



GARDEN BUZZZZ



Volume 35 Issue 4 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.

April 2026

Message from Cindy
Cindy Augustine
CAMGA, INC. PRESIDENT



Happy April Everyone!

I hope everyone is enjoying the warmer temperatures! Now we just need some good soaking rain (with no severe weather) to help everything grow green and healthy.

I hope everyone is busy propagating for our plant sale, which will be Saturday, May 2nd from 8 AM – 12 PM. Please be sure to talk up the fact that it is a rain or shine event being held in the barn when you talk to people about it. At our April meeting we will have some flyers to pass out as advertising. I'd love to see a huge turnout and lots of profit!

Just a few reminders about upcoming events:

- Saturday, April 11th will be Earth Day at the Wetumpka Farmers Market. CAMGA, Inc. will have a table and will offer plants to swap.
- Monday, April 13th, 10 AM, the Projects' Committee will have a meeting in the Extension Center Conference Room.
- Tuesday, April 14th, 12 PM, Lunch & Learn at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church. The topic will be Bees of Alabama with Dr. Selina Bruckner, a bee specialist with ACES.
- Tuesday, April 21st, 10 AM, CAMGA Monthly Meeting at the Extension Center.
- Wednesday, April 22nd, 10 AM, Field trip to Crooked Oaks in Notasulga. Be sure to sign up via Sign-Up Genius. The trip costs \$20.
- Friday, May 1st, time TBD, set up for the plant sale
- Saturday, May 2nd, CAMGA Plant Sale, 8 AM – 12 PM at Elmore County Extension Center (CAMGA Volunteers 7:30 AM)

I hope everyone had a blessed Easter and gets to spend lots of time in the garden this month! See you on April 21st!

Cindy

Table of Contents:

Message from Cindy.....	1
Message from Mallory.....	2-3
Mansion Report	4
CAMGA, Inc. Minutes.....	5-8
Intern Event	9
April Calendar.....	10



Carol Pugh, Editor
Garden Buzzzz
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.





Governor's Mansion Report For March 2026 By: Amanda Borden



Tasks this month included watering, dead-heading, renewal pruning, weeding, mulching, relocating the daylilies donated by the Montgomery Area Daylily Society, and normal winter cleanup.





CAMGA, Inc. Minutes Tuesday, March 17, 2026 — 10:00 AM

Elmore County Cooperative Extension Office

By: Dee Turberville, Secretary, CAMGA, Inc.

Vice President Jason Maddox began the meeting at 10:00 am with 31 members present. He introduced Hugh Nichols, a Chilton County Master Gardener, who gave a power point presentation on *Native Plant Conservation Opportunities* in Alabama. The Chilton County MGA Conservation Group began in May 2023. They recognized a need for conservation effort and developed objectives and goals in a partnership with APCA, the Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance.

Hugh discussed the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 noting that it is illegal to collect or sell endangered plants on state and federal land. However, 90% of the threatened plants are on private property in Alabama. Alabama is ranked #4 in biodiversity of plants and animals according to a 2002 study done by naturereserve.org. 9.4% of Alabama's vascular plants are at risk while Elmore County has 53 threatened plants, such as the owl-eyed ginger plant. He shared an excellent resource for endangered species on The Alabama Plant Atlas website - www.florofalabama.org.

He suggested a field trip to visit the "Clanton Flats" to see the canebrake pitcher plant, an endangered species. Hugh's goal is to inspire master gardeners to do more to help endangered native plants in Alabama.

The program concluded at 10:31 am with a break for lunch.

Jason and Cindy called the business meeting to order at 11:00 am.

Upcoming Events

- Mar 20th: 1st day of Spring
- Apr 5th: Easter Sunday
- Apr 11th: Earth Day at Farmers Market, 9 am to 1 pm
- Apr 13: Projects Committee Meeting, 10 am
- Apr 14th: Lunch & Learn, 12 pm
- Apr 21st: CAMGA Monthly Meeting, 10 am
- Apr 22nd: Field Trip to Crooked Oaks, Notasulga, 10 am

There is a cost of \$20.00 for the field trip to Crooked Oaks, parking is available, Sign Up Genius to come.

Jim Scott will conduct a tour of his garden on Lake Martin for CAMGA on May 13th, group will carpool, no cost, pack lunch, Sign Up Genius coming.

