soil, high in organic matter. Incorporate organic matter such as peat moss, compost, or fine pine bark into the soil and mulch around the plant to help in retaining water and suppressing weeds.





CAMGA Minutes

July 2019

By: **Deann Stone, Secretary**



Central Alabama Master Gardener Association Member Meeting Minutes — July 16, 2019

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

Speaker: Sandy introduced our speaker, Gary Gray, Regional Extension Agent from Chilton County. Mr. Gray shared information on easy healthy fruit you can grow. Have you ever made Muscadine Hull Cobbler? You can view a recipe at www.alabamaheritage.com

Some fruits are high maintenance to grow and require great attention to prevent disease. Look for disease resistant varieties. However, there are also many fruits that grow wild in our area that are easier to grow.

Presidents Report: They Hydroponic and Aquaponic tour is July 24. There is a group going to Farmer Brown's Paradise in Opelika. They farm using the rain gutter gardening method. You can find videos on YouTube. Candy will arrange the date and let those interested in going know the date. Rhonda shared that there is a place in Fitzpatrick called Sprouts. They grow wheat seed from New England and mill it to make bread. You can learn more about how the grow and mill wheat at www.healthyflour.com.

The next Master Gardener class begins September 5. Sandy challenged each member to identify one person to participant in the intern program beginning in September. How can YOU get the word out to your circle of friends? Take the challenge and grow our membership!

Secretary's Report: Last month's minutes were shared in the news letter. The minutes were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Quailles' presented the Financial Report for June 2019. The beginning balance was \$6,281.01, a revenue of \$322.00, expenses of \$146.00, leaving an ending balance of \$6,457.01. The report was approved by acclamation.

Projects Reports: Terry gave everyone a reminder about the fairy garden project. Please wear your red apron (over your clothes) :-) if you are participating in the project. The location is 10286 US 231, Cedarwood Community Church. Please be there by 8:30.

If you are interested in purchasing a tee shirt or red apron, please let Terry know.

Awards - Leigh Ann presented the Robin Award to Candy Jones.
Lois Pribulick was awarded her 2000 hour platinum badge. Congratulations, ladies!

The meeting concluded at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deann K. Stone



Learning Garden Report

By: Mary McCroan

Our Thursday morning group varies depending on other commitments, but Katrina Mitchell, Mary McCroan, Jane Mobley, Virginia Pruitt, Candy Jones, Amanda Borden, Deborah Kelso, Terry Chambliss, John Barnes and Bill Quailes are the crew keeping things looking good.



Summer heat is getting us a little droopy, but the water garden is a refreshing element in the landscape with the look and sound of the water making you think you are cooler.



Jane continues to try new plants in the butterfly garden and there is always something blooming for our pollinators.

Terry Chambliss' artichokes produced fruit and now are looking pretty sad in our Alabama summer.



We are keeping a couple of plants going to see if they survive and then perk up when temps moderate. We planted some new types of winter squash this year and they are doing well so far.

Katrina is experimenting with yard long beans - they don't usually really reach 36 inches, but hers are up to about 20 and looking good.



The sweet potato bed looks like it will be a great success if we can go by all of the happy foliage. The true test will be when it comes time to dig.





July 2019 Lunch and Learn By: Charlotte Hall

“Snake Identification” By: Mary McCroan

With all the heat that we have been having in the last few months, tales of snake sightings are more frequent, and there may also be an increase in snakebites. Since snakes are cold-blooded creatures, they rely on external environmental features to regulate their body temperature – either lying in the sun to warm up or slithering into the shade to cool down. Therefore, you can see that there should be an increase in snake activity during the warmer weather. They probably get in the sun for a while and then, if they are like me, they are looking for a shade later in the day!

I found it interesting to learn that since snakes are cold-blooded, it gives them an advantage over other animals in the wild. Because they don't generate body heat, they don't need to eat anywhere near as much food as mammals and other warm-blooded creatures. This means that snakes can spend more time mating or hiding from predators, which can be a huge advantage for them.

