



# GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 34 Issue 11 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.

## November 2025



### Message from Cindy

*Cindy Augustine*  
CAMGA, INC. PRESIDENT



Welcome to November! While I love the warm temperatures, I was glad to see the rain and cooler weather at the end of October. We have several events in the next two months before we pause for the Christmas holidays and then begin 2026:

- Tuesday, November 11, 12 - 1 p.m., Lunch & Learn at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church - Holiday Wreaths with Lucie Wadsworth from Wadsworth Farms (the workshop following this is full).
- Tuesday, November 18, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., CAMGA Monthly Meeting at Extension - Native Plants with Lynn Dickinson
- Tuesday, November 18 immediately after the meeting, we will be stuffing sachet bags for Wetumpka's Dickens Christmas
- Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., CAMGA Christmas Luncheon and Officer Installation
- Friday, December 5 and Saturday, December 6 - Dickens Christmas in Wetumpka - look for a signup coming soon
- Tuesday, December 9, 12 - 1 p.m., Lunch & Learn, Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church - Storing Tender Plants & Hobby Greenhouse Health with Dr. Jeremy Pickens

We held the election for our 2026 slate of officers at our monthly meeting in October. The 2026 officers will be Cindy Augustine, President; Jason Mattox, Vice-President; Dee Turberville, Secretary; and Bob Shields, Treasurer. These officers will be installed at our Christmas Luncheon.

We all look forward to serving our CAMGA, Inc. members in 2026!

In September, the Executive Board decided to ask all members to complete a new membership form this year to update our files and ensure correct information for the 2026 Directory.

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Carol Pugh, Editor  
Garden Buzzzzz  
Newsletter

## Message from Cindy (Continued)

We collected many of these forms at the October meeting, so thank you to everyone who turned one in. If you have not yet paid your dues for 2026, please be sure to get your money turned in no later than December 2<sup>nd</sup> at our Christmas luncheon.

On-time payment allows us to send the correct dues to AMGA and to ensure you are included in the directory. The membership form is located on CAMGA's website, and some printed ones will be available at our November meeting as well. Links are available to pay online, and you can also pay by check or cash. Please see Robin Snyder to pay your dues and turn in the completed form.

The website link is: <https://camga.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/CAMGA-Membership-Form-with-Square-Payment-QR-Codes.pdf>.

Remember to keep propagating for our plant sale. There are pots and Super Soil available at the Extension office if you need some. Be sure to label plants with the name and plant needs (sun, shade, etc.).

Enjoy the upcoming CAMGA, Inc. events, and I hope to see you there! Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!

*All the best,  
Cindy*

**Please note:**

**The October 2025 CAMGA, Inc.  
minutes will be available at the next meeting.**



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

### **Purchase and Plant Spring Flowering Bulbs Now**

To have a beautiful array of flowering bulbs this spring, the time to purchase and plant bulbs is now. Before purchasing your bulbs you first need to decide which ones are best for your landscape.

Think about the, location and needed environment, colors and heights of the bulbs before purchasing. For this area of Alabama the most common bulbs available include tulips, hyacinths and daffodils, but other specialty bulbs that do well in this area you may consider include allium, crocus, galanthus, fritillaria and scillas. Purchase bulbs from reputable sources and check them for health before purchasing. Check for firmness of the bulbs, do not purchase molded or crushed bulbs and buy early to get the best selections and healthiest bulbs available.

Another consideration should be the size of the bulbs. The size is directly related to the size and number of flowers. Generally, the bigger the bulb the bigger the flower. Small nicks and loose skin don't affect development of the bulb. In fact, loose skin aids in inspecting for diseases, and encourages rooting. If necessary to store the bulbs before time of planting, keep the bulbs cool and store between 50-65 F.

The optimal planting time for most areas in Alabama is late October to late December.

Bulbs perform best with a soil pH between 6-7. When preparing to plant, remember several things: Good drainage is essential for spring flowering bulbs. If your soil is mostly clay, mix in an organic material such as peat moss, compost or aged bark. Don't mix more than 50 percent organic material with the soil. If your soil is mostly sand, add an organic material to increase water- and nutrient-holding capacity. Plant small-sized bulbs (one inch in height) 4 or 5 inches deep and a little deeper in sandy soils and space small bulbs an inch to 2 inches apart. For large bulbs (2 or more inches in height) plant them 4-6 inches deep and space larger bulbs 3 to 6 inches apart. Cover the bed with 2 to 3 inches of mulch. If the fall season is dry, make sure to water the area appropriately.

