



# GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 34 Issue 4 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.



## April 2025

### Message from Cindy

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



Happy April Everyone!

Spring is finally here! I am so looking forward to warmer weather and blooming plants.

Hopefully many of you will be attending the AMGA Conference, hosted by the Autauga County Master Gardeners. It will be April 3-5, 2025. AMGA would like us to get a group picture of all the CAMGA members attending the conference, so we will try to do that at some point.

I hope everyone is busy propagating plants for our annual plant sale on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you haven't signed up to volunteer, I hope you will. This is our biggest and best fundraising activity and we need "all hands on deck" to make it a great success.

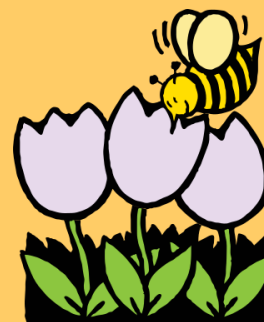
Many thanks to the Project Committee headed by Rebecca Ridley and Terri Chambliss for heading up the Plant Sale this year. Also thanks to Allyson Andrews for handling the vendors.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 10 A.M. at the Elmore County Extension Center.

*Happy Gardening,*  
*Cindy*

### Table of Contents:

Message from Cindy.....	1
Message from Mallory.....	2-3
CAMGA, Inc. Minutes.....	4-5
Treasurer's Report.....	6
Governor's Mansion Report.....	7-8
CAMGA Library News.....	9
Learning Garden Report.....	10-12
Upcoming Workshop.....	13
April Calendar .....	14



*Carol Pugh, Editor*  
*Garden Buzzzzz*  
*Newsletter*



## Message from Mallory

Mallory Kelley

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

### The Excitement of Spring Gardening is Here!

The cool, crisp, bright sunny days of spring are upon us. I don't know about you, but I have been in long anticipation and the gardening bug is biting me big this year. Like me, maybe you have been dreaming over seed catalogs all winter and plotting out ideas of where you want to try something new or just the rotation plan for your vegetable garden.

Here are some tips for your spring garden that I hope will excite and encourage you to plant some of the garden staples like tomatoes and peppers, but also try something new in your garden or landscape this year.

First of all, let's talk about planting and pruning. The best time of year to plant trees and shrubs is in the late fall and winter, this is because the plant leaves and stems go dormant, but its roots continue to grow. This allows time for the roots of the plant to establish so when Spring arrives the roots are strong and healthy and ready to send all the energy up into the leaves, stems and flowers. But, if you missed planting or you are now out in the garden centers and see something you want to add, planting can continue on into the spring, but extra care needs to be taken.

Make sure you amend the planting hole with good garden soil, keep the plant watered and apply mulch to keep the plant from drought stress and weeds. If possible, remove any flowers or fruit the plant produces the first year in the ground. This will reduce stress and send energy into making roots for a much happier, healthier plant sooner than later!

If you have not pruned shrubs yet, 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.

April is a great time to plant a new lawn or to fertilize established lawns. Wait until May to plant lawns from seed. In May water new lawns as needed to prevent drying. Keep established lawns actively growing by watering, fertilizing, mowing, and spray weeds in lawns with the proper herbicide. Begin fertilizing in April at 3-6 week intervals.

## Message from Mallory (Continued)

Mallory Kelley

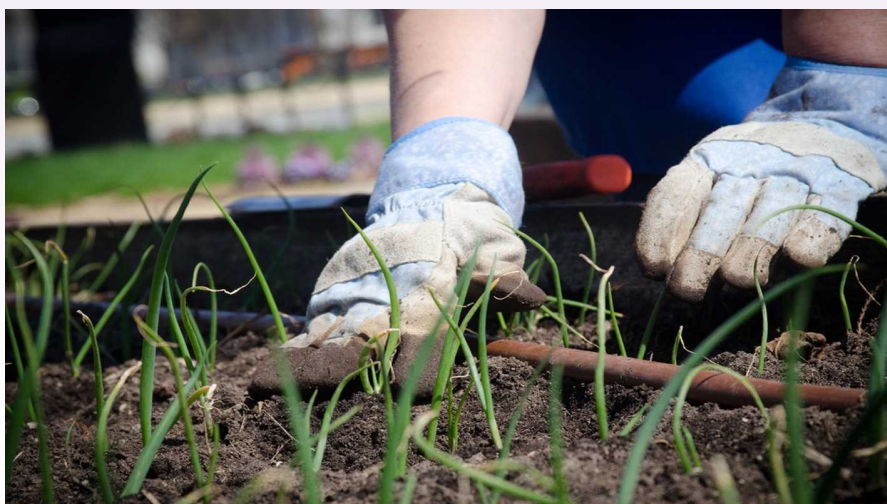
Regional Extension Agent — Home Grounds,  
Gardens, & Home Pests

As for Vegetable Gardening, it is time to plant those seeds and transplants once the threat of a late season frost has passed, this is usually mid April but can vary from year to year.

