



GARDEN BUZZZZZ



Volume 35 Issue 3 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.

March 2026

Message from Cindy
Cindy Augustine
CAMGA, INC. PRESIDENT



Happy March, Everyone!

Spring is edging closer and I'm loving these warmer, sunnier days! Just a few reminders of some upcoming events.



First, please be sure to continue (or start) propagating plants for the plant sale on Saturday, May 2nd. We want to have lots of plants available for our shoppers, as we want to have a great sale this year. As you spread the word about the plant sale, please be sure to emphasize that it is a rain or shine event, as we are holding it in the Extension barn.

On March 10 from 12-1 p.m. will be our lunch and learn at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church. The topic for this month is Japanese Maples, and our speaker is Nicole Hart from Crooked Oaks Farm (formerly Pat Dye's maple tree farm). We also will be having a field trip to Crooked Oaks in Notasulga on April 22nd. Look for a Sign-up Genius for that in late March.

Our next CAMGA, Inc. meeting will be on Tuesday, March 17th, which is also St. Patrick's Day! Dress in green and learn more about what's going on in CAMGA as we prepare for the plant sale.

Also, please mark your calendars for a field trip out to Jim Scott's garden scheduled for May 13. Jim is now personally leading the tours, so this should be a treat! I hope you are enjoying the Spring-like weather and spending time out in the sunshine!

Happy Planting!
Cindy

Table of Contents:

Message from Cindy.....	1
Message from Mallory.....	2
CAMGA, Inc. Minutes.....	3-7
Learning Garden Report.....	8-10
Mansion Report	11
Library Report.....	12
March Calendar.....	13



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. Minutes Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 10:00 AM

Elmore County Cooperative Extension Office

By: Dee Turberville, Secretary, CAMGA, Inc.

Vice President, Jason Maddox began the meeting at 10:08 a.m. with 33 members in attendance. Noting it was “32 Days Until Spring,” he started the PowerPoint presentation with a program given by advanced Master Gardener, Amanda Borden, on *Sustainable Landscape Design*.

Amanda emphasized the importance of proper plant selection, future growth, allowing for existing structures/trees, as well as consideration of soil types and testing within the available terrain. She reminded members that removing and planting annuals causes soil ecosystem disturbance while native perennials have deeper root systems. She discussed need analysis of plants, such as xeriscaping plants that can thrive with little supplemental watering and then those that thrive in hydro-zoning zones.

Her advice included: adapt your landscape design for your space – sun vs. shade, wind, soil type and health, terrain, water needs, and consider plants susceptible to pests and diseases. Try to avoid synthetic fertilizers. Growing plants in raised beds may be the best solution for some gardeners. Your master plan can develop over the years. Sustainable design includes low maintenance, accommodating the homeowner’s schedule, and ability to travel, plants that survive in both hot and cold weather, privacy, and plants that can leave a legacy, i.e. trees. She covered the pros and cons of various types of mulches, placed at least 12 inches away from foundations.

Amanda stated the most important principle for sustainable gardening is to observe your property for elements in all seasons. She encouraged members to plant what they like, considering aesthetics, senses, privacy and edibility. She shared several resources for research on sustainable gardening, such as [Gaia’s Guide](#), on permaculture and ecological gardening, which is available for check out in the CAMGA library collection. She sent members an emailed handout on drought-tolerant plants.

After a break for lunch, Jason started the CAMGA business meeting at 11:15 a.m. Rhonda Miles thanked Alicia Brown, Tracy Poist, and Erica Godby for supplying treats for lunch. Bob Brown and son dropped by to donate pots and shirts – to share leftover garden items from his estate sale. He and Becky Brown were in the 2012 intern class and were active members for many years; Becky passed away a few years ago.

