



# GARDEN BUZZZZ



Volume 35 Issue 2 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.



## February 2026

### ***Message from Cindy***

***Cindy Augustine***

***CAMGA, INC. PRESIDENT***



Happy February Master Gardeners!

I hope everyone has been staying warm with these crazy cold temperatures. I am itching to get outside and work in the yard, but it is just so cold! I'm definitely looking forward to Spring 2026 and warmer temperatures!

February is a month full of events for Master Gardeners! Here are CAMGA, Inc.'s scheduled events:

Monday, February 2, 9 AM – 4 PM at the Extension Center classroom.

We will be crafting for the Mardi Gras parade float.

Monday, February 9, 10 AM at the Extension Center conference room.

Projects Committee meeting.

Tuesday, February 10, 12 Noon at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church. Lunch & Learn with topic of Sowing Winter Seeds in Milk Jugs and Containers with Elizabeth York, a Shelby County Master Gardener.

Friday, February 13, 10 AM - ? at the Extension Center barn. Decorating the float for the Mardi Gras parade.

Saturday, February 14 (Happy Valentines Day!) NLT 11:30 a.m. at the Farmers Market in Wetumpka.

Tuesday, February 17, 10 AM at the Extension Center Classroom. CAMGA, Inc. monthly meeting. The speaker will discuss Sustainable Landscape Design.

Thursday, February 26, 10 AM at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church. Rose Pruning and Fertilizing.

I hope you can make some of these events, especially our lunch & learn and meeting! Looking forward to a bright and productive February!

***Happy Gardening!***  
***Cindy***

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*Carol Pugh, Editor  
Garden Buzzzz  
Newsletter*



## Message from Mallory

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

# Winter in the Garden: A Season of Preparation and Protection

Winter in Alabama may be mild one day and ice cold the next, but it is still an important season for gardeners. While growth slows, the work you do now lays the foundation for a healthier, more productive garden in spring. From protecting plants, planning for the future, pruning and soil improvements, winter is the gardener's quiet but powerful season.

### Protect Cold-Sensitive Plants

Alabama winters often bring fluctuating temperatures, with warm days followed by sudden freezes. Be prepared to protect tender plants such newly planted perennials, citrus that may be in the ground or in containers, strawberries and winter vegetables.

- Cover plants with frost cloths, old sheets, or blankets during freezing nights (remove during the day).
- Mulch heavily around the base of plants to insulate roots.
- Move container plants to sheltered locations near the house or into the garage during hard freezes.
- Water plants before a freeze; moist soil holds heat better than dry soil and will help insulate the roots.

### Prune at the Right Time

Winter is the ideal season to prune many plants while they are dormant. Remember, NOT ALL plants, so do your homework. If they bloom before May/June in Alabama DO NOT prune in winter or you will most likely not have blooms this coming spring.

- Prune roses (except climbing roses) in late January or February.
- Prune fruit trees such as apples, peaches, and pears to improve airflow and shape.
- Remove dead, damaged, or crossing branches from trees and shrubs.
- Avoid pruning spring-flowering shrubs like azaleas, camellias, and hydrangeas, as this can remove next season's blooms.

### Tend Vegetable and Herb Gardens

Winter doesn't mean the vegetable garden is idle. Remember February is the time to plant your potatoes (not sweet potatoes) and it will soon be time to start your seeds for spring time planting.

- Continue harvesting cool-season crops such as collards, kale, lettuce, carrots, and broccoli.
- Remove spent and diseased plant material.
- Add compost or organic matter to garden beds and get your soil test now and go ahead and apply lime if you need to raise the soil pH.
- Plant cover crops like crimson clover or rye to improve soil health in beds without a winter crop.

## Message from Mallory — (Continued)

February 2026

### Manage Weeds and Pests

Winter is one of the best times to get ahead of weed and pest problems.

- Hand-pull winter weeds before they set seed.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicides if appropriate for your landscape beds, vegetable garden in areas you plan to plant transplants and in your lawn, but do not use a Weed& Feed as it is not yet time to fertilize.
- Inspect trees and shrubs for overwintering insects and egg masses.
- Clean and disinfect tools to prevent spreading disease next season.

### Plant Trees, Shrubs, and Perennials

Winter is prime planting season in Alabama.

- Plant trees and shrubs while they are dormant to reduce transplant stress.
- Ensure proper planting depth and water thoroughly after planting.

Mulch new plantings to conserve moisture and protect roots.

### Plan for Spring

Take advantage of winter's slower pace.