Some seeds can be started now if you have them inside in a sunny place or if you have a green house, but if you plant them outside too early you will only be wasting your time and money as the soil temperature is not warm enough for the seeds to germinate. Tomato plants can be transplanted at 55 degrees F, but growth will be slow. Use a rule of thumb of a night air temperature minimum of 55 degrees F. If you plant seeds like okra, beans and marigold seeds when the soil is less than 60 degrees F, the seed will sit in the soil which could result in it rotting or birds eating it before it germinates. It is really best to wait for warm sunny days in the 70's before planting.

Applying new mulch in April 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 on things 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, Inc. Monthly Meeting Minutes** **March 18, 2025**

### **Elmore County Extension Office**

**By: Martha Rodgers, Secretary**

Jason Maddox introduced our guest speaker, Alicia Leverette with Whitewater Creek Farm, Troy, Alabama and her topic, "Sowing a Cutting Garden". Alicia noted that her farm is designated as a Bloom and Harvest Farm. She raises heirloom chrysanthemum which will be used in arrangements along with Fall Millet, Broom Corn, and Okra for texture. In addition, this year Alicia has added as trials two hundred varieties of heirloom tomatoes. Her farm produces fruit and native floral jellies. She chooses cutting flowers that are not fussy, have a long vase life, and possess good stem length. She had many more good things to consider creating a cutting garden. She can be reached at <https://whitewatercreekfarm.com> or followed on Facebook.

The CAMGA, Inc. Monthly Business Meeting was called to order by President Cindy Augustine at 11:08 a.m. Twenty-nine (29) members signed the roster today.

Jason Mattox reviewed the upcoming events.

A member noted that the mentioned attachment for Reach for the Stars was not included in February's minutes. Martha will correct the minutes to include those recognized in Reach for the Stars. The minutes passed. Martha brought up the need to be sensitive to the privacy of members who are having health issues and that she will not be including any health reports in the minutes unless specifically asked by the member involved to do so.

Sherri Davidson gave the treasurer's report noting that the total cash balance is \$12,268.12. Cindy asked for a motion to submit the Treasurer's Report to record, \_\_\_\_\_ made the motion, and \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

In Mallory's absence, Cindy reminded members that Mary Ann Hatcher is rotating off the Master Gardeners Hot Line and a celebration for Mary Ann's twenty years of service would be in order. It was recommended the celebration follow the CAMGA, Inc. monthly meeting in May. A motion to was made by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, and unanimously agreed to the celebration.

Darlene Branyon-Dixon asked the attending members if they had any personal contacts with the local newspapers that she could reach out to about the May Plant Sale. Rhonda Miles said that there are a total of 55 vendors and 12 of them are new.



**CAMGA, Inc. Monthly Meeting Minutes (Continued)**  
**March 18, 2025**

**By: Martha Rodgers, Secretary**

Terry Chambliss needs team leaders for the May Plant Sale. She acknowledged Robin Synder for her work that laid the foundation for a successful plant sale. Terry announced that Allison Andrews will manage set-up. Bottled water is needed and members are reminded to turn in receipts for any water they purchase. Plant trays and one-gallon containers are needed.

Members are encouraged to bring their own 5-gallon buckets for soil if they are planning to propagate. Martha volunteered to check with Lowe's and Home Depot about their donation policy. Dee suggested that promotions encourage people to bring their own wagon. Robin said that a Sign-up Genius will be sent out for volunteers to work the plant sale.

There were no Special Committee reports.

Kelly stated that the State Advisory Council has cautioned that mysterious free seed packets are arriving in the mail. Since the source is unknown, they recommended that the seeds be turned in to either the Extension Office or to the Alabama Department of Agricultural Industries. Kelly also announced that anyone working with youth needs training on Youth Protection Policy. That training is offered once a year at Auburn University through AMGA webinars. AMGA webinars are offered on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month.

