GARDEN BUZZZZ

Volume 35 Issue 11 Central Alabama Master Gardener Association, Inc.

November 2026

Message from Cindy
Cindy Augustine
CAMGA, INC. PRESIDENT



Happy November!

I hope you're all adjusting to the time change better than I am! I really don't enjoy it being dark by 5 p.m. every day.

Thank you to everyone who attended our last meeting. We were able to fill committee positions and elect a new slate of officers. In 2027, Sherri Davidson will be taking over as President, with Rebecca Ridley doing double duty as Vice President and Projects Committee Chair. Lisa Huff will be taking on the role of Secretary, and I will become the CAMGA Treasurer.

Thanks to Cathy Whigham, Cheryl Fitzgerald, and Martha Rogers for agreeing to serve on the Audit Committee. Additional thanks go out to Bob Sheilds for heading up the budget committee with members Sherri Davidson, Jason Mattox, Cindy Augustine, and Mary McCroan.

Upcoming events for the rest of the year include:

Tuesday, November 10, Lunch and Learn at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church from 12-1 p.m. with the topic of "Citrus in the Backyard" with Dr. Chip East of ACES.

Tuesday, November 17, CAMGA Meeting at the Elmore County Extension Office at 10 a.m.

Tuesday, December 1, CAMGA Meeting and Christmas Lunch at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church from 10-12. A email has been sent out with links for both food and attendance.

Tuesday, December 8, Lunch and Learn at Wetumpka First Presbyterian Church with Dr. Charles Mitchell discussing "Alabama Soils & Garden Fertilizers" from 12-1 p.m.

After these events, we will take a few weeks break before we enter into the New Year. We have a wonderful lineup of exciting Lunch and Learns already planned for 2027, so be sure to pick up the new flyer soon. I look forward to seeing everyone at the November meeting!

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

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.

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes
Tuesday, October 20, 2026
Elmore County Extension Office
Submitted by: Cheryl Fitzgerald

The monthly meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. There was not a program due to the annual Plant Swap occurring at the end of the business meeting. Vice President Jason Mattox began the meeting by discussing upcoming events:

October 23rd A Season for Succulents (sold out)
October 24th Wetumpka Wildlife Arts Festival Planting Demonstration. Rebecca has sent out a Zeffy sign up for anyone wanting to volunteer.
October 28th Lunch and Learn Work Session
October 31st 2027 Committee Budget Reports due to Treasurer
November 7th Crepe Myrtle Workshop at Rebecca's home
November 10th Lunch and Learn (Citrus in the Backyard) with Dr. Chip East
November 12th Growing Citrus Workshop
November 13th Dickens Christmas Workshop (Fill sachet bags)
November 17th Monthly CAMGA meeting

Secretary's Report

Cindy asked if there were any needed corrections for the September minutes published in the Garden Buzz Newsletter. Name misspellings needed to be corrected. Cindy took a motion to accept the minutes with corrections. Beth Deaton made the first motion, and Leslie Bingham seconded it. There was unanimous consent.

Report from Mallory Kelley

Mallory is out of town. No report was provided on her behalf.

Treasurer's Report

Bob Sheilds provided a detailed report for September. Summary is as follows:

Beginning Cash Balance $30,141.88
Pri Share Balance $59.17
Checking Balance: $19,269.62
Income Checking: $2530.71
Expenses ($2327.78)
Ending Cash Balance Pri Share $59.17
Ending Cash Balance Checking: $19,472.55
7 Mo CD $10,813.09 (no change)
Total Overall $30,344.81

Comments and Questions: Rebecca Ridley inquired as to the plus/minus status of income. Bob answered her inquiry by informing that we are up about two hundred dollars.

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)

Tuesday, October 20, 2026

Education Committee Report
Pattie Brown reported "A Season for Succulents" is sold out as well as the November program,'' A Pot Full of Sunshine: Growing Citrus." Programs for January, March and May of 2027 are already being planned. Beth Deaton inquired if the Education Committee will continue to be involved with 4-H in 2027. Tracey Poist reported programs are scheduled though March of 2027. Beth commented on how enjoyable it has been to work with 4-H.

Learning Gardens Committee
Mary McCroan brought a luncheon dish of carrots from the Learning Garden and encouraged everyone to try it. Super soil has been purchased for plant propagation for the plant sale in May. Members are welcome to use it. Peat moss has been donated but Mary warns it is hard packed and can be a challenge to break apart. It can be used to lighten up the supersoil. Individuals who grow 100 plants or more for the plant sale can get a bale of the peat moss after speaking to Mary. The super soil and the peat moss can be used by all committees as needed.