Upcoming Events

- Feb 26th Rose Pruning & Fertilization, First Presbyterian Church, 10 am
- Mar 8th Daylight Saving Time Starts
- Mar 9th Projects Committee Meeting, 10 am
- Mar 10th Lunch and Learn, Japanese Maples, 12 pm
- Mar 20th First Day of Spring
- Apr 5th Easter Sunday
- Apr 13th Projects Committee Meeting, 10 am
- Apr 14th Lunch & Learn, Bees of Alabama, 12 pm
- Apr 21st CAMGA Monthly Meeting
- Apr 22nd Field trip to Crooked Oaks, Notasulga, AL

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)

By: Dee Turberville, Secretary

Not included in this list, Jason said that Wetumpka Earth Day and Spring Market will take place on April 11. James Scott, owner of the Scott Gardens at Lake Martin, has invited master gardeners to visit his gardens this spring. Jason will check on available dates, probably after the plant sale and state conference. Nicole Hart will lead the tour at Crooked Oaks, now managed by Auburn University - the organization is still selling maples for those interested in purchasing. Jane Mobley asked for a few more members to join the rose pruning session at First Presbyterian Church. Work should only last an hour if enough members show up.

For the Secretary's report, Amanda sent out an update for corrections for two email addresses in January's 2026 minutes. Cindy accepted a motion to approve the corrections. First motion offered by Beth Deaton and second motion from Jason Mattox. There was unanimous consent.

Mallory updated members on the still available CCMGA's The Master Floral Design and Floral Bar workshop to be held on March 6, cost of \$42.00, with lunch at the Grace Episcopal Church. She said future workshops are being developed for April and May. There are 17 interns in the spring class; only one is from Elmore County, Debra Watson. Darlene Dixon Branyon is her Bud-Dee. Mallory thanked interns Alicia Brown, Tracy Poist, and Erica Godby for helping with the Lunch & Learn treats. She reminded interns and members to sign up for the Helpline.

Bob Shields presented slides on the treasurer's report.

Investment: 18-Month CD, \$10,627.83; *Income:* \$53.59; *Expenses:* \$1,713.80

Summary: beginning cash balance of \$14,382.25 and total overall ending balance of \$23,349.87.

There was one outstanding check, reissued, to Mary McCroan.

Cindy discussed the vacant chair for the Education Committee in Old Business.

Unable to attend the meeting, Mary McCroan did not send a report to share on the Learning Gardens. In the Membership report, Robin Snider stated that intern Patty Brown has volunteered to be a co-facilitator for the fall intern class which will be hosted by Autauga County in Autaugaville in 2026.

Robin and Patty would welcome more helpers for the intern class, at least 1 or 2 more. Cindy stated additional directories are available. She hopes to obtain heavy duty staples soon for them to be bound. Several plant sale team leaders are still needed, i.e., 2 volunteers for trees and perennials in each category. Pricing members could use a few more helpers on Friday, May 1st. Sherri suggested that members pre-price their plants, with an image of the flower, color, attached. The cashiers could use another volunteer to work with Bob, Cindy and Rebecca. Barbara Wallace needs an assistant in the shrub department. Mary would like someone to plan and conduct tours of the learning gardens or to conduct small workshops. Pots are being ordered for the plant sale. Robin Snider emphasized that there is a spot for everyone at the plant sale. Reserve your spot with Robin and Terry soon.

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)

By: Dee Turberville, Secretary, CAMGA, Inc.

Anida had no new concerns for the Network report. In Publicity, Darlene would like another helper for advertising the plant sale, especially in the Millbrook area, to post fliers around town as well as to post info for the sale on social media accounts. Within the Projects committee.

Rebecca stated the next projects meeting will be on March 9, and she invited interested members to sit in and possibly join in the future. She stressed to members how interesting the AMGA meeting was that she and Sherri recently attended. She enjoyed meeting other master gardener groups and learning about their activities. She stated that all the photos of the Mardi Gras production and parade are available on the CAMGA Facebook page along with the reels she created. For their float, *The Bourbon Street Beach Party*, CAMGA won the "Edward Bloom Award for Being a Big Fish in Wetumpka's Small Pond," one of only two awards given for the Order of Cimarron Mardi Gras parade. Cindy stated that this is the third year that CAMGA has won an award, thanks to the vision of Rebecca Ridley. The members gave her a round of applause for her creative ability. She shared that more information on ordering bricks for the Tribute Garden is coming soon - an email that hopefully will include a QR code.

