



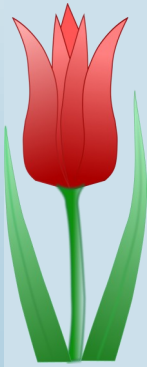
# GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 34 Issue 3 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.

## March 2025

**Message from Cindy**  
*Cindy Augustine*  
**AMGA, INC. PRESIDENT**



Happy March Everyone!

Can you believe Spring is almost here? If you're like me, you are ready to get back out in the garden and get everything ready for Spring planting.

We have had a busy start to the year, between pruning roses at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church, creating art for the float, wrapping seed packets around Tootsie rolls, and decorating the float.

Congratulations to our Projects committee on winning the Order of Cimarron Grand Marshal's Award for our float, entitled "The Magic of Herbs".

This is the second year in a row that CAMGA, Inc. has won this award.

Thanks to Rebecca Ridley and everyone else who worked on the float, and the group that rode/walked in the parade. You did a wonderful job!

I look forward to seeing everyone at this month's meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at the Elmore County Extension office!

Just remember, Spring is coming!

*Cindy*

### Table of Contents:

Message from Cindy.....	1
Message from Mallory.....	2
CAMGA, Inc. Minutes.....	3-5
Treasurer's Report.....	6
Governor's Mansion Report.....	7
CAMGA Library News.....	8
Learning Garden Report.....	9-12
Upcoming Workshop.....	13
March Calendar .....	14



*Carol Pugh, Editor  
Garden Buzzzzz  
Newsletter*



## Message from Mallory

Mallory Kelley

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

### March Garden Tips

#### Fruits and Nuts

- Continue strawberry and grape plantings.
- Bud apples and peaches.

Start planting blackberries. If weather conditions prevent prompt planting, heel the plants in by placing the root system in a trench and covering the soil.

#### Shrubs

- Fertilize shrubs (except azaleas and camellias) according to a soil test.
- Late plantings may be made, particularly if they are container grown.  
Monitor shrubs for harmful insects.

#### Lawns

- Plant bermudagrass, zoysiagrass, and centipedegrass in south Alabama.
- Soil test and add limestone as recommended.
- Fertilize fescue lawns at 1 pound slow-release nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.  
South: If daytime temps are consistently above 70 degrees F, consider applying fire ant bait. Read label carefully for best control.

#### Roses

- Watch new growth for aphids.
- Begin a spray or dust program.
- Begin fertilizing.

#### Miscellaneous

- Check and repair sprayers, dusters, and lawn mowers.
- Control lawn weeds with chemicals as needed. If weeds are deemed a serious problem, send a soil sample for testing as weeds can indicate the lawn is unhealthy.
- Delay pruning of fruiting shrubs such as cotoneasters, pyracanthas, and hollies until after flowering.

#### Vegetable Seeds

- Central and North: Plant all hardy crops recommended for January and February (garden peas, leafy greens, and root crops).
- Central and South: Continue planting carrots, lettuce, and radishes. Plant sweet corn and squash. South Alabama can start planting beans, melons, and southern peas in late March.



**CAMGA, Inc. Monthly Meeting Minutes**  
**February 18, 2025**  
**Elmore County Extension Office**

**By: Martha Rodgers, Secretary**

Members welcomed Sarah Wolak, Co-owner of Nemophily Natives, Auburn, Alabama. Nemophily means the love of forests and woodland scenery. Their nursery grows over 300 species of native plants, and they like to educate the public on the importance of native plants in the garden and how they support wildlife that is much needed to maintain our eco-systems. Sarah spoke about specific plants supporting specific bees, whereas other plants support a variety of bees. In addition, native plants are important for attracting butterflies and moths to produce caterpillars which in turn provide protein for hatchlings which improves the species survival rate. Sarah and her crew can be reached at 334-728-7853. The website is [www.nemophilynatives.com](http://www.nemophilynatives.com).

# # # # #

The CAMGA, Inc. Monthly Business Meeting was called to order by President Cindy Augustine at 11:30 a.m. Twenty-three (23) members signed the roster today.