Membership Committee
Robin Snyder asked that dues be paid by the next meeting, November 17th. She will provide a list of those who have paid. Robin is not requiring all members to fill out a new Membership form unless you are a recent graduate. Any major changes in information should go to Anida or Robin. SAVE THE DATE: The CAMGA Christmas party will be held on the first Tuesday in December at First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka. Robin wants to put together a choir for the party. More information on this at the next meeting.

Network Committee
Anida Wishnietsky was not at the meeting. No report was available.

Publicity Committee
Darlene Branyon asked members to send her details about events or other items needing publicity. She has several ways to promote events.

Projects Committee
Rebecca is hosting a Crepe Myrtle Pruning workshop at her home on Saturday, November 7,2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The workshop is limited to ten participants, and some slots have already been filled. The cost is $5.00 per person, and a Southwestern-style luncheon will be served. The alternate rain date is Friday, November 13.
The Wildlife Arts Festival and Planting Demonstration will be held in Wetumpka on October 24. Rebecca welcomes additional volunteers, including members who need volunteer hours.

State Advisory Council Representative Report
The next AMGA Advisory meeting is on the first Tuesday in November at Petals from the Past. Kelly LaFreniere encouraged members to attend. Kelly provided a brief explanation of the Pathways newsletter, published by AMGA. There was also a brief discussion of the 2027 AMGA Statewide Conference being held in Homewood Alabama, April 7th through 9th.

CAMGA, Inc. Minutes (Continued)

Tuesday, October 20, 2026

Old Business
Cindy provided an update on the shed. We are waiting on the county for site approval which will not occur until after the November election.

New Business

Audit Committee
Cindy requested volunteers to form an Audit Committee. Cathy Whigham, Martha Rodgers, and Cheryl Fitzgerald volunteered. The committee will meet in late December to audit the 2026 finances in a single session with the treasurer present.

Budget Committee
The Budget Committee needs additional volunteers, and executive board members may serve. Committee chairpersons will submit proposed budgets, which the Budget Committee will combine. Sherri Davidson has volunteered. Jason Mattox, Tracey Poist, and Cindy Augustine have also volunteered.

Nominating Committee
On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Cathy Whigham presented the following slate of officers for 2027:

President: Sherri Davidson
Vice President: Rebecca Ridley
Treasurer: Cindy Augustine
Secretary: Lisa Huff

Cindy called for nominations from the floor. With no additional nominations being made, the slate of officers was approved by unanimous acclimation. Installation will occur at the December meeting.

Additional comments:
Beth Deaton spoke about the Autauga County Master Gardeners Scholarship. She is proposing CAMGA investigate doing the same. The intern with the most volunteer hours would be the recipient of the scholarship. No action was taken. Sherri Davidson encouraged members to keep an eye on postings on social media. This could be an effective way to recruit new interns. Rhonda thanked everyone for bringing food and encouraged members to sign up for the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m. The annual Plant Swap will occur at 11:10 a.m. outside the Extension building.

The next meeting will be on November 17th at 10:00 am at the Elmore County Extension Office.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Cheryl Fitzgerald
(On behalf of Dee Turberville, Secretary for CAMGA, Inc.)



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



We were busy during October, with lots to do each workday. On the 5th we weeded the Secret Garden, dead headed zinnias and trimmed (very lightly) camellias in preparation for the installation of Christmas lights. On the 12th we picked up debris from Hurricane Isaias. On the 15th the new Autauga and Elmore County Master Gardener intern class visited the Mansion grounds. We toured the gardens and shared our Master Gardener history and vision for the future of the gardens. The 19th was Columbus Day, so we had a small group. We cut back unsightly perennials in the Herb Garden. On the 26th we trimmed camellias in the Secret Garden and the snowball viburnum in the back yard.

We had several of the newest interns join on our Monday workdays at the Mansion: Wendy Aldridge, Lauren Henry, and Jennie Lougee. Beginning November 2, workdays will begin at 9:00 a.m. instead of 8:00.



Interns visit to Governor's Mansion. Back row: Pat Leger, Kiara Satchell, Robin Snyder, James Satchell, Brenda Henson, Lyn Burrell, Cathy Jones, Fourth row: Debra Atwell, Darlene Blumentritt, Jane McCarthy. Third row: Pattie Brown, Jennie Lougee. 2nd row: Shannon Dennis, Beth Debusk, Lauren Henry, Tasha Dangerfield. Front row: Sirita Harmon, Duren Harmon, Ann Hamill, Amanda Borden

Governor's Mansion Report (Continued)
October 2026
By: Amanda Borden



Jane shows interns proper pruning technique



Carmen filling toter



Kathy, Robin, Wendy, and Ann trimming azaleas



Surprising Jane



Darwin trimming branches



Library Report

By: Lisa Huff

Special CAMGA Library Acquisition, The Garden Primer: The Completely Revised Gardener's Bible – 100% Organic by Barbara Damrosch (Comprehensive Gardening), donated by Cheryl Fitzgerald, in honor of CAMGA Class of 2026:"*May your garden be abundant*."