The executive board approved a memorial donation for Randall Jones. Cindy requested a donation from members to take up a collection for funds to be given to the Equality Real Island Volunteer Fire Department in memory of Randall Jones, the husband of member, Candy Jones. He served as a volunteer for the department from 2004 to 2025; he passed away on January 4, 2026. She will solicit members again in March 2026.

Cindy thanked the Budget Committee for meeting on Zoom and was pleased that it only took an hour of work. The executive board members discussed and approved the proposed budget. Sections of the budget considered were divided into Administrative; Member Activities & Engagement; and Community Engagement. The budgeted income is \$9,830.00 and the Budgeted Expenses are \$13,769.00. Cindy discussed the three categories and highlighted a few items, such as new signs and banners needed for the new logo, with QR code included.

Beth asked for clarification of our CAMGA, Inc. 501c name in association with the ACES extension change that indicates Elmore County/CAMGA master gardeners as ACES master gardeners. With no further questions, Cindy accepted the executive board's approval for the proposed budget (with no need for a first motion) and Amanda Borden made the second motion. There was unanimous consent.

Cindy stated that some addresses are missing from the AMGA Dues Tracker. When logging in service hours, she asked members to update their profile with correct address and phone number. Anida will help with service hours if needed.

The 2026 AMGA State Conference will be held in Huntsville on April 7-9. The president of each of Alabama's master gardener groups can vote in the business meeting.

Cindy asked members to approve of a CAMGA attendee to be her proxy and to be reimbursed for the conference fee. Beth made a motion to allow CAMGA Inc. to pay for the designee to vote as a proxy for Cindy and to be reimbursed. Sherri made the second motion. There was unanimous consent.

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)
By: Dee Turberville, Secretary, CAMGA, Inc.

The 2027 AMGA State Conference will be held in Homewood while the 2028 AMGA State Conference will be held in Dothan.

There is now an EMG Online Store for state master gardeners. Some items will accommodate adding local MG Association names. Introductory discounts on shirts are available from Feb. 6 through March 6. The site will temporarily shut down until March 31 to complete the new orders. Standard pricing will be in effect on April 1, 2026

The next Advisory Council meeting will be on April 21, but not at Petals from the Past.

Old Business:

Cindy stated that the Education Chair is still vacant. She is considering asking an active intern to train for the position under the mentorship of Robin Snyder until the graduation ceremony in August, at which time he or she could assume the role as a full member.

She reassured members that this is not a difficult position. The Education Chairperson oversees expenditures of members within his/her subcommittees and then approves and signs for reimbursements after checking invoices and receipts.

A new subcommittee chairperson, also an open position, will help with project development and will coordinate with Mallory on providing four programs each year, three of which Mallory already has in mind for 2026.

New Business:

2025 Volunteer "Reach for the Stars" Awards, presented by Michelle Sharpton.

AMGA Award Nominees from CAMGA:

Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award: Amanda Borden, 4153.33 Lifetime Hours

Top Hours of the Year Award: Annette Walker, 1000 Volunteer Hours

Reach for the Stars Advanced Badge & Star Recipients:

Silver Star Pin with Ruby Colored Gemstone: Lee Borden, 4114.24 Hours

Silver Star Pin with Ruby Colored Gemstone: Amanda Borden, 4153.33 Hours

Gold Badge: Darlene Branyon-Dixon, 1272.25 Hours

Gold Badge: Virginia Pruitt, 1369.29 Hours

Gold Badge: Rebecca Ridley, 1097.25 Hours

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)
By: Dee Turberville, Secretary, CAMGA, Inc.