Ever since the Garden of Eden, snakes have gotten a bad rap and an unfounded reputation as being inherently evil or bad. Most people have the attitude that all snakes are harmful and should be eliminated. I know I have heard many people say that the only good snake is a dead snake. Mary McCroan pointed out that more people die of bee stings each year than they die from snake bites. Also, if you really want to be overly cautious, avoid the bathtub. Statistics indicate that one is 67 times more likely to suffer a bathtub injury than a snake bite. Also, snakes are environmentally beneficial to us. They eat rodents, frogs, lizards, some other snakes, insects, bugs and other things that are a nuisance or harmful in your garden.

Mary attempted to disprove many of the snake myths that are rampant and perpetuated in the South. For instance, snakes do not have stingers. The hoop snake will not put its tail in its mouth and roll down the road like a round hoop. A coach whip will not whip you with its tail. Female snakes do not keep their young in their mouth. One fact that is true, however, is that snakes can bite underwater.

There are only four poisonous snakes in Alabama – copperhead, cotton-mouth moccasin, rattlesnake and coral snake. There are several different rattlesnakes located in Alabama which are timber rattlesnake, pygmy rattlesnake and the Eastern diamondback rattlesnake. Mary wanted to cover the venomous snakes at the first of her program, so she listed the characteristics of the poisonous snakes and how to determine if the snake is poisonous or non-poisonous. The poisonous Alabama snakes, other than the coral snake, are all pit vipers. Vipers have thicker bodies than non-poisonous snakes. They have a narrow neck before the large triangular head starts. The pupils are different and are like cat eyes, instead of being round. They also have a deep vertical pit, or a facial pit located between each eye and nostril on both sides of the head which are heat-sensing organs used to hunt prey. Round eyes would indicate a non-poisonous snake.

Mary later showed slides of different snakes and identified their distinctive markings. Juvenile snakes may have different markings than adult snakes. An adult copperhead has a definite pattern on its side which looks like a wedge-shaped large Hershey's kiss. They are usually 2-3 feet in length. If you see a snake with a yellow tip on its tail, it probably is a juvenile copperhead.

Cotton-mouth moccasins are poisonous and have some distinct characteristics. They are identified by the white coloration in its mouth which it prominently displays to anyone who happens to be close. It has the distinctive triangular head and its body is quite thick. It is generally found near water, and it is an aggressive snake. They have been reported to chase intruders. They are very buoyant and when swimming, their head and about half of their body is visible. Most non-poisonous water snakes swim low in the water and only show their head when swimming. If you see a snake in water and you can see its body, as well as its head, it is most likely poisonous. The younger ones have brighter coloration.



July Lunch and Learn (Continued)

By: Charlotte Hall



Rattlesnakes are known for their relatively heavy bodies and their diamond-shaped heads. Most rattlesnakes have a rattle or a partial rattle made of interlocking rings, or segments of keratin. When vibrated, the rattle makes a hissing sound that warns off potential predators. They also have the characteristic pit on each side of the head. Timber rattlers usually have brown stripes down their back, live everywhere in both swampy and dry areas, and grow relatively large in Alabama and the Southeast. They eat little things such as small mammals and birds. The timber rattlesnake is less dangerous than the diamondback. The Eastern diamondback is a daytime hunter and the largest of the poisonous snakes found here. The topside contains the characteristic yellow diamond shapes surrounding by black and brown centers. It has a large and distinctive head. It is a good swimmer and gives birth in late summer to early fall. The pygmy rattlesnake is rarely found in Alabama and is most common in Florida. Its rattle is tiny and because of its small size, it may not be easily or readily heard. It is pugnacious and eats mice, lizards, and various insects.

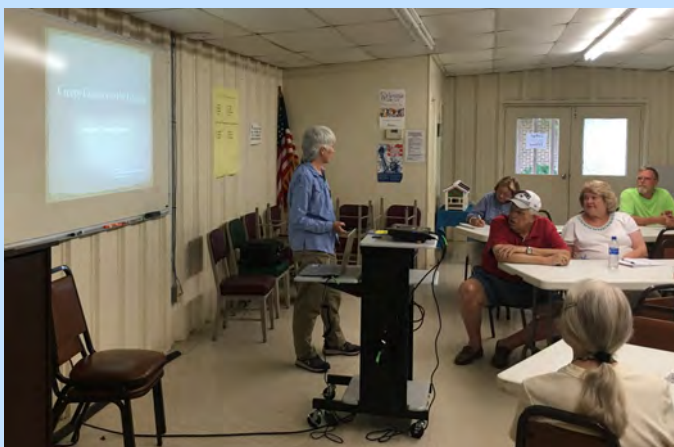
The coral snake is not a very common snake for our part of Alabama. It is located in South Alabama, Florida and along the coastal Carolinas. It is found mostly south and north of our area. Though poisonous, it is not a pit viper. The saying of "Black on yellow, kill a fellow" can help distinguish the poisonous coral snake from other non-poisonous snakes which have similar markings but a different color pattern.