To fertilize your bulbs, it is best to take a soil sample to know for sure the pH of the soil and also what nutrients are lacking. However, bulbs can be grown successfully for a season or two by using a slow-release complete fertilizer.

Incorporated the fertilizer into the soil at planting at a rate of one tablespoon per square foot. And as an additional note, tulips are popular, but typically do not come back year after year blooming as our soil does not get cold enough in the winter to provide the proper chilling requirements. In this case you will need to dig them up after the foliage starts to die back in the summer and store in the refrigerator in a brown paper bag, not plastic, and plant again next fall.

Often times planting in a container makes this process easier and more successful.



## Governor's Mansion Report For October 2025

By: Amanda Borden



On October 6, we removed the daylilies from the Secret Garden and passed them out among the volunteers to give them TLC and save them for their MG plant sales. The group also worked in the herb garden. Volunteers present were Linda Cater, Sue Berry, Ann Hamill, Kathy Quinn, Robin Snyder, Katherine Reed, Teri Magdon, and Bettie Summerlin.

On October 16 we hosted the 2025 CAMGA/Autauga MG intern class for a tour of the grounds and an in-depth session analyzing pruning needs and techniques to employ throughout the garden, considering which plants need pruning, why, when and how. Although no pruning was needed that fall day, future plans for pruning were discussed and demonstrated. Several of the weekly MG volunteers participated in assisting the interns: Robin Snyder, Amanda Borden, and Ann Hamill.

On October 20 we cleaned up in the herb garden, did light pruning of wayward branches of camellia along the driveway, and cut back the curbside and backside of the lantana for neater appearance. We trimmed flowers in the big lion pots at the front entrance. Almost two inches of rain had come in the previous few days and perked up everything. Volunteers present were Linda Cater, Kathy Quinn, Sue Berry, Carmen Sowers, Ann Hamill, and Robin Snyder.

On October 27 we did not work due to the wet weather. **Starting November 3, our workdays will begin at 9:00 a.m.**



CAMGA & Autauga interns on front steps



Robin shows interns the lantana in the side yard



Robin tells interns about beds in the front yard



## CAMGA Library News

### November 2025

By: Dee Turberville

### Taming the Potted Beast

#### The Strange and Sensational History of the Not-So-Humble Houseplant

By Molly Williams

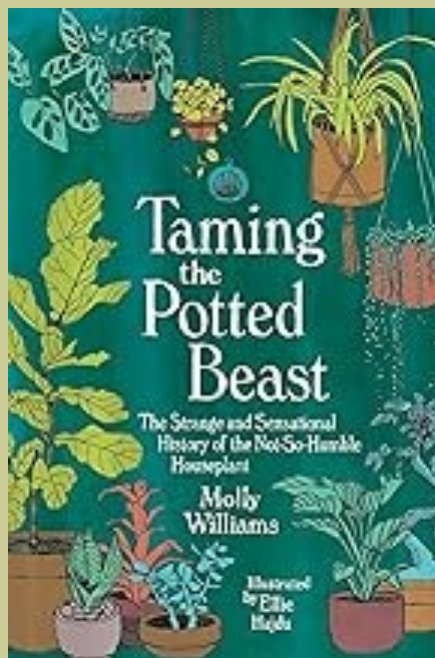
*Taming the Potted Beast* is an easy-to-read book. It is a brief history of houseplants with so many fun facts. From the hanging gardens of Babylon to that fiddle-leaf fig in your living room, houseplants have been humanity's companions for millennia. The book is organized with ten chapters that begin during ancient times and proceed through history to the current post-pandemic obsession with houseplants. For example:

Chapter 2 - That Time Cleopatra Tried to Poison Mark Antony, (3000BCE-350CE) Egypt, Rome, Greek

Chapter 4 - Gardening For Prudes, (500-1453) The Middle Ages

Chapter 7 - A Bougie Victorian Invents the Terrarium, (1800-1899), the Nineteenth Century

Other chapters that caught my attention were "when women go to work" and the current trend of over-priced online rare plants—the black market and the unethical harvesting practice of poachers.



