



# GARDEN BUZZZZZZ



Volume 32 Issue 4 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association

## April 2023

### Message from Kelly

*Kelly Lafreniere*

*CAMGA President*



Hello fellow gardeners. I hope you all are doing well and enjoying this warm weather.

I'm looking forward to the plant sale on Saturday— May the 6th, and I hope everyone is potting up their plants and starting plants from seeds for the 2023 CAMGA plant sale! It will be a wonderful event this year!

Please join Mary McCroan on Monday April 24th from 8 to 12 noon to clean up the learning gardens.

Master Gardeners will be working at Earth Day which will be held at the Wetumpka Farmer's Market on April 15th so bring a plant to swap!

Community Market will be held Thursday April 6 following our annual AMGA Conference on April 3rd, 4th and 5th in Tuscaloosa!

LAST WEEKEND I SAW MY FIRST HUMMINGBIRD OF THE YEAR!! I was so excited! It's time to put your hummingbird feeders out if you haven't already done so.

Enjoy working in your gardens and stay well. I look forward to seeing everyone at this month's meeting.

*Kelly*

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*Carol Pugh — Editor  
Garden Buzzzz  
Newsletter*



## Message from Mallory

**Mallory Kelley**  
Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds,

### Spring Temperature Swings in the Garden

Can you believe the weather we have had lately? The last 2 weeks of February felt more like May and even June and it sure caused plants to wake up early thinking spring was here.

The bug that always bites me first is planting spring vegetables and plants like lettuce, kale, spinach, broccoli, collards and cabbage, which are all great additions to the garden. They love the cold crisp air, but once the temperatures start to rise and we get those hot days like we had, even those crops will begin to “bolt” which means start to flower to set seed and die.

Plants like tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, okra, corn, all of these really like it hot, so resist the urge to plant them early, as they will sit and wait on the temps to rise in the air and also the soil before they will begin to grow and they are very tender to a frost so if you plant early, you run the risk of having to replant later. Mid April is our recommended planting date for central Alabama for those summer vegetables.

When you do start to prune, any plant material that is dead from the winter freeze remove it, but for other pruning needs, remember the “May Rule” or you may be removing buds, resulting in a garden with no beautiful flowers. The “May Rule” is “If it blooms before May, prune it right after it blooms, if it blooms after May, it can be pruned when it is dormant in the fall or winter.” But some plants are exceptions to this rule so always check before pruning to make sure.

It is also a great time of year to get your soil tested. Soil tests are available through the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and cost seven dollars. We recommend you retest the soil every 3-4 years to see what additional nutrients might be needed to improve the growth of your plants. Plants like blueberries, camellias, and azaleas require a low pH and need acidic soil to grow healthy.

Applying new mulch around existing shrubs, a perennial or annual bed, a large planting of new shrubs, or your vegetable garden each year is always a good idea. This will help prepare your plants for the hot summer temperatures that are quickly approaching along with many other benefits. Mulch helps conserve moisture so less watering is needed which saves you a lot of time pulling weeds, but also saves on your water bill. In addition, mulch will add nutrients to the soil as it breaks down over time.

However, you do not want mulch to become too thick and piled up around the base of trees as this can hold moisture in the bark and cause rotting over time and invite insects. Make sure that the flare of the tree where it meets the ground is still visible!

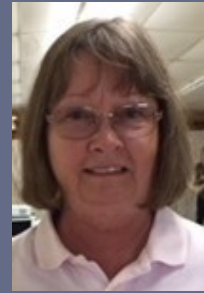
Those are just a few tips you can be doing now in the garden, but also things you can prepare for in the next few months to help improve the success and beauty of your garden or landscape.

# CAMGA Minutes

March 21, 2023

First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka

By: Sheila Radford, Secretary



Sandy introduced speaker, David Doggett, an advanced master gardener. David presented the program, “I’ve Got Those Hydrangea Blues”. Big leaf or French hydrangeas were first cultivated in Japan. The hydrangea petals are actually sepals, or modified leaves, with colors ranging from pale pastels to vibrant violets, blues, pinks, and reds.