The remaining portion of Mary's presentation consisted of slides and descriptions of non-poisonous snakes which outnumbered the poisonous ones by a large margin. Among the common non-poisonous snakes found in our area are the Northern scarlet snake, milk snake, worm snake, ring-neck snake, black racer, Eastern ribbon snake, Eastern coachwhip, grey rat snake, king snake, corn snake, red-bellied snake, black king snake, hognose snake, yellow-bellied water snake, and the Midland brown snake. The photos were very informative, and the physical characteristics were discussed in detail.

There are many non-poisonous snakes in Alabama, and the snakes cover a large range in size, shape, color and distinctive tendencies. Most are not harmful and provide an ecological service to mankind. Juvenile snakes may be of a different color such as the juvenile black racer which has a pattern in its younger stages that becomes a solid black as an adult. Most non-poisonous snakes are docile and will not bother humans when they are not provoked. However, the black racer can be very aggressive and will bite. Many snakes are also good climbers, as well as good swimmers.

Snakes have a purpose on this earth and though widely hated and feared by many, they should be recognized as formidable reptiles that deserve respect. Being able to determine a poisonous snake from a non-poisonous snake will enable one to view snakes with a better appreciation for their role in our environment without automatically being fearful of all varieties.

For those of us who do not have acreage and a lot of space for gardening, the next Lunch and Learn program is just for you! Please join us on August 13th for a presentation on Unique Ideas to Gardening in Small Places with advanced master gardener, Glenn Huovinen. It's always fun to hear how creative people can develop imaginative ways to approach old gardening techniques. I'm sure it's going to be another hot day in August, so join us in an airconditioned cool room and learn some new ideas for small space gardening. We'll have cool air, an interesting program and some refreshments. Hope to see you then!





Governor's Mansion Report July 2019 By: Amanda Borden



In July, the volunteers at the Governor's Mansion diligently worked in the gardens despite the heat and humidity. They watered, weeded, cut back, and trimmed in the Herb Garden; pruned the saw palmetto, removing seeds; trimmed azaleas and hollies near the Fleming garden; and trimmed Lady Banks trailing branches that were in the sight line. They worked in the forsythia bed between the pool and the guest house and watered and weeded across the front of the Mansion. They weeded and tidied up along the driveways, parking lot, back yard, and in the pool area.

For those of you who are unfamiliar, the three Master Gardener groups surrounding Montgomery—Autauga (ACMGA), Central Alabama (CAMGA), and Montgomery (CCMGA) have been working in the Governor's Mansion gardens for six years. We are successfully restoring the gardens using correct pruning techniques, period-appropriate plants, and weed control using hand pulling and mulch.

If you would like to begin volunteering at the Governor's Mansion, please contact Jane McCarthy at macandjane@att.net or (334) 221-9936.





Projects Committee Minutes July 2019

By: Terry Chambliss

Minutes Project Committee Meeting July 9, 2019

Those present were: Johan Beumer, Bill Quails, Terry Chambliss and Robin Snyder, guest.

Robin discussed the extensive recruiting efforts for the next class and the lack of interest. To date, six applications have been received. She will bring recruiting literature to the senior fairy gardening event on July 18.

We discussed the pros and cons of intern classes on line, Saturday and evening classes, providing child care, the Junior Master Gardener program, and tapping into the home schooling population getting parents and children involved alike. Bill volunteered to contact Mallory to discuss our ideas.