Jason Mattox reviewed the upcoming events included as attachment to these minutes. Darlene Branyon-Dixon reminded everyone of the need of volunteers in shifts for Earth Day coming up on April 12th and the Wetumpka Farmers Market. Farmers market dates are to be determined.

Cindy Augustine asked for a motion to submit last month's minutes report to record, Martha Rodgers noted the misspelling of Sherri Davidson's name, Bonnie McCormick made the motion and Connie Willis seconded the motion. The vote was placed. The vote was unanimously in favor of the January minutes to be submitted to record.

Sherri Davidson gave the treasurer's report noting that the audit of records was complete. The total cash balance is \$12,215.23. Cindy asked for a motion to submit the Treasurer's Report to record. Bonnie McCormick made the motion, and Cheryl Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The vote was placed, and the vote was unanimously in favor of adding the February's Treasurer's Report to record. None were opposed.

Mallory Kelley announced that enrollment for landscape design workshop sponsored by the Montgomery Area Master Gardeners was overflowing by an additional 10 participants. She reminded us that the Garden Tours workshop was coming up soon and gardens within 30 minutes of the Extension Office are needed. Mallory also asked for mentors for the two interns who are now in their fourth week of class in Montgomery.

Rebecca Ridley announced the Tomato Workshop that will be coming up soon. She also reminded members to volunteer to finish decorating the Mardi Gras float which will be in the Extension Barn on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The parade will start on Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, at 1 o'clock. Members who plan to walk or ride need to be at the float by 12 noon.

Darlene Branyon-Dixon encouraged members to participate in Earth Day on April 12<sup>th</sup>. She encouraged us to make people aware that the next Master Gardener class will start in August and will be at the Wetumpka Extension Office. Darlene also asked for volunteers for the Millbrook Farmers Market. She will get the dates for it and the Wetumpka Farmers Market.

Rebecca Ridley suggested that CAMGA, Inc. partner with Charlton Place in Deatsville (Millbrook). She will see if she can work out the details by our next meeting.

**CAMGA, Inc. Monthly Meeting Minutes (Continued)**  
**February 18, 2025**  
**By: Martha Rodgers, Secretary**

In Candy Jones absence, Kelly LaFreniere reported that the Education Committee had a successful Staghorn Fern workshop with great responses. She reminded members of the Touring Landscapes (Garden Tours) workshop coming up in April.

Cindy Augustine reported that the Learning Garden project including the gazebo and landscaping around the gazebo are almost finished.

Robin Synder reminded members that the Plant Sale is coming up in May and a volunteer is needed to take the lead in organizing it. She also said Sherri Davidson volunteered to maintain the membership directory. Robin reminded everyone to send Carol Pugh pictures by the end of the month for Spotlight on Volunteers. Include at least a caption of who the volunteers are and what they are doing.

Member Care - Robin told members that Katrina Mitchell's mother died recently and suggested CAMGA purchase a tribute brick in her memory to be placed in the Tribute Patio. Rhona Watson said she would design an order form for ordering a tribute brick. Bonnie McCormick told us that a member, Andy Wallace, has brain cancer.

Anida Wishnietsky announced that there is a new MOU to be signed and if members have difficulty with it, she'll be happy to help them. She emailed everyone who had not paid their dues. If the email was not received, please check the Spam folder then let her know. Judy May has reached Emeritus status (10 years). The Executive Board voted at their meeting this morning to award Emeritus status to Judy May due to health issues. She will still receive CAMGA, Inc. emails, but will not be considered a voting member.

Jane Mobley reminded members to use jpeg for pictures submitted for the annual pictorial history album.

Sherri Davidson and the Budget Committee presented the 2025 CAMGA, Inc. budget with accommodation for changes due to inflation. She also presented a comparative analysis between the actual 2024 budget and the proposed 2025 budget. Dee Turberville seconded the motion. A vote was placed and unanimously approved. There was no opposing vote.