There was no old business to discuss. No new business except that Betty Stricker is donating twine and is also looking for portulaca not purslane.

Cindy adjourned the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

*Respectively submitted by,  
Martha Rodgers, Secretary*

# Treasurer's Financial Report

## February 2025

By: Sherri Davidson



### TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.  
February 1, 2025 – February 28, 2025

**Investments**

18-mo Certificate (matures 5/16/2026) current balance \$10,354.39

**BEGINNING CASH BALANCE (FEBRUARY 1, 2025)**

**\$12,986.13**

**INCOME**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2/3/2025	Member dues (Square)	\$ 25.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 25.00</b>

**EXPENSES**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Check#</u>	<u>Payable To`</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
2/3/2025	---	Square fees	(see above)	(\$ 1.13)
2/18/2025	3035	K. Lafreniere	Mardi Gras beads	(\$ 78.66)
2/18/2025	3036	M. Sharpton	Reach for Stars	(\$ 33.44)
2/19/2025	3034	A. Wishnietsky	Network	(\$ 190.20)
2/20/2025	3042	C. Augustine	Member directory	(\$ 14.26)
2/20/2025	3040	J. Mobley	Church fertilizer	(\$ 37.24)
2/20/2025	3039	J. Mobley	Historian book	(\$ 68.84)
2/20/2025	3032	J. Mobley	Dickens lavender	(\$ 74.24)
2/20/2025	3041	C. Augustine	AMGA registration	(\$ 185.00)
2/24/2025	3038	D. Turberville	Libib Subscription	(\$ 60.00)
<b>Total Expenses</b>				<b>(\$ 743.01)</b>

**ENDING CASH BALANCE (February 28, 2025)**

**\$12,268.12**

**OVERALL BALANCE  $10,354.39 + 12,268.12 = \underline{\underline{\$22,622.51}}$**

**Outstanding checks:**

3027 Candace Jones(\$269.84)	3030 Mary McCroan (\$ 77.74)
3028 Candace Jones(\$ 99.00)	3033 Candy Jones (\$407.00)
3029 Candace Jones(\$ 77.68)	3037 Robyn Snyder (\$136.00)

*Prepared by Sherri Davidson*





## Governor's Mansion Report For March 2025

By: Amanda Borden



We had three weather cancellations this month, but thankfully there were five Mondays in March! We had our annual rose pruning workshop, and we welcomed several of the area 2024 and 2025 interns: Racile Casey, Marilyn Greer, William Haynes, Randy Henderson, Gigi Langford, Murray Lewis, and Vicki Stroup. We weeded, dead-headed pansies, picked up lots of windblown debris and also pruned multiple shrubs: wax myrtle, 'Anthony Waterer' spirea, beauty berry, paniculata hydrangea, camellia, dwarf crepe myrtle. We dramatically renewal pruned a sasanqua camellia hedge across the Mansion's back porch. It was a muddled mess of uneven 4-6' tall bug-filled branches stuffed with trash and roofing debris. These camellias will now start fresh and get pruned properly (thinning cuts) and will be a healthy, loose and open hedge.



Camellias after renewal pruning



Sue & Anne trimming knockouts



Randy & Marilyn trimming knockout roses



Jane demonstrates proper limbing up technique



## **Governor's Mansion Report (Continued) For March 2025**

**By: Amanda Borden**



Robin & Linda trimming in back yard



Darwin & William cutting back lantana





## CAMGA Library News

April 2025

By: Dee Turberville

### CONTAINER Theme Gardens

By: Nancy Ondra

Container gardening is rewarding and easy on the back, plus, no garden is required. Nancy Ondra includes 42 combinations, each using 5 perfectly matched plants. You can choose the color scheme, the arrangement, and container to fit your style throughout the changing seasons. You may be drawn to a favorite color, or you might want something just right for a sunny balcony or a shady spot on the covered patio. Perhaps you want to support the hummingbirds or butterflies, feature night-blooming plants, or create a fragrant container of herbs. Ondra suggests a beautiful combination of plants (with possible alternatives) of five plants for any season, situation, or style.