- Review last season's successes and challenges.
- Order seeds and plants early.
- Design new garden beds or landscape improvements.
- Sharpen and repair garden tools and service your gas powered tools.

### Enjoy the Garden

Even in winter, the garden offers beauty. Bluebirds will begin nesting soon so have your boxes clean and ready along with bird feeders. And plants such as camellias, pansies, hellebores, and winter honeysuckle provide color and fragrance in the winter to enjoy. Take time to walk your garden, observe, and appreciate the restful season as the hot days of summer will be here before we know it.



## **CAMGA, Inc. Minutes January 20, 2026**

### **Elmore County Extension Office Dee Turberville, Secretary**

CAMGA members met at the Elmore County Extension Office with 34 members present. Jason Mattox opened the meeting with a slide presentation program, "New Year, New Opportunities!", to encourage volunteer opportunities for both interns and members during year 2026.

He introduced the officers for the year: President, Cindy Augustine; Vice President, Jason Mattox; Secretary, Dee Turberville; Treasurer, Bob Sheilds.

#### **Volunteer Opportunities covered included:**

Learning Gardens – contact Mary McCroan, [mary@mccroan.com](mailto:mary@mccroan.com), 334-312-0679

Projects Committee – contact Rebecca Ridley, [rebecca.ridley74@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.ridley74@gmail.com), 256-419-3332

Advertising & Community Market – contact Darlene Dixon Branyon, [darlenedixon@yahoo.com](mailto:darlenedixon@yahoo.com), 334-275-0486

Lanark – contact Maria Pacheco, [flyingwindflower@gmail.com](mailto:flyingwindflower@gmail.com), 334-657-9414

Governor's Mansion – contact Amanda Borden, Liaison; POC, Jane McCarthy, [janemccarthy9@gmail.com](mailto:janemccarthy9@gmail.com), 334-221-9936

Stubborn Old Gardeners (YouTube Channel) – contact Lee Borden, [leebordan@gmail.com](mailto:leebordan@gmail.com), 334-421-0229

Lunch & Learn – contact David Heffelfinger, [Dcheff21@hotmail.com](mailto:Dcheff21@hotmail.com), 256-794-7658

Membership/Interns/Plant Sale – contact Robin Snyder, [jmsrgs@gmail.com](mailto:jmsrgs@gmail.com), 334-549-3921

Education – VACANT

Library – contact Dee Turberville, [deelighted2@yahoo.com](mailto:deelighted2@yahoo.com), 334-235-4302

MG Helpline – contact Beth Deaton, [bedinok@hotmail.com](mailto:bedinok@hotmail.com), 334-595-7467

Hospitality – contact Rhonda Miles, [rhondaamiles@gmail.com](mailto:rhondaamiles@gmail.com), 334-271-0498

Advisory Council Rep – contact Kelly LeFreniere, [kdlafreniere@gmail.com](mailto:kdlafreniere@gmail.com), 334-546-4468

Kelly LeFreniere stated that new Extension Master Gardener badges can be ordered once a year through the AMGA treasurer for a cost of \$15.00.

Darlene Dixon mentioned the propagating soil now available for members to use for potting their plant sale plants--back of ACES property, near the Learning Garden, to the left of the mulch pile.

Rebecca Ridley covered the upcoming Mardi Gras project, "New Orleans Garden Party Meets Beach Party", and encouraged members to participate in three days of possible volunteer opportunities in February.

Rebecca is also involved with the Tribute Garden, including the Memorial Album of the honorees, housed in the ACES office/CAMGA Library. She is planning to order bricks in the future annually, including the 3 current brick orders from 2025. She will see about shipping costs and will create an order form to be kept in the ACES office.

Robin Snyder mentioned that the Spotlight on Volunteers position is vacant. She asked for a volunteer to record some of the special events that occur within so many of our programs. She needs an assistant to help with the interns. She also asked chairpersons of the various committees to give a copy of their reports, discussed during meetings, to Dee Turberville, the secretary, to assist her with writing the minutes.

## **CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)**

### **January 20, 2026**

Cindy Augustine stated that the Education Chair is also Vacant. Candy Jones is no longer the chair, but will remain as the liaison in the advanced master gardener at the state level in the AMGA organization. Cindy shared that the board voted in favor of adding a subcommittee under the Education Chair entitled Public Education Workshop. Working with Mallory Kelly, the coordinator of this subcommittee will plan four workshop events, one per quarter. The Education Chair will coordinate all these committees under his/her position and no longer be solely responsible for developing the public workshops.

Cindy also mentioned the need for a CAMGA rep to serve one Tuesday per month at the Millbrook Farmer's Market.