"The Garden Primer" is a comprehensive, one-volume gardening reference guide that covers "just about everything you can think of, and then some." It is widely regarded as a foundational "gardener's bible," and is often listed as a "must-have book" for master gardeners. Many thanks to Cheryl Fitzgerald for donating this highly useful text to the CAMGA library in honor of the 2025-2026 CAMGA Interns, to celebrate their graduation to fully certified Master Gardeners this past August!

This is a big book that covers a lot of "ground". It includes detailed profiles of more than 370 plants, providing practical instruction on their selection, planting, on-going care, and harvest of annuals and perennials, herbs, vegetables and fruits, bulbs and roses, lawn sand groundcovers, vines, shrubs, and trees, wildflowers, and houseplants. Each profile focuses on essential growing conditions, including preferred soil types, sunlight, spacing, and water requirements, as well as common pests, diseases, and other challenges.

The book focuses on organic gardening practices, including soil health through assessment of texture, pH, and nutrient balance to create optimal growing conditions; composting to build natural soil fertility; selection, use and care of essential tools for efficient work; organic pest and disease management through prevention, identification, and non-chemical controls, and season-extension techniques, such as cold frames, row covers, and timing to prolong harvests well into cooler months. It emphasizes the benefits of native species for supporting local biodiversity and reducing maintenance needs, approaches to designing wildlife-friendly gardens that attract pollinators and other beneficial organisms, and guidance on identifying and avoiding harmful invasive species.

"The Garden Primer" offers sound advice on landscaping and design, guiding readers through sustainable principles for property layout, nursery selection to identify healthy specimens free of issues, harmonious flower combinations that achieve season-long color by anchoring with perennials and accenting with annuals, and development of low-maintenance lawns using varieties and alternatives that require less maintenance.

The book features more than 500 black-and-white illustrations and easy-to-read diagrams depicting plant structures, pruning techniques, planting patterns, and other details. Several design plans offer sample layouts suitable for a variety of garden and landscape types. It includes additional gardener's resources, a bibliography, and a comprehensive index to support quick reference and further reading.

Throughout the book, Damrosch, who describes herself as an "old fashioned dirt gardener", promotes sustainable methods that reflect a belief that good gardening is fundamentally straight forward when guided by observation and respect for natural systems. Honestly, I was not expecting a massive 800+ page gardening encyclopedia to be witty and fun to read, but it was. At times, she is friendly and reassuring, blending wit with straight forward advice (not unlike a master gardener talking to an intern): "*…and I will try and come to your aid when you're standing alone in the garden, holding a plant that looks like an amorphous tangle, and you have no idea what to do with it. If I could be there with you, I would tell you…**Plant it with the green side up***". (Ms. Mary gave me this very advice the first time I volunteered in the Learning Garden!)

Damrosch's passion for gardening also shines through her writing, and it is not difficult to understand why gardeners return to this book again and again as they dream of next year's garden: *"I don't think we'll ever shed so much light on the subject that we dampen the awe the gardener feels when the first vegetable seedlings poke up in the spring. We may never explain why we're drawn to flowers just as butterflies and bees are…We'll never know all there is to know about gardening, and I'm glad there will always be some magic about it."*

CAMGA, Inc. 2027 Membership Dues Reminder

Please pay your 2027 dues by the November 2026 meeting. The links to pay via square are provided below.

Links to pay with a debit or credit card:

CAMGA, Inc dues $25 (includes CAMGA and AMGA):
https://checkout.square.site/merchant/MLKP3FRZE6W7Z/checkout/UPSVTI7P4AGFECWRL6X34H52?src=webqr

CAMGA, Inc dues only $15 (lifetime AMGA member):
https://checkout.square.site/merchant/MLKP3FRZE6W7Z/checkout/YK63DAUSUGYOF7C2FAGBJITL?src=webqr

CAMGA, Inc dues only $15 (non-primary member):
https://checkout.square.site/merchant/MLKP3FRZE6W7Z/checkout/H5ZXXJ357ITD42UTXTFJOBXN?src=webqr