The pH, or potential Hydrogen, helps determine whether the blooms in a particular location will be pink or blue. Blue blooms need acidic soil (less than 6). Pink blooms need more alkaline soil (greater than 6). However, the pH of the soil is not the only thing that determines the color of hydrangeas. The availability of aluminum in the soil is a large factor too. Aluminum (Al) is the 13<sup>th</sup> element and the most common one found in the Earth’s crust. It is not an essential ingredient for plant growth.

David’s practical advice for blue hydrangea blooms includes: (1) Get a soil test. (2) Plant in peat moss. (3) Mulch with pine straw. (4) Use a low phosphorus fertilizer--( the middle #). (5) Try adding Al sulfate around the plant. Use no more than one tablespoon to a gallon of water and apply this in March, April, or May. Too much of this will kill the plant. (6) Do not plant near concrete, brick, or gravel. If this can’t be avoided, then grow bushes in containers. (7) BE PATIENT

For pink hydrangeas he suggests:

( 1) Get a soil test. (2) Add lime to the soil. (3) Use a fertilizer high in phosphorus. (4) Place in ground bushes near concrete and brick structures and gravel paths. (5) BE PATIENT

## RECAP HYDRANGEA COLORING FACTS

- 1) A single pigment is responsible for color.
- 2) That pigment’s default color is pink/red.
- 3) Different hydrangea cultivars have varying amounts of this pigment.
- 4) Vividness of color depends on concentration of the pigment.
- 5) Al ions are key to turning blooms blue (they compose 8% of Earth’s crust).
- 6) Acidic soils (6.0 pH or less) let Al become mobile and absorbable.
- 7) Citric acid exuded by the plant’s roots become “welcome mats” that detoxify Al ions and enable these ions to enter the plant.
- 8) Al travels through the plant and reacts with the pigment to change the molecular structure and thus the color (to blue).

David Doggett’s presentation ended at 11:00 a.m.

# CAMGA March21, 2023 Minutes (Continued)

By: Sheila Radford, Secretary

Kelly called the meeting to order at 11:21a.m. Twenty-two member signed the attendance sheet. CAMGA does need to know how many people attend meetings. Please remember to put your name down.

There are numerous health concerns for members and their families. Lynda Edwards had significant storm damage to her home on March 26. Mallory's son, Hudson, was bitten by a poisonous snake, but is now recovering at home. Cindy Augustine's brother-in-law died unexpectedly. Please remember these folks and any others in prayer.

A decision has been made that CAMGA will continue to have meetings and the Lunch & Learns at the First Presbyterian Church, and not return to the Extension Auditorium for these events.

Kelly announced that the minutes for February's meeting are available in the Garden Buzz for anyone to read. Connie Willis moved to dispense with reading the minutes and this was seconded by Michelle Sharpton. In August 2022, Alabama Cooperative Extension System (not CAMGA) was awarded \$2,497.00 by the Elmore County Community Foundation to be used to expand the Learning Gardens.

In Sherri's absence, Kelly gave the treasurer's report:

## Treasurer's Financial Report

Beginning Balance for February 21, 2023	\$22,535.34
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### INCOME:

Membership dues	225.00
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### EXPENSES:

Reach for the Stars	45.27
Plant sale signage	76.54
Project m&t	466.17
Mardi Gras	352.14
Business cards	<u>70.55</u>

<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$1,010.67</u>
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<b>ENDING CASH BALANCE as of (March 20,2023)</b>	<b>\$21,749.67</b>
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- The check written to the American Diabetes Association has cleared.
- There are 70 members that have paid their 2023 dues. Anida will be mailing out reminder letters to those who have not yet paid, and she will start eliminating names in May or June.



## CAMGA March 21, 2023 Minutes (Continued)

By: Sheila Radford, Secretary

Sandy has received word from Don Armstrong that he will be unable to host the April meeting due to pending foot surgery. She has planned a field trip for June 7<sup>th</sup> to visit Young's Plant Farm on Airport Rd. in Auburn. Departure time will be 7 a.m. Sandy needs volunteers to serve on a field trip committee. Terry, Rhona, Dee, and Jane Mobley volunteered.