CAMGA received a thank you note from Michelle Sharpton and the Gandy family for the card and words of condolence during their family's time of loss.

#### **Upcoming Events**

Jan 20<sup>th</sup> Plant Sale Organization Meeting after today's business meeting (Cancelled)  
 Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> Mardi Gras Craft Day, 9am-4pm, ACES Extension, (Signup Genius)  
 Feb 9<sup>th</sup> CAMGA Projects Meeting, 10 am  
 Feb 10<sup>th</sup> Lunch & Learn, Sowing Winter Seeds in Milk Jugs @ 12pm, First Presbyterian  
 Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> Mardi Gras Float Decorating, 10 am-until (Signup Genius)  
 Feb 14<sup>th</sup> Mardi Gras Parade, Wetumpka Farmers Market NLT 11:30 am (Signup Genius)  
 Feb 17<sup>th</sup> CAMGA Monthly Meeting, Sustainable Landscape Design, 10:00 am  
 Feb 19<sup>th</sup> The Art of Tussie-Mussie, Montgomery County Extension, 12:30 -2:30 pm,  
     CCGMA workshop, \$25.00 registration, signup by 2/15, contact Janell Diggs, 334-425-9069  
 Feb 26<sup>th</sup> Rose Pruning & Fertilizer, First Presbyterian Church, 10:00 am  
 Mar 6<sup>th</sup> Master Floral Designer Workshop and Floral Bar, includes lunch, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, Grace  
     Episcopal Church, demonstration by Dr. Jim Del Prince, signup by 2/25, \$42.00, CCGMA,  
     contact Janell Diggs, 334-425-9069  
 Mar 10<sup>th</sup> Lunch & Learn, Japanese Maples@ 12pm, First Presbyterian Church

#### **Old Business:**

After a quick lunch, Cindy Augustine began the business meeting by seeking approval of the 2025 November minutes, with an added amended version suggested by Anida Wishnietsky (Network), to include the approved purchase (voted upon by members) of a new computer for CAMGA use, up to \$1000.00. Cindy accepted a motion to approve the amended minutes with Beth Deaton as first and Jason Mattox as second. The motion unanimously passed. Cindy accepted a motion to approve the 2025 December minutes as published. Beth Deaton was first and Darlene Dixon was second. The motion unanimously passed.

#### **New Business:**

Jane Mobley shared the 2025 CAMGA annual with members. She was disappointed with Shutterfly's production of a few photos. She will need a volunteer to take over this pictorial record in 2027. Since she is unable to attend all events, she asked members to take snapshots at activities and workshop programs for her and to be shared – via her email address, in a jpeg format. The yearbook is shelved in the library with prior years of annuals.

## **CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)**

### **January 20, 2026**

Members were requested to review the AMGA Pathways email newsletter for information and registration forms to attend the AMGA State Conference, Gardening to the Moon and Back, to be held in Huntsville this spring, May 6-8, 2026.

#### **Mallory Kelley's Report:**

Mallory thanked the 7 CAMGA interns for attending today's meeting. She shared that there will be 18 interns in the CCMGA spring master gardener program, beginning now, with one Elmore County resident, Debra Watkins, included. She is pleased that the Lunch & Learn programs have been well attended within all four counties: Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, and Montgomery. There were 54 programs total with 1,975 people in attendance. She encouraged us to keep up the good work of publishing these educational programs for the public on our social media pages and accounts. She reviewed positive statistics of attendance at the latest 2026 January Lunch & Learn programs for citizens of Elmore, Montgomery, and Autauga counties. She was pleased with the attendance of 2025 special workshops including the Garden Tour on Landscaping Design, Wildlife in the Garden, and Wreath Making.

She made a special note of thanks to Beth Deaton for taking on the Helpline duties and to Candy Jones for all her contributions to the Education Committee for the past 13 years. Mallory currently has three programs on the docket to assist the future chair of the Public Education Workshop subcommittee.

She covered a list of 2026 events planned in the next few months that will be shared in the upcoming CAMGA Buzz Newsletters. She left fliers for members to attend two February activities, sponsored by CCMGA – “The Art of Tussie-Mussie” presented by Elizabeth Via Brown, on February 19, 2026, open for 24 participants. On March 5, 2026, Dr. Jim Del Prince will conduct a “Master Floral Designer Workshop and Floral Bar,” including lunch, at Grace Episcopal Church in Pike Road, open to 70 participants. (Please see Upcoming Events list for more details and contact info for these workshops.)