Member Care/Concerns

Mary Ann Hatcher is recovering from hip surgery; Janet Lewis is not doing well, at home with an attendant.

Debra M. Bracy, a former CAMGA master gardener, passed in January.

Cindy expressed her desire to collect money during this meeting, as was done last month, for a donation in memory of Randy Jones, Cindy Jones' husband. Bob Shields will write a check to the Equality Real Island Volunteer Fire Department for this memorial gift.

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)

By: Dee Turberville, Secretary

Secretary's Report

Cindy accepted a motion for Dee Turberville to correct a few misspelled member names, an incorrect book title, and to rephrase the plant pricing discussion in last month's minutes. To approve the corrected minutes, first motion was made by Rhonda Miles; Rhona Watson made the second motion. There was unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report — Bob Sheilds' summary:

Beginning Cash Balance	\$12,722.04	
Pri-Share Balance	\$59.13	
Checking Balance	\$12,662.91	
Income-Pri-Share Dividend	\$ 0.00	
Income-Checking	\$ 245.00	
Expenses	(\$938.83)	
Ending Cash Bal Pri-Share	\$59.13	
Ending Cash Bal Checking	\$11,969.08	
18-Mo CD	\$10,721.59*	
Overall		\$22,749.80

*The 18 Month CD at Max Credit Union earned an increase of \$93.76 which helps to cover the cost of square fees. Maturity date is 5/16/2026. Cindy emphasized that we want a good plant sale to keep the funds replenished.

Mallory Kelley's Report

Unable to attend, Mallory sent an email to Cindy with an attachment of fliers for three upcoming extension workshops: (1) Autauga County's *Floral Wreath Workshop* on floral design skills to be held March 25th, 2026, from 10 am to 12 pm, at the Autauga Extension Office Auditorium with a registration fee of \$30.00

(2) CCMGA's *Floral Fiesta – Ina Pot* to be held May 5th, 2026, from 1 pm to 3 pm, at Grace Episcopal Church with a registration fee of \$35.00

(3) ACES *Tree Care And Maintenance Workshop* to be held on May 29th, 2026, in Prattville at 1320 Old Ridge Road, from 8 am to 3:30 pm.

Jane Mobley asked workshop attendees to take photos for the CAMGA yearbook.

Standing Committee Reports

Education Committee - Robin Snyder discussed changes for the open position that Cindy Jones no longer holds. The interns, Tracey Poist and Pattie Brown, volunteered to work in that position in conjunction with Robin until they graduate in August. At that time, they will take full responsibility and then become the co-chairs for the Education Committee.

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)

By: Dee Turberville, Secretary, CAMGA, Inc.

Learning Gardens –Mary McCroan stated that she is working with the county’s maintenance department in hopes they will take responsibility to mow and weed and to care for the beds and foundation plants at the entrance of the ACES Extension Office. This change allows the Thursday CAMGA crew to focus solely on maintaining the learning and demonstration gardens, such as the butterfly garden, giving them more time to devote to its core purpose and area.

Membership – no new information from Robin

Plant Sale – all categories are covered by at least one person. Robin invited more volunteers to show up on the work day as well as the day prior to the plant sale. She is confident that all members will participate and work together for the success of the sale.

Interns –Robin has created a potting workshop experience with the CAMGA interns in which they will organize and supervise a “pilfering” of Carol Rattan’s garden on March 27, 2026. They will follow Carol's guidance for selecting, potting, and labeling plants as they tidy up her garden in the process. The interns will “babysit” those plants at their homes until it is time for the plant sale.

Network – no news from Anida

Publicity – no new comments from Darlene

Projects –Unable to attend, Rebecca sent Cindy the info on the committee’s propagation workshop to be held at her home on April 4th from 10-12 pm. Her address is 410 Cabin Road, Wetumpka, 36093. This workshop will include demonstrations and hands-on practice for air layering, ground layering, and propagation via cuttings, mainly focusing on camellia, hydrangea, and azalea shrubs. Sign up soon; participation is limited. Everyone will take a potted cutting home. Cindy stated that she plans a 2nd workshop in the fall.

Darlene Dixon is acquiring volunteers for the Wetumpka Earth Day market event on April 11, 2026. She needs assistance during two shifts: 8:30 to 11:00 am and 11 am to 1:30 pm. Volunteers will receive a Wetumpka Earth Day T-Shirt.