The Audit committee, composed of Margaret Cully and Dee Turberville, met with Sherri Davidson at Margaret's home. They audited the CAMGA financial records and closed the books. They also determined that the 2024 financial records for CAMGA, Inc. financial are in order.

Kelly LaFreniere, liaison to AMGA, reminded members of the upcoming state conference in Prattville at First Baptist Church. Joe Lampl will be the guest speaker. The conference fee is \$185. There is a discount for early birds which ends March 1. The next conference will be in Huntsville, Alabama. Kelly passed out buttons and pamphlets to promote Master Gardeners. AMGA Council quarterly meetings are always at Petals from the Past in Jemison. The next one will be May 6<sup>th</sup> and starts at 10 a.m.

**Old Business** - Cindy Augustine reminded everyone that Sherri Davidson is managing the CAMGA, Inc. Directory

**CAMGA, Inc. Monthly Meeting Minutes (Continued)**  
**February 18, 2025**  
**By: Martha Rodgers, Secretary**

**New Business** - Michelle Sharpton presented Reach for the Stars awards to CAMGA members. Reach for the Stars recognizes members who have devoted many volunteer hours to CAMGA projects, activities, and events. The award recipients are listed in the attached.

Rhonda Miles recognized all who had brought food for today's meeting.

Cindy Augustine reminded everyone to pick up the 2025 membership directory available on the sign-in table.

Cindy adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

*Respectively submitted by,  
Martha Rodgers, Secretary*



**TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT**  
 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.  
**January 1, 2025 - January 31, 2025**

**Investments**

18-mo Certificate (matures 5/16/2026) current balance **\$10,263.84**

**BEGINNING CASH BALANCE (January 1, 2025) — \$13,156.64**

**INCOME:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1/1/2025	Checking interest	\$ 0.49
1/1/2025	Share interest	\$ 4.31
1/10-26/2025	Staghorn fern workshop (Square)	\$ 625.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 629.80</b>

**EXPENSES:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check#</u>	<u>'Payable To' Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1/10-26/2025	---	Square fees( <i>see above</i> )	(\$ 27.63)
1/29/2025	3031	AMGAMember dues	(\$ 360.00)
1/30/2025	3026	R. Snyder December lunch	(\$ 412.68)
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<b>— (\$ 800.31)</b>

**ENDING CASH BALANCE (January 31, 2025) \$12,986.13**

**OVERALL BALANCE — (\$10,263.84 + \$12,986.13) \$23,249.97**

**Outstanding checks:**

3027 Candace Jones (\$269.84)  
 3028 Candace Jones (\$ 99.00)  
 3029 Candace Jones (\$ 77.68)  
 3030 *Mary McCroan* (\$ 77.74) *to be delivered*  
 3032 Jane Mobley (\$ 74.24)





## Governor's Mansion Report For February 2025

By: Amanda Borden



Well, we had no weather cancellations this month and the group was busy. We monitored the grounds for winter damage, dead-headed pansies, planted donated ginger lily rhizomes in the Serenity Garden, removed two huge rotted tree stumps (with two axes and considerable sweat equity), dead-headed oak leaf hydrangeas, and pulled and dug smilax. We learned two valuable things.

First, when shrubs are in the way of a building extension and have been in that location for several decades and are near underground utilities and a driveway, it is best not to try and relocate them. Just cut them down. Second, when digging around an old building, be prepared for anything. We found 2-3 dozen old broken marble pieces from when the mansion front porch was installed decades ago. What a treasure! **Due to daylight savings time starting March 9th, Mansion workdays will be 8-11 a.m. on Mondays.**