The book has good practical information as well as creative container ideas; some of my favorites are “Butterfly Banquet,” “Elegant Whites,” “A Mini Meadow,” and “Asian-Inspired Beauty.” The plant palette pages include marvelous photographs and descriptions of each plant. Each design uses a five-plant palette of plants that complement each other and the pot they’re displayed in, i.e., a terra cotta container holds fuchsia, coleus, spurge, sweet potato vine and heuchera, color coordinated for the pot. For each design, Ondra gives tidbits and tips for optimum growth. This is a fun book that focuses on pots rather than plots.



## LEARNING GARDEN ADVENTURES

**By: Mary McCroan**



The garden in March is on the verge of getting exciting. The Pollinator Garden in front of the Extension Auxiliary Building is featuring Iris and Columbine with many more plants about to show their stuff. Cleaning out the invasive Golden Rod and Mugwort is a never ending task, but without dedicated weederers there would be nothing else in this bed. Beth, Bill, and Deb, with a visiting friend pressed into service, accomplished wonders.



And do we have any clue why the pond was full of bubbles last week? No we don't. Some natural phenomena? A prankster with a handful of soap? In any case, in a few days it subsided and all seems to be well. I am glad we don't have fish in there.

We are using cardboard and wood chips as a strategy to smother spring weeds and dress up the Extension office so our "home" looks good for our Master Gardener plant sale and the landscape class Master Gardeners will be presenting in late April. It's going to look great, But there is a good bit left to do. If you are feeling like a little shovel and wheelbarrow exercise the next couple of Thursdays, we could sure use the help. In the picture below, you can see the right side looking good, and the left side still needing some TLC.



## LEARNING GARDEN ADVENTURES (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



Speaking of making the garden look good, we had the added motivation of improving safety around the raised beds. Ground fabric is great for presenting a neat look, but over time wears and tears and needs replacement both for appearance and to avoid tripping on torn spots. Wes and Bill have done a wonderful job putting down new fabric where needed and that area is looking great.

Other cleanup has included replacing a rotted board that was allowing soil to leak out of one of the raised beds. Deb, Bill and Wes were the lead on this effort with Mary making just enough of an appearance to get in the picture!



Amanda continues to manage and maintain the four year rotation beds. Most recently she terminated the collards so spring/summer veggies could be added. Melons are on the list for this bed. The seeds will take a little while to germinate as soil temps are still a little cool, but soon we will have melon plant everywhere!



## LEARNING GARDEN ADVENTURES (Continued)

**By: Mary McCroan**

And last, but far from least, we have all been involved with propagation for the 2025 Plant Sale.

Beth has taken a major role in this effort and one way or another has had her hand in most of the pots in our plant holding area.

Candy and Virginia are right up there with her digging, potting and labeling. Just in the few couple of weeks, we have divided and dug and potted over 125 plants including rosemary, lavender, chamomile, poppy, daylily, elderberry, confederate rose, and coral honeysuckle.

And always, always, along with the work comes time for rest and fellowship in the garden!





## Upcoming Workshop



REGISTRATION  
\$25



**Tuesday, April 29th 9:00am – 3:30pm**

**Lunch Included**

**Elmore County Extension Office  
340 Queen Ann Road, Wetumpka, Alabama**

**For more Information: 334-201-8253**

**\*We will Carpool to visit 5 Gardens  
Rain Date (April 30th)**



**Space is Limited**

**ACES.EDU**


**Register at the  
link below or Scan  
QR Code  
[www.aces.edu/go/4929](http://www.aces.edu/go/4929)**



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 [Name] at [Email] by [Date].



# April 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	3 <b>AMGA Conference</b> <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office</i>	4 <b>AMGA Conference</b>	5 <b>AMGA Conference</b>
6	7 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	8 <i>Lunch &amp; Learn First Presbyterian Church 12-1 p.m.</i>	9 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	10 <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office</i>	11	12
13	14 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m.</i>  <i>Projects Meeting at Extension Office 10 a.m.</i>	15 <i>CAMGA Meeting Extension Office 10-12 noon</i>	16 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	17 <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office</i>	18	19
20 <b>Happy Easter!</b>	21 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	22	23 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>	24 <i>Learning Gardens Workday 8-12 noon at Extension Office</i>	25	26
27	28 <i>Mansion Gardens workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	29 <i>Tips for Your Garden Design and Tour Local Gardens— registration required 9 a.m. -3:30 p.m.</i>	30 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-11</i>			