Reach for the Stars (Star Pin) Award Recipients:

Gold Star (500-999 hours):

Cheryl Fitzgerald, 539.11 Hours

Silver Star (300-499 hours):

Jason Mattox, 417.75 Hours

Beth Deaton, 428.7 Hours

Bronze Star (100-299 hours):

Pattie Brown, 108.7 Hours

Lidia Mitchum, 185.5 Hours

Martha Rodgers, 131.5 Hours

Robert Sheilds, 201 Hours

Total of 7,251.95 member hours for 2025, up from 2024, with lifetime hours of 63,469.08 for Elmore County.

Cindy thanked the “Reach for the Stars” recipients for their volunteer hours and adjourned the meeting at 12:25 pm.

The next CAMGA meeting will be held at the Elmore County Cooperative Extension Office at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

Minutes respectively submitted by,

Dee Turberville, Secretary for CAMGA, Inc.



Learning Garden Report

By: Mary McCroan

LEARNING GARDEN -FALL TO WINTER

We enjoyed a lot of mild weather last fall which kept the flowers in the Butterfly Garden going longer. Pink mums and Black-eyed Susan Vines were two of the perennials that were looking good well into November.



One unexpected find in the garden was a bunch of empty snake eggs in one of the irrigation boxes. We are telling ourselves that the new snakes slithering around the garden are rat snakes. Really.



Other fall harvests in the veggie garden, besides snakes, included turnips. We grew these from seeds and they did well, but for some reason the beets planted in the same bed mostly failed to germinate.

The loofa planted last spring matured finally and provided free scrubbies after, with some effort, we managed to drag the vines down from the top of the Pineapple Guava bushes



Learning Garden Report (Continued)

By: Mary McCroan

In January, freezing weather finally put perennials to sleep and we spent several Thursdays cutting back Phlox, Black-eyed Susans, Asparagus, Turmeric, and other perennials.

Topping off beds with soil where needed, thinning strawberry plants and mulching established plants has also been on the chore list.



Late February sees us planting hardy veggies such as potatoes and brassicas. Brussels Sprouts are in this bed to the left. And along the bottom of the beds we have decided that the self-sowing poppies are ornaments, not weeds. They should bloom and really be a nice, if unexpected, accent along the beds.

Meanwhile, some of last fall's "winter veg" such as the Swiss Chard did not survive that week our temperatures dropped into the teens, but the Curly Kale and Broccoli are happy.



And after being cut back to a couple of inches after the first freeze, the wildflower garden is putting out lots of new growth and will be putting out flowers in a month or two.

You'd use the same procedure in a wildflower meadow where you can mow in the fall for appearance or to reduce weeds. Optionally, you can leave the dead stalks over the winter. They provide shelter for moths, butterflies, solitary native bees, hoverflies, ladybugs, and other pollinators. Seeds are also a food source for birds. And some may find sculptural stems or spiky seed heads are interesting visually in the winter garden.



Learning Garden Report (Continued) By: Mary McCroan

Saffron Crocus is being studied as a crop for small farmers. It is not hard to grow in Alabama, however when blooming it requires constant attention to get those little red stamens at the optimum time. This is the second year we've grown saffron in the Learning Garden, and although it is kinda cool to grow the world's most expensive spice, it is more trouble than it is worth.



The last thing to mention is that a frequent activity last fall, winter and going into spring has been propagation of our plants for the Spring Plant Sale.

During those cold, in-the-teens nights, temperatures in the greenhouse dipped down to a low of 34 degrees, but the plants did surprisingly well.

We will have Angel Trumpet, Confederate Rose, Kaleidoscope Peppers, Lemon Grass, Sago Palms, Toothache Plant, Mexican Oregano, Coleus and a few others from the greenhouse. And many more that are cold hardy and hanging out behind the shed.



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



We had only two workdays in February due to the extreme cold. We started winter cleanup and mulching in several high-visibility gardens.