### Michelle gave the 2022 Reach for the Stars report:

Mary informed members about a scheduled Learning Gardens Clean-up Day prior to the plant sale. This will be on Monday, April 24 from 8-12 noon. She is also looking for members willing to do brief presentations or guide tours of the gardens the day of the plant sale. Robin stressed the need for members to start signing up to bring refreshments to CAMGA meetings. She also addressed the need for increased efforts to publicize the plant sale. Dee and Darlene are the publicity team, but anyone can put this information on their Facebook pages.

Rhona presented a proposal for the Memorial Brick Patio. It will be located in the area in front of the shade garden at the Extension Office. Its dimensions are 12 ft x 8 ft with the approximate capacity of 450 bricks. The installation cost is \$2600.00 and CAMGA is buying 17 bricks to be engraved bringing the total to \$3000.00. One of these bricks will be in honor of Mallory Kelley, and one is in honor of Rick Beauchamp. The others are in memory of CAMGA members who are deceased. CAMGA members will have ample opportunities to purchase engraved bricks as well. This is a wonderful way to honor people that make CAMGA a great place to learn about agriculture and engage with each other and the community. The first order of bricks will cost \$30.00 each with shipping included. Subsequent orders will cost \$40.00 per brick.

Jane has spoken to Becky Brown's husband, and he has endorsed spending the \$600.00 donated in memory of Becky toward this project.

A motion to approve this project was made by Jane Mobley and seconded by Bonnie McCormick and was passed unanimously by CAMGA members.

The brick patio was installed March 31, 2023. Make checks payable to CAMGA. The order form with instructions can be found at link below:

<http://camga.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Brick-Order-Form.pdf>

Old business: None

New business: None

2022 Volunteer "Reach for the Stars" Awards	
AMGA Award Nominees from CAMGA:	
Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award:	Lee Borden 3818.04 Lifetime Hours
Top Hours of the Year Award:	Kelly LaFreniere 322 Volunteer Hours
Honorable Mention for Volunteer Hours:	Terry Chambliss 320.4 Hours
Reach for the Stars Advanced Badge & Star Recipients:	
Platinum Badge:	Terry Chambliss 2296.65 Lifetime Hours
Platinum Badge:	Rhonda Miles 2003 Lifetime Hours
Reach for the Stars (Star Pin) Award Recipients:	
Gold Star (500-999 hours):	
Alan Griffith:	616.5 Lifetime Hours
Sheila Radford:	592.7 Lifetime Hours
Constance Willis:	528.25 Lifetime Hours
Betty Plaster:	527.76 Lifetime Hours
Silver Star (300-499 hours):	
Cheryl Fitzgerald:	392.86 Lifetime Hours
Cindy Augustine:	333.55 Lifetime Hours
Bronze Star (100-299 hours):	
Michelle Gentry-Sharpston:	201.3 Lifetime Hours
Sherri Davidson:	198.25 Lifetime Hours
Diane Wonderly:	186.75 Lifetime Hours
Jay Maguire:	143 Lifetime Hours
Teresa Paglione:	128 Lifetime Hours