No further new business was discussed.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Chambliss

Helpline News

June-July 2019

By: **Mary Ann Hatcher**



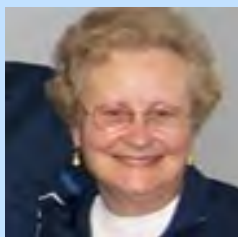
Calls to the Helpline have been steady with a variety of concerns. Of note, we have received word that the Fall Armyworm will possibly be arriving earlier than usual and wreaking havoc with lawns and pastures.

Assisting clients with concerns in June were: Interns Sue Morris and Sita Williams, along with Master Gardeners Sandi Rosamond, Ricky Hatcher, Katrina Mitchell, and John Barnes.

Assisting Clients in July were: Pat Petro-Perryman, Ricky Hatcher, Andy Wallace, and Linda Jennings. Sharon Potts was our Appointment Reminder. Mary Ann Klatt, Cathy Whigham, and Mary Ann Hatcher served as Advisors.



**Sita Williams and Sue Morris
worked the Helpline**



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERS

July 2019

By: Judy May

Volunteering at Lanark this month were Leslie Bingham, Carla McCune, Sue Brasel, Dee Turberville, Norman Turnipseed and Judy May.

The speaker for Lunch and Learn July 10 was Mary McCroan speaking on Snake Identification. Assisting were Bill Quailes, Cathy Whigham, and Charlotte Hall. There were 25 attendees, 17 of them Master Gardeners.

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

Members who brought food to the monthly meeting were Carolyn Placeway, Robin Snyder, Rhonda Miles, Bonnie McCormick, Leslie Bingham, Carol Rattan, and Sandy Rosamond.

Jane Mobley did a presentation on Pruning for the Capitol City Master Gardener Lunch and Learn on July 3. Thirty-five members were present.

On July 11 Sandy Rosamond, Rhona Watson, Terry Chambliss, Candy Jones and Jane Mobley worked on preparing materials for the senior center project.

Attending the Projects Committee meeting this month were Johan Beumer, Bill Quailes, Terry Chambliss and guest Robin Snyder.

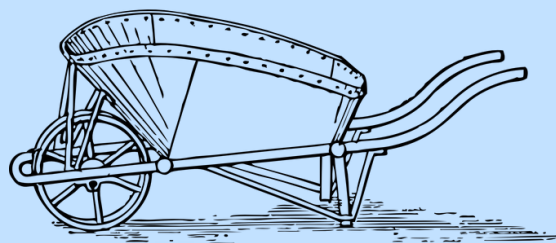
Members who filled pots for the Fairy Gardens Project were Jane Mobley, Rhona Watson, Sandy Rosamond, Candy Jones and Terry Chambliss.

Working in the Learning Gardens this month were Mary McCroan, Candy Jones, John Barnes, Bill Quailes, and Debra Kelso.

Members who volunteered at the Senior Center for the Fairy Garden workshop were Cheryl Fitzgerald, Robin Snyder, Jane Mobley, Rhona Watson, Johan Beumer, Iva Haynie, Betty Plaster, Rhonda Miles, Cecelia Ball, Candy Jones Sandy Rosamond, Linda Jarzyniecki, Ann Carr and Terry Chambliss. Judy May attended briefly.

Working the Helpline this month were Linda Jennings, Pat Petro-Perryman, Ricky Hatcher, Andy Wallace, Cathy Whigham, Sharon Potts, and Mary Ann Hatcher.

Working at the Governor's mansion this month was Amanda Borden.