Molly Williams includes DIY projects and an accessible reference guide with house plant care tips throughout her book. Every reader, whether a novice or an expert, can enjoy the historical vignettes while learning about their own leafy and beastly companions (my monstera!). Neither a textbook nor a comprehensive guide, *Taming the Potted Beast* is an entertaining read that captures the significance of plants to the humans who keep and collect them.



## 2025 Master Gardener Intern Class Volunteers Submitted by Robin Snyder

The CAMGA/ Autauga 2025 Intern Class was the guest of the CAMGA Learning Gardens this fall. They were invited to perform a few tasks in the gardens and also were told of the interesting experimental gardening done by the volunteers.



October 23rd the intern class and several Bud-E's met at the home of Kelly Lafreniere for a big dig. They dug and divided and dug some more as Kelly directed them to the plants available for plunder. Fortunately we had a nice cool morning and Kelly had a perfect potting area under the carport.

They worked hard for a short 2 hour session and by the end had potted almost 300 plants for their own use and also to store for the winter for plant sales for all three counties. They did a good clean up of the area. We all appreciate the generosity and bravery shown by Kelly by allowing us to go to her home to gather plants.

This was a great experience for the interns digging and potting, but also working together as a team.

Good job, folks! Thanks to all.



## 2025 Master Gardener Intern Class Volunteers (Continued)

Submitted by Robin Snyder





## LEARNING GARDEN -- SUMMER TO FALL By: Mary McCroan

The “Early Settler” demo gardens planted by Deb Kelso have matured over the summer.

The Three Sisters Garden in the back, provided corn and beans, but we never got fruit from the squash.



Deb, Darlene and Candy are having a great time pulling down the old beans and corn stalks. Seriously--it was more fun than you might think. And although our husbands might be concerned about us climbing into the double height beds, they would not be surprised.

Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*) shown to the right, is one of the plants in the Early Settler Garden. It is gorgeous, native to our area in and a great food source for butterflies and bees. One enduring legend is that a Native American healer named Joe Pye used tea from this plant to treat typhus.





## LEARNING GARDEN -- SUMMER TO FALL (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



Last August, the County contracted to replace old iron pipes from the street to the buildings. This was both good and bad. On the good side, the quality of water in the kitchen is much better. And the water pressure in our gardens is much higher. On the bad side, some of our irrigation pipes were broken (the contractor replaced them), some valves quit functioning (CAMGA replaced them), and some of our connectors came loose and had to be tightened because of the higher pressure. In addition, a large leak was created by accidentally connecting an old pipe that had serviced a building that used to sit where our fenced in garden now resides. Fortunately, the contractor had included a ball valve on that line, so the fix was just identifying which valve to turn off. We also have an ongoing more subtle leak somewhere that we are still working on.

Picture above: the professional and courteous contractor who was always patient with Mary's questions and concerns. Pictured left is our garden one inch PVC supply line, a smaller pipe that protects our irrigation valve control wires, and the old unused pipe that accidentally got connected. It created an opportunity to get wet and muddy which is not necessarily a bad thing on a hot August day. After all, you aren't going to get far as a gardener if you are afraid of a little dirt.



## LEARNING GARDEN -- SUMMER TO FALL (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



Zinnias are always great for feeding the butterflies, but in the past they have tended to get pretty shabby looking because of powdery mildew and other fungus. One management technique would involve spraying fungicide. But we decided to try a fungus resistant variety instead of spraying with chemicals and it worked great. Pictured to the left is Zinnia Profusion Double Mix from Pinetree. It tolerates heat and humidity, and is resistant to powdery mildew. Profusion's performance has been outstanding!



Last spring, Beth experimented with planting peppers from seed and was excited with her success. She had fun with trying interesting varieties. They were tasty, some hot and some mild, and all attractive plants. Of particular interest was the Kaleidoscope with both variegated leaves and fruit that ranged from green to red to chocolate as they matured.



Fall flowering herbs (white garlic chives, blue Russian sage, red Lipstick sage) in the Learning Gardens are enhanced with a back ground of yellow Goldenrod and blue Ironweed growing in the field behind the Extension Office. The combination was greatly enjoyed by both people and pollinators until the landowner decided it was time to bush hog.