***Minutes respectfully submitted by,  
Sheila Radford, Secretary***



## CAMGA Library News

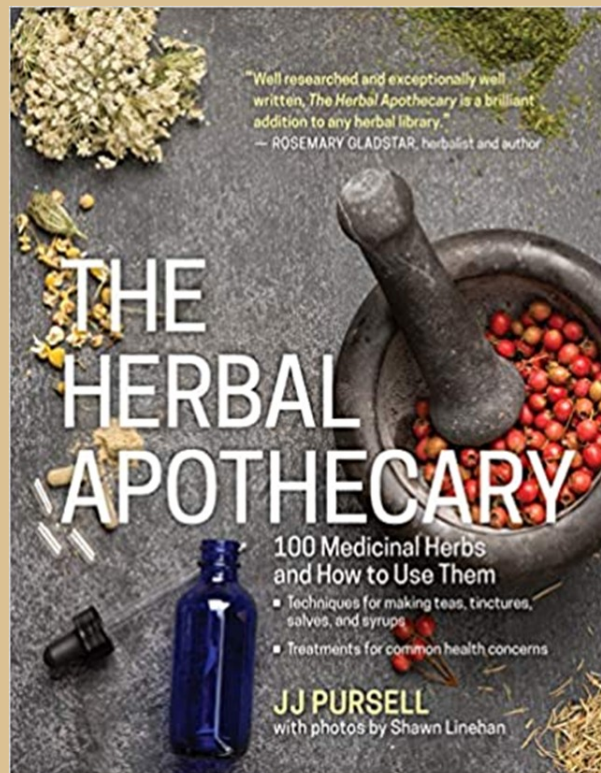
April 2023

By: Dee Turberville

### The Herbal Apothecary; 100 Medicinal Herbs and How to Use Them

By JJ Pursell

Plant-based medicines offer many healing possibilities for the body, mind, and spirit. Naturopath JJ Pursell provides a comprehensive introduction to medicinal plants. She explains how they work and how to use them safely. Shawn Donnille, co-owner of Mountain Rose Herbs, states, "Without a doubt, this fine volume has made it onto my permanent bookshelf."



The book features profiles of the 100 most important medicinal plants, including information on medicinal uses, identification, cultivation, as well as recipes for common concerns. Additional information includes step-by-step instructions for making herbal teas, tinctures, compresses, salves, and more. This holistic guide includes treatments for men, women, and children that address a variety of concerns: acne, muscle strain, the flu, the common cold, insomnia, anxiety, skin conditions, IBS, and childhood bumps/bruises, plus more. I liked Pursell's advice on growing and foraging for healing plants that fight common ailments.





## Governor's Mansion Report For March 2023

By: Amanda Borden



March at the Governor's Mansion saw the continuation of Herb Garden path renovation and weeding.

We had a rose pruning workshop on March 13 in which we welcomed two new volunteers from CCMGA: Sue Berry and Alicia Robertson.

Later we cut back lantana, confederate rose, wisteria, planted seven silky dogwood in the Serenity Garden, and started weeding there.





## Governor's Mansion Report (Continued)

### For March 2023

By: Amanda Borden



Jane devises an ingenious way to compress rose pruning debris and make room for more!





## CAMGA Projects Minutes March 14, 2023 By: Terry Chambliss

Those present were Jason Mattox, Deborah Kelso, Jane Mobley, Kelly LaFreniere, Sandy Rosamond, Darlene Dixon, Rebecca Ridley, Rhona Watson, Terry Chambliss and guest Mary McCroan.

It was decided to change the meeting time to 10:00 am instead of 9:30am in the future. It will remain on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. There will be enough time for the meeting and to get to the Presbyterian Church for Lunch and Learn.

Mary has been recruiting helpers for the new garden plan all along. She would like to have a general clean up day at the gardens before the plant sale. She initially suggested April 17<sup>th</sup> but later had to change the date to April 24<sup>th</sup> from 8am-12:00 p.m. She will make a list of everything that needs to be done. A signup sheet will be available at the next CAMGA meeting.

Rhona will prepare a signup sheet for air layering at Dr. Mitchell's house scheduled on April 6<sup>th</sup> from 8 --10:00 am. We have ten volunteers signed up for Earth Day.

Rhona updated the committee about the memorial brick project. A 12'X8' patio cost \$3000 while the 6'X8' will be \$2000. These costs include the bricks, shipping and installation. The committee agreed that a larger brick patio would make a better statement. It might be that an urn or sculpture could be placed in the center for added interest. Locations were evaluated as the group walked the area in the Learning Gardens and the area between the kitchen and office. It was agreed this area would be better suited.

It was suggested to use bricks from a local vendor instead of used bricks from Selma that would cost more. An engraved brick costs \$25. Rhona compiled 17 names that CAMGA might consider to honor. For those wishing to purchase bricks on their own, it was suggested to charge \$30 with the initial order and \$40 thereafter. It was decided to cap the cost of the whole project at \$3000. It was mentioned that with time, the project will start generating revenue after the initial expense.