CAMGA Library News

By: Dee Turberville

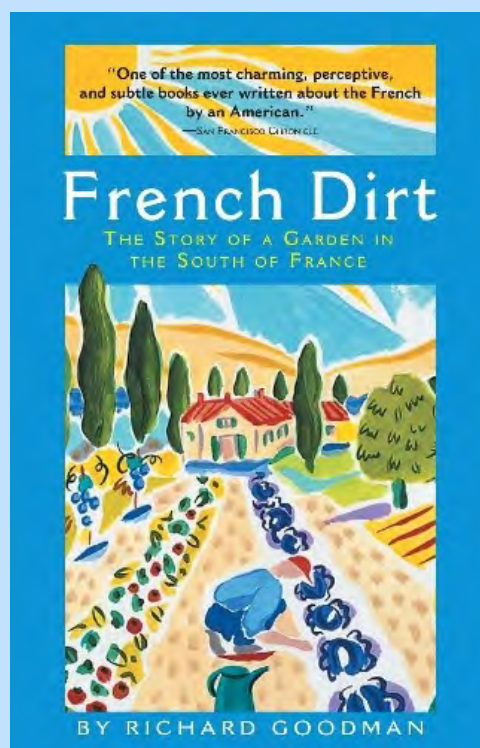


French Dirt: the Story of a Garden in the South of France

By Richard Goodman

Too hot to garden? *French Dirt* will not change your life or give you much horticultural advice, but if you yearn for travel, want a pleasant read for your vacation, or have a comforting read on your bedside nightstand, this book might be the perfect story for you—that is, **if you are a gardener.**

“A story about dirt—and about sun, water, work, elation, and defeat. And about the sublime pleasure of having a little piece of French land all to oneself to till. Richard Goodman saw the ad in the paper: ‘SOUTHERN FRANCE; Stone house in Village near Nimes/Avignon’Uzes. 4BR, 2 baths, fireplace, books, desk, bikes. Perfect for writing, painting, exploring and experiencing la France profonde. \$450 mo. plus utilities.’ And with his Dutch girlfriend, he left New York City to spend a year in southern France. The village was small—no shops, no gas station, no post office, only a café and a school. St. Sebastien de Caisson was home to farmers and vintners. Every evening Goodman watched the villagers congregate and longed to be a part of their camaraderie. But they weren’t interested in him; he was just another American, come to visit and soon to leave. So Goodman laced up his work boots and ventured out into the vineyards to work among them. He met them first as a hired worker, and then as a farmer of his own small plot of land. *French Dirt* is a love story between a man and his garden. It’s about plowing, planting, watering, and tending. It’s about cabbage, tomatoes, parsley, and eggplant. Most of all, it’s about the growing friendship between an American outsider and a close-knit community of French farmers. There’s a genuine sweetness about the way the cucumbers and tomatoes bridge the divide of nationality.” --The New York Times Book Review



The prose of Richard Goodman’s nonfiction memoir is simple and inviting. A cultural tidbit—most vegetable gardens in France are tended by men, not women. You will learn about the opinionated and competitive nature of these Provincial gardeners who appreciate Goodman’s bumbling efforts and, in time, offer him advice and assistance. You may identify with Goodman’s delights and worries about his garden as well as the generosity of fellow gardeners – whether here or in the South of France.



August 2019 Gardening Tips

By: Jane H. McCarthy

What I try to do in August...

Semi-hardwood stem cuttings can be propagated off your favorite azalea, camellia, hydrangea

This year's growth...not old and hard growth, or new and fleshy growth

Cut 4-6" long stems with only 2-3 leaves and no flowers

Rooting hormone (follow pkg. directions)

6-8 weeks in perlite or very light potting mix, then bump up and keep protected over winter

Hand mist several times a day

Branch tip growth usually roots faster than side shoot growth

Branch air-layer French hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*)

Remove spent flowers off a branch that can be gently brought down to the soil without breaking

Scratch the underside of the branch

Gently lay it on the soil and lightly cover with mulch

Place a rock/brick on top of the branch

Patience wait until next spring and if your roots are robust, separate your new hydrangea plant from the parent

Some perennials and herbs can be renewal pruned now if they are leggy and have tiny new growth coming out at their base

Old blackberry canes that fruited this year should be cut back to the plant crown to allow for new growth that will fruit next year

Start seeds in the garden...turnip, rutabaga, beans, and peas for your late summer garden

Start seeds in containers...broccoli, cabbage, collards, and lettuce for your fall garden

However, this is actually what I will do in July, August, September, October, and November:

I will learn all I can about Invasive Ductal Carcinoma (IDC)

I will start chemotherapy to shrink my IDC tumor

I will have a lumpectomy to remove what is leftover

I will remind any and every one to regularly check their breasts and get their annual mammogram

Fairy Gardens Senior Center Project July 2019

Submitted by: Jane Mobley



On July 18th nineteen seniors made fairy gardens. Everyone had a great time!

Several of them said that making the gardens was addictive, and that they were going to make more.

They wanted to know when we could come back and do other things with them!



Calendar of Events



August 2019

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

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