Linda & Kathy weeding in herb garden



Ann & Jane filling tote in pool area



Kathy & Ann trimming in front yard



Group after work day 2/24/25





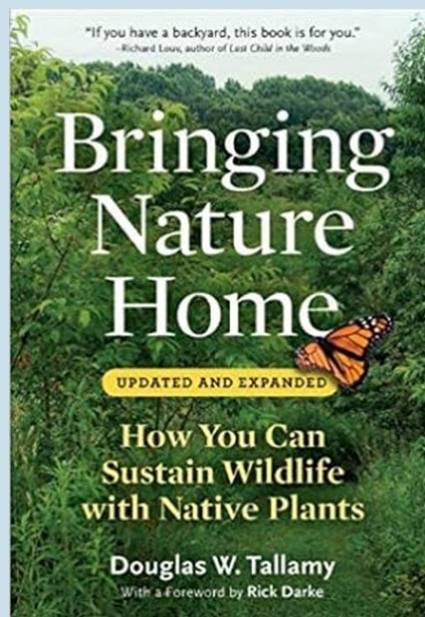
## CAMGA Library News

### March 2025

By: Dee Turberville

### Bringing Nature Home; How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants By Douglas W. Tallamy

Highly recommended by Sara Wolak from Nemophily Natives, during her recent talk with CAMGA members, [Bringing Nature Home](#) is one of the best resources for the “Homegrown National Park Movement.” Author Doug Tallamy has become the most vocal proponent of using native plants in suburban landscapes. Tallamy builds a strong case for the benefits of native plants. The premise of the book is that humans and nature can coexist and *need to coexist*. He believes the primary decline in wildlife population in the USA is over development and introduction of non-native species. This has caused fragmented wild spaces. Planting native in suburban backyards is our best chance to increase habitat and food supply.



An essential chapter is entitled “Why Can’t Insects Eat Alien Plants?” Tallamy expounds on the specialized relationships between plants and insects that have developed over millennia. Besides emphasizing the importance of native plants and insects, Tallamy argues for the protection of birds who have seen their population shrinking at an alarming rate. Most bird species rely on insects during reproduction to feed themselves and their young. Reducing insect population by filling our landscapes largely with alien plant species threatens their survival.

I enjoyed Chapter 14 “Answers to Tough Questions.” Peruse the appendixes – outstanding information.





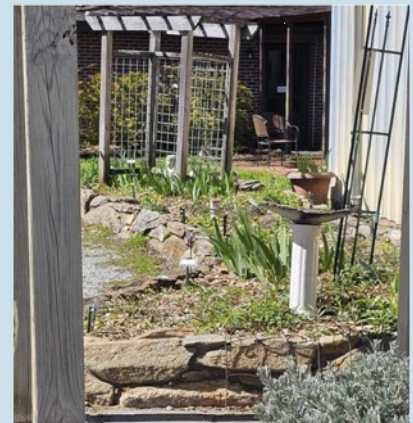
## LEARNING GARDEN ADVENTURES

By: Mary McCroan

The winter garden at the Extension Center is quiet and resting, but the Learning Garden Team stays active.



We stay busy with winter chores such as pruning, weeding (in Alabama they grow year round), propagating and working on keeping our gardens neat and safe with projects such as replacing ground cover fabric as needed. As recently as November we were still enjoying flowers and pulling weeds in the pollinator gardens, but after the hard freezes many perennials were trimmed to the ground to get ready for new growth in the spring.



Cleaning up the area where the native blackberry vines had naturalized was a couple days work for several of us. The area along the fence is where the blackberries are. The area behind the fence used to be an enclosure for chickens, and had turned into a forest of weeds and saplings. We've cleaned all that away and put down some ground fabric to make the area easy to maintain. The blackberries had to be cut on pretty hard, so flowering and berries will be much sparser this year. Next year it should look great.





# LEARNING GARDEN ADVENTURES (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



The Knock Out Roses and Lantana in front of Extension were pruned. Nicks and cuts were not important when accompanied by encouraging hugs! Shrub roses can be pruned around Valentine's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day.



Propagation projects have included digging up and dividing the Lemon Grass.

It is not hardy here, so we cut it in to pieces with a Sawzall (very tough roots), replant one division in the spring and sell the rest at our plant sale.

Canna lilies left to die back in pots will return in the spring. However, as an experiment we have put some in the greenhouse where they are looking very good and will have a head start on looking good for our plant sale.