Sherri shared that the money donated in honor of Becky Brown might be used to offset the cost since it has not been designated for anything to date. It is around \$650. Jane volunteered to contact Bob Brown for his approval. After a rather lengthy discussion, Rhona moved to present this information to the membership for approval at the next meeting. Jane seconded and the motion carried without any dissenting votes.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

*Respectively submitted by,  
Terry Chambliss*

# CAMGA Engraved Brick Patio Memorial

By: Rhona Watson

We are going to create a brick patio in the area in front of the shade garden at the Extension Office.

CAMGA is going to buy 17 engraved bricks to honor the people, who are no longer with us, that made our organization a great place to learn about agriculture and engage with each other and the community.

If you have someone you would like to honor with an engraved brick the price will be \$30 for orders submitted by May 15th. In the future the bricks will be \$40.

If you have questions contact Rhona Watson at: 334-201-2410

(See link below to print brick order form)

<http://camga.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Brick-Order-Form.pdf>



## CAMGA BRICK ORDER FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

You have 20 spaces and three rows to input your letters. Use the boxes below to write in capital letters what you want engraved on your brick. The letters will be centered by the brick company

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1																				
2																				
3																				

Give your completed form and money to Rhona Watson. The cost per brick is \$30 for the first order only.

Please make checks out to CAMGA, or if you bring cash, please put it in an envelope with your name on it.

We will be doing 2 more orders per year based on interest, at \$40 per brick. May 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the initial order. You can bring your order form to a meeting, the plant sale, or mail it to me at:

Rhona Watson  
1160 Emerald Mountain Parkway  
Wetumpka AL 36093.

You can call or text me at 334-201-2410 with any questions.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### SUCCESSFUL *Aging* INITIATIVE

PRESENTS



**Wetumpka Civic Center**  
410 S Main Street | Wetumpka, AL 36092

**Wednesday, April 26, 2023 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

*Receive valuable information to prepare for weather events and learn the importance of weather radios, how to follow local weather reports, and other tips and strategies to related to preparing and recovering from disasters.*

**Free Weather Radio to first 50 registrants**  
**To register, call 334.567.6301**





The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educational employer. Everyone is welcome. Please let us know if you have accessibility needs. [www.aces.edu](http://www.aces.edu)

## Backyard Tomato Workshop



Hosted by the  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

**Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> 2023**

Autauga County Agriculture Center  
Autauga Extension Office  
2226 Hwy 14 West, Autaugaville, AL

**9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**



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Topics to be discussed:

Tomato Varieties and Culinary Uses • Tomato Growing Tips • Identifying Tomato Diseases & Disorders with Control Recommendation

\*Snacks and Waters will be provided

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For more information, contact the Autauga County Extension office at (334) 361-7273. Cost is \$15 per person & you will receive a Tomato Plant to take home.

**Pre-Registration and Payment is required by Friday, April 21st.**

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To Register please visit the link below:  
<https://www.aces.edu/go/tomato>

If you have a smartphone, go to the camera app and open as if to take a picture. Hover over the QR Code below and the link will appear to direct you to registration/payment link:









# April 2023



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1
2	3 Governor Mansion Gardens 8-11 a.m.  AMA Annual Conference	4  AMA Annual Conference	5 Lanark Gardens 8-11 a.m.  AMA Annual Conference	6 Learning Gardens 8-11 a.m. Extension Office  Air Layering Camellias 10-1 p.m. Dr. Mitchell's home,  1st Thurs. Community Market 4-7 p.m. Wetzumpka	7	8
9 	10 Governor Mansion Gardens 8-11 a.m.	11 Projects Meeting at Extension Office 10 a.m.  Lunch & Learn— First Presbyterian Church 12-1	12 Lanark Gardens 8-11 a.m.	13 Learning Gardens 8-11 a.m. Extension Office	14	15
16	17 Governor Mansion Gardens 8-11 a.m.	18 CAMGA Monthly Meeting First Presbyterian Church 10-12	19 Lanark Gardens 8-11 a.m.	20 Learning Gardens 8-11 a.m. Extension Office	21	22
23	24 Governor Mansion Gardens 8-11 a.m.  Clean-up Day at Extension Learning Gardens 8-12 noon	25	26 Lanark Gardens 8-11 a.m.	27 Learning Gardens 8-11 a.m. Extension Office	28	29
30						