Mallory would appreciate any volunteers who might want to work with her on the AUM Ollie Garden Series. She is working on a statewide initiative in partnership with Alabama Power on Lakeside Living that will feature lakes in the region – Wedowee, Mitchell, Smith, Jordan and/or Martin. The program will deal with erosion control, vegetation control, run-off, and possible water features.

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Sherri Davidson gave the treasurer report for November and December of 2025. The overall balance for November was \$26,449.52 while the ending balance for December was \$25,010.08.

November summary – investment 18-month CD, \$10,627.83 + beginning cash balance of \$15,327.16; ending cash balance of income and after expenses, \$15,821.69 = \$26,449.52 Total.

December summary – investment 18-month CD, \$10,627.83 + beginning cash balance of \$15,821.69; ending cash balance of income and after expenses of \$14,382.25 = \$25,010.08 Total.

There were several expenses for the Learning Gardens in December.

Sherry will be assisting Bob Sheilds in his new role as Treasurer. Cindy stated this guidance will be especially helpful for Bob during the plant sale and tax time. There was a lost check for \$30.57 that has been rewritten. There are two outstanding checks.

## **CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)**

### **January 20, 2026**

#### **Special Committee Reports:**

##### ***Audit:***

Cheryl Fitzgerald and Mary Ann Hatcher met on January 19, 2026, with Sherri Davidson and Cindy Augustine for the 2025 CAMGA audit. They conducted random sampling of the finances and stated that after reconciling and matching deposits, reimbursements, square and bank statements, all figures are in order within the treasury records. Cheryl stated one of two recommendations was to revise the CAMGA Expense Reimbursement Request Form to add a line for a printed signature under the authorized signature of the Committee Chair. The second recommendation was for additional information, such as an email invoice, for any automated renewal subscriptions.

##### ***Budget:***

Cindy Augustine stated that the Budget Committee will meet in early February to work on the budget to present to members before the next CAMGA meeting. Bob Sheilds, Sherri Davidson, treasurers, and two volunteers, Robin Snyder and Rebecca Ridley, will join Cindy to review the budget requests.

After discussing the 2026 directory process, with recommendation to bring back the booklet to the next meeting to be stapled with heavy-duty staples, Cindy Augustine adjourned the meeting at 12:25 pm.

Note: Kim Schellenberg, one of the interns, mentioned that she has organic free range chicken eggs available for purchase.

*Minutes respectively submitted by,*

*Dee Turberville, Secretary*  
*CAMGA, Inc.*



## **Governor's Mansion Report For January 2026 By: Amanda Borden**



In January we cleaned up the Hill House from the Christmas tours and packed away the decorations.

The only outdoor work during the month was the planting of three camellias. Other than that, it was too cold, so we had to cancel our work days.



Group after last Hill House workday — January 2026

## Master Garden Interns Volunteer at Charlton Place Senior Care Facility in January By: Robin Snyder

Five of our current interns took part in a winter planting of three raised beds at the Charlton Place Senior Care facility in Deatsville on January 20, 2006.

The beds had originally been planted by the previous intern class last winter and again in the spring. We removed the dead plants, trimmed the perennials and planted winter plants for the residents to enjoy until the spring when we will return to get them ready for the next season. It was a bit cool that day as you may recall so no residents joined us for the event. They will enjoy them through the windows this season. The residents and staff were very grateful for our assistance in making a pretty spot in their courtyard.



# February 2026

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

|    |   |   |  |  |  |   |
|----|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| 1  | 2<br>Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.<br><br>Crafting at the Extension Office 9-4 p.m. For Mardi Gras parade | 3   | 4<br>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon  | 5<br>Learning Gardens at Extension Office, 8-11 a.m.   | 6  | 7   |
| 8  | 9<br>Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.<br><br>Projects meeting at Extension Office, Conference Room 10 a.m.   | 10<br>Lunch & Learn First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka 12-1 p.m.     | 11<br>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon | 12<br>Learning Gardens at Extension Office, 8-11 a.m.  | 13<br>Decorate Mardi Gras parade float at Extension Office 10 a.m. | 14<br> |
| 15 | 16<br>Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.   | 17<br>CAMGA, Inc. monthly meeting at the Extension Office, 10-12 noon | 18<br>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon | 19<br>Learning Gardens at Extension Office, 8-11 a.m.  | 20   | 21  |
| 22 | 23<br>Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.   | 24  | 25<br>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 noon | 26<br>Learning Gardens at Extension Office, 8-11 a.m.<br><br>Rose pruning & fertilizing at First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka, at 10 a.m. | 27   | 28  |