## LEARNING GARDEN ADVENTURES (Continued)

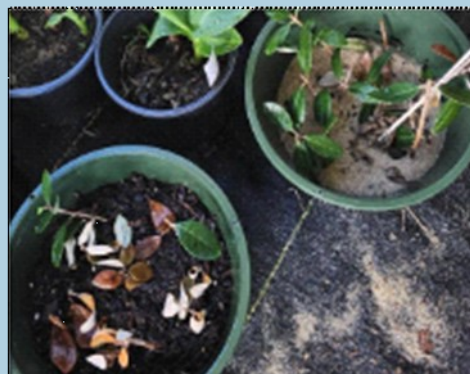
By: Mary McCroan



We have propagated the Angels Trumpet two different ways. Longer cuttings were placed in water--they are now rooted and ready to put in pots. And shorter cuttings were cut and placed directly in soil in pots--quart size yogurt containers worked great. Both are doing well in the greenhouse. Elderberry and Confederate Rose cuttings are rooting in water in the greenhouse also and hopefully will be ready for pots soon.



A bunch of Coleus cuttings were taken just before our first frost, stuck directly in good soil in pots and are doing well in the greenhouse. And a few Pineapple Guava cuttings taken in the fall are doing well in sand, but failed in composty garden soil.





## LEARNING GARDEN ADVENTURES (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



In 2024/2025 we've initiated three experiments in the Learning Garden. A group of us went to the ACES seminar on strawberries and came back with flats. Some of them are planted in the strawberry bed, but others were introduced to the Asparagus Bed and the Turmeric Bed. Strawberries can be maintained as perennials and should appreciate the summer shade provided by the turmeric and asparagus. And hopefully will not compete too much for nutrients.



Also, this is our first year for trying to grow saffron. It is a spice from the flower of *Crocus sativus*, commonly known as "saffron crocus". A corm survives for just one season, but produces up to ten "cormlets" that grow into new plants. It flowers in the autumn and produce three vivid crimson stigma that are the spice. 200,000 hand-picked stigmas are required to for a pound of saffron. Growing saffron commercially in the South-East United States is being explored as a diversification strategy for small farmers.

Most of the winter veg in the garden is still small, but the collards are looking great and tasting delicious. Especially slow cooked with bacon and a ham hock. Yum! The smaller veggies that were planted from starts (cabbage, swiss chard, etc) survived our recent freezes. And veggies recently planted from seed (beets and kale) we hope will be looking good in a month or so.

Please call Mary McCroan with any question about our Learning Garden — 334-312-0679. Volunteers are welcome! Visitors are welcome! Weather permitting, the team is in the garden on Thursday mornings, but feel free to wander around any time.



# Upcoming Workshop



**Pruning Basics**  
**Blueberries, Muscadines,**  
**Grapes, Figs, Blackberries,**  
**and Peaches**  
**March 6, 2025**  
**9:00 am - 12:00 pm**



**Chilton Research & Extension Center**  
**120 County Road 756**  
**Clanton, AL 35045**  
**(205)646-3610 to register**  
**Deadline to Register March 5, 2025**  
**\$5.00 registration fee**

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator, employer, and provider. If you need a reasonable accommodation or language access services, contact ACES Human Resources at [aceshr@aces.edu](mailto:aceshr@aces.edu) or (334) 844-5531

# March 2025

Sun                  Mon                  Tue                  Wed                  Thu                  Fri                  Sat

						
						1
2	3 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 9-11</i>	4	5 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	6 <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office</i>	7	8
9 <b>Daylight Savings Time Begins</b>	10 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m. Projects Meeting at Extension Office 10 a.m.</i>	11 <i>Lunch &amp; Learn First Presbyterian Church 12-1 p.m.</i>	12 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	13 <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office</i>	14	15
16	17 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	18 <i>CAMGA Meet- ing Extension Office 10-12 noon</i>	19 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	20 <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office <b>First Day of Spring</b></i>	21	
23	24 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	25	26 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	27 <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office</i>	28	29
30	31 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m.</i>					