On April 13, 2026, there will be a Projects Committee meeting from 10 to 11:00 am in the ACES Extension Boardroom. All are welcome to attend.

Memorial Bricks - Cindy has created a QR code and form to order the bricks. These orders will be scheduled twice a year with the first order placed this June. Currently, three bricks have been requested. As stated by Rebecca, “I will place the order in June, to ensure everyone interested has a chance to purchase. Payments should be made via Square QR code or personal check at the time of the order. Once I receive the QR code, I will place an order in the Master Gardener Office with the QR code for payment, or you can attach a check to the order form made out to CAMGA. I will have Anida send out a notification as soon as this is set up. **Please do not give brick money directly to the Treasurer.**”

Robin reminded members that the Memorial Tribute scrapbook in the ACES office should be updated to include a brief write up of those individuals being honored. The individuals do not need to be master gardeners to be included in the Tribute Garden.

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

State Advisory Council Representative Report

Kelly corrected dates and times for the Alabama 2026 plant sale flyer sent by Sheila Bolen from AMGA. Kelly also shared info on the upcoming fall conference hosted by Blount County, "Happiness in the Garden!" on Thursday, October 1, 2026, in Cleveland, AL.

Felder Rushing is the featured speaker, an expert known for his humor and laid-back nature in the garden. The 2026 AMGA Conference closed registration in early February after 400 people had registered, a first in the history of the conference. Kelly can add members to a wait list if they are interested in attending. The next master gardener intern class in Autauga County (Autaugaville) costs \$150 if registered between June 1-16, 2026; after June 16, the fee is \$175.

Old Business – No old business

New Business

Cindy stated that a line item for propagation was omitted in the 2026 budget. During their meeting, the executive board members voted in favor of adding funds to the 2026 budget for propagation needs. Therefore, Rhona Watson proposed a motion for \$1500.00 to be added to the budget for the purchase of super soil and pots needed for the propagation of plants. Cindy accepted the motion and Beth Deaton seconded the motion. The members voted in favor, unanimously.

Adjournment

Cindy adjourned the meeting at 11:44pm. The next CAMGA meeting will be Tuesday, April 21st at 10 am at the Elmore County Extension Center.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Dee Turberville, Secretary for CAMGA, Inc.*



Intern Event

By: Robin Synder
Master Gardener

The Fall 2025 CAMGA/Autauga Interns met at the home of Carol Rattan in Wetumpka to propagate plants for the spring plant sales. Carol had generously invited the interns to come and dig plants from her gardens and Jenn Cruise and Tracy Poist organized the event for their fellow interns for 9-12 March 27.

The weather was perfect and Carol had marked available plants and then took us on a quick tour to assess the job. Interns Carol Richey, Pattie Brown, Lisa Huff, Karen Cooper, Debbie Satterfield, and Katherine Reed, as well as MG's Lori Terrell, Jane McCarthy, Bob Sheilds, Carol Rattan and Robin Snyder joined Jenn and Tracy for this big event.

They all worked hard for 3 hours, loaded pickup trucks, vans and car trunks with hundreds of potted and labeled plants and left the place looking pretty good. Carol provided snacks and drinks for all. Thank you so much Carol. You were a good sport!! We will have a lot of plants for the plant sales.



April 2026

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

			1 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	2 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8–11 a.m.</i>	3	4
5 <i>Happy Easter!</i>	6 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	7	8 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	9 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8–11 a.m.</i>	10	11 <i>Earth Day at Wetumpka Farmers Market</i>
12	13 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 8-11 a.m. Projects Committee Meeting at the Extension Office 10 a.m.</i>	14 <i>Lunch & Learn First Presbyterian Church, We- tumpka 12-1 p.m.</i>	15 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	16 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8–11 a.m.</i>	17	18
19	20 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	21 <i>CAMGA meeting 10 a.m. at Extension Auditorium</i>	22 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12 Field Trip to Crooked Oaks in Notasulga, 10 a.m. Registration required</i>	23 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8–11 a.m.</i>	24	25
26	27 <i>Mansion Gardens Workday 8-11 a.m.</i>	28	29 <i>Lanark Gardens Workday 8-12</i>	30 <i>Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8–11 a.m.</i>	<i>May 1st Plant Day Sale Set Up (TBD)</i>	