## LEARNING GARDEN -- SUMMER TO FALL (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



Many of the 2025 interns have come to help out in the Learning Garden. Lisa is with Candy to the left battling knot grass in the herb bed. Alicea is working on propagation with Wes and Beth below. And I may miss some, but Katie, Allison, Jennifer, Kim, Bettie, and Leslie also came out to help. My apologies to those I'm not remembering.

Interns also came out for a tour of the gardens and a work day. They learned about the correct way to plant strawberries, harvested sweet potatoes and cleaned out the sweet potato bed so it is ready for fall crops, pruned shrubs and learned to cut elderberry to root in water

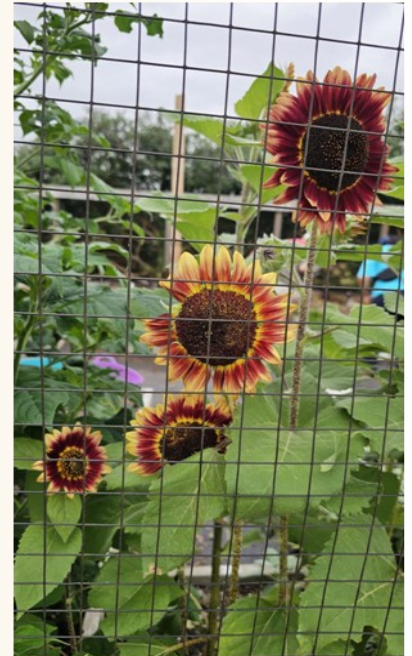


Speaking of propagation, we had super soil from Bubba's delivered last month. Just past the shed, there is a large pile under a tan tarp. That is not the super soil--that is wood chips. However, just to the left is a smaller pile under a black tarp. Just move the tarp, get a few buckets of soil to take home for your propagation projects. The intent is that we are making new plants to share with our community during the May plant sale. And hopefully make a few dollars for CAMGA along the way.



## LEARNING GARDEN -- SUMMER TO FALL (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



A lesson learned from the Learning Garden this summer is that, yes, you can plant sunflower seeds in August and with a little luck have flowers before the first freeze. The plant above and in the middle is a Mexican Sunflower, and so impressive that we have several requests for seeds. We will try and save some.



Sometimes we grow bugs instead of plants! Tomato Hornworms are voracious and generally you want to find and kill them before they get to this size. One exception is that if they are covered with parasitic wasp cocoons, leave them be as the wasps are a benefit to your garden. At this point, the eggs laid inside the skin of the hornworm have hatched, eaten the caterpillar from the inside out and are ready to produce more wasps to eat more hornworms. Yay!



## LEARNING GARDEN -- SUMMER TO FALL (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan



Ideally, we dig up the lemon grass in the fall before the first freeze, cut the root ball with a sawzall (it's tough) and make six or seven new lemon grass plants to overwinter in the greenhouse for our plant sale. Beth had a great idea to wrap the grass in string to make it easier to cut and that worked great. The next step was to cut the grass about six inches high with a hedge trimmer or sawzall and that was accomplished. And then we hit a snag in the form of a disturbed nest of red wasps. It's a wonder Wes and Mary weren't stung. Anyway, the lemon grass may not get dug this year.

Sometimes a picture gets into the news letter just because it's pretty. Like this Texas Star Hibiscus to the right, that grows in the rain garden. We have taken cuttings and are attempting to propagate it.



Last, just an FYI for those that may not know, there is no rule that sweet potatoes have to be dug all at the same time. Prior to our 2025 interns digging the bed, Amanda and Beth dug a couple that were already sticking above the ground and begging to be eaten. In fact, you can harvest anytime until the ground is frozen and take your sweet time about how much to get at once.

# NOVEMBER 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.	4	5 Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon	6 Learning Gardens Workday at Extension Office 8-11 a.m.	7	8
9	10 Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.	11 Lunch & Learn 12-1 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka	12 Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon	13 Learning Gardens Workday at Extension Office 8-11 a.m.	14	15
16	17 Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.	18 CAMGA Monthly Meeting, 10-12 noon, Extension Office — afterwards stuff Satchet Bags	19 Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon	20 Learning Gardens Workday at Extension Office 8-11 a.m.	21	22
23	24 Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.	25	26 Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon	27 Happy THANKSGIVING	28	29
30						