The sasanqua camellia trimming started in February; we will trim the japonicas after they are done blooming.

The Herb Garden needed dead-heading, weeding and trimming.

The Secret Garden is being renovated with help from the Capitol grounds crew. This includes renewal pruning of several very large shrubs, weed removal, and applying fresh mulch.

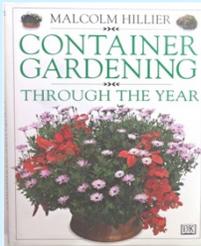
In March, with the advent of Daylight Savings Time, we will begin our workdays at 8:00 a.m.



Library Report March 2025 By: Lisa Huff

I am so fortunate to count Miss Dee Tuberville as a friend for many years and as my MG buddy for the past several months. She is an accomplished librarian, educator, and gardener. She has served as the CAMGA librarian since 2019 and is the current CAMGA secretary. As her MG buddy, I am training to take over librarian duties – (in other words, we're going from "expert to tries hard"). She has such little feet, but such big shoes to fill!

Container Gardening Through the Year – By: Malcolm Hillier



There are so many advantages to container gardening, but three specifically come to mind on this gray, frigid, dreary day: 1) A container garden can be planted anytime, even on a gray, frigid, dreary day; 2) Planting a beautiful container garden can make a gray and dreary day less gray and dreary; and, 3) The impact is immediate. You plant it, and there it is! Lovely and bright.

“Container Gardening through the Year” by Malcolm Hillier, provides a “season-by-season approach for the all-weather container gardener”. The heart of the book is a catalogue of 71 seasonal plantings and display ideas. Many of the projects are summer plantings, and there are plenty of plantings for beautiful displays in spring and autumn. Hillier also includes, “several planting ideas for indoors and outdoors to help you through the dreary winter months”.

Each planting project is beautifully photographed and clearly summarized with specific guidance on the types and number of plants needed, the type and size of container, initial planting steps, soil, light, and water requirements, and the size of the planting at maturity. The book includes a chapter on plant care, in which he gives detailed instructions on how to prepare containers for planting, how to plant shrubs and bulbs, how to stake and train taller plants and vines, how to plant and replant window boxes and hanging baskets, and how to deadhead and top-dress containers.

Hillier clearly states his main principle for designing containers: “The secret of successful year-round gardening is to plant a varied selection of trees, shrubs and flowering perennials in pots to create a foundation of permanent plantings and then to introduce annuals, biennials, and bulbs that can easily be changed out once they are past their peak for seasonal interest.” Arranged by season, Hillier puts this principle into practice in designing the project containers: spring-blooming shrubs and bulbs, summer annuals, fall blooms and berries, and winter berries and evergreens. His guidelines and planting projects also provide helpful information to create containers for multiple seasons of interest, such as planting spring bulbs within a foundation of winter berries and evergreens.

For each project, Hillier provides all the information necessary to recreate the container planting and to care for them so that they thrive. The book’s highly practical introduction provides design guidelines for mixing pot and plant colors, and textures and shapes that invite more advanced gardeners to apply these concepts to new combinations of plants for containers or the yard.

March 2026

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1	2 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.</i>	3	4 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	5 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8-12 noon</i>	6	7
8 <i>Daylight Savings Time begins 2 a.m.</i>	9 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 8-11 a.m.</i> <i>Projects Meeting 10 a.m. Extension Office</i>	10 <i>Lunch & Learn 12-1 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka</i>	11 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	12 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8-12 noon</i>	13	14
15	16 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	17 <i>CAMGA Meeting at the Extension Office, 10 a.m. (Dress in green for St. Patrick's Day.)</i>	18 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	19 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8-12 noon</i>	20  <i>First Day of Spring</i>	21
22	23 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	24	25 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	26 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8-12 noon</i>	27	28
29	30 <i>Mansion Workday Gardens 8-11 a.m.</i>	31				