Master Gardener Intern Class Tour Gardens
October 22, 2026
By: Robin Snyder



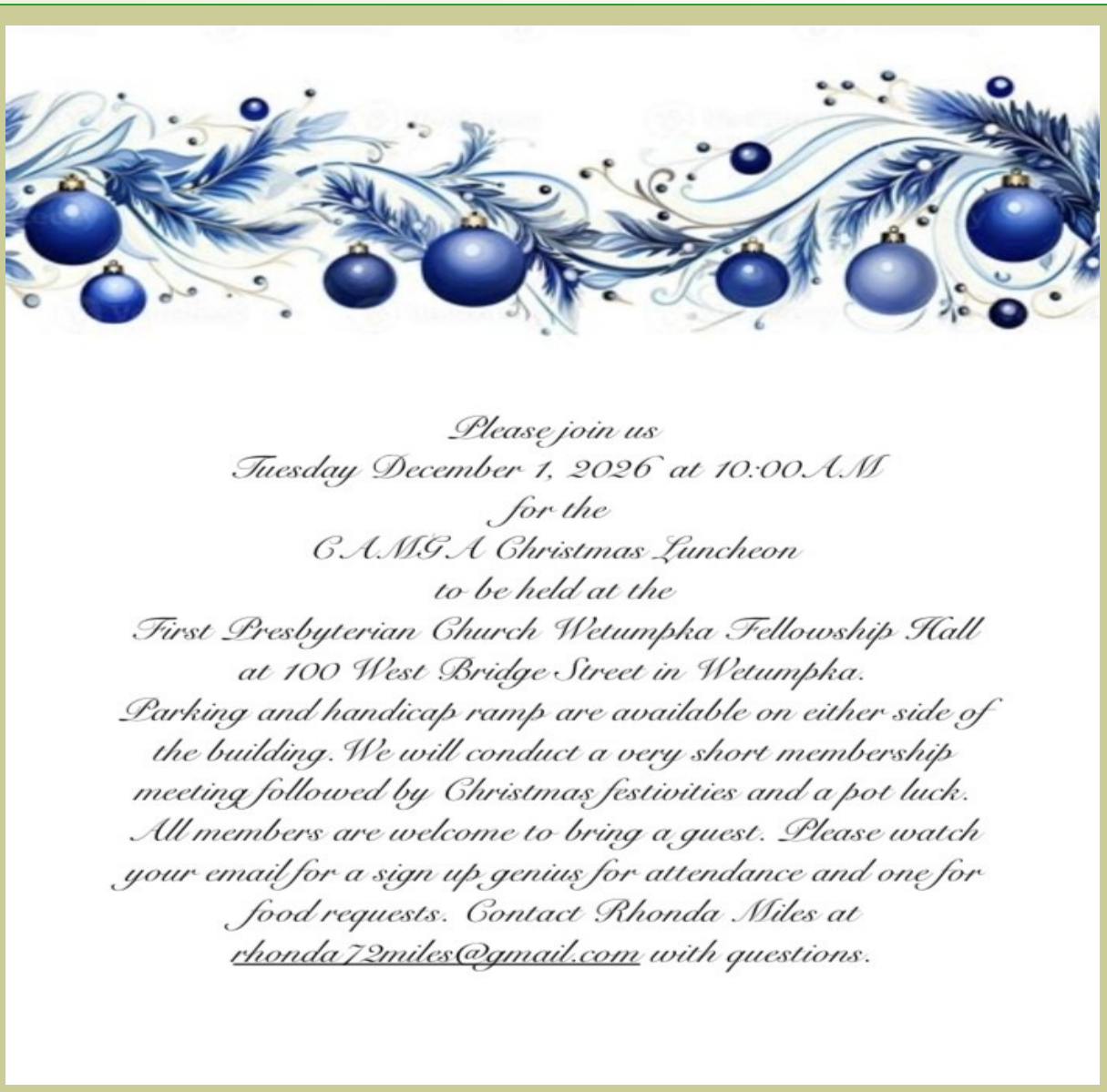
On Thursday October 22nd, the 2026 fall intern class met at the home of Rhona Watson. Rhona took the interns on a tour of her gardens where they were excited to see the numerous Japanese maples and so many beautiful and unusual plants. Rhona led the group in making a lovely kokedama moss ball arrangement.











Please sign up on EACH genius. One is for attendance/guest attendance and one is for food.

Attendance:
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545A4AD2EAAFAC34-67210024-camga#/

Food:
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0545A4AD2EAAFAC34-67210298-camga#/

PLEASE consider helping with any of the following:

- Decorating and setting up the day before the event.
- Helping in the kitchen the morning of the event.
- Cleaning up after the event.

These are things we definitely need help with. Please contact Rhonda Miles at rhonda72miles@gmail.com or text her cell phone at 334-271-0498 (texts are strongly preferred).

November 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 *Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.*	3	4	5 *Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8—12 noon*	6	7 *Crape Myrtle Workshop at Rebecca's Home*
8	9 *Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.*	10 *Lunch & Learn, First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka 12-1 p.m. "Citrus in the Backyard" by Dr. Chip East*	11	12 *Learning Gardens at the Extension Office Office 8—12 noon*	13 *Dickens Christmas Workshop (fill sachet bags) at the Extension Office, 10-12 noon*	14
15	16 *Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.*	17 *CAMGA Monthly Meeting 10 a.m. Extension Office*	18	19 *Learning Gardens at the Extension Office 8—12 noon*	20	21
22	23 *Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.*	24	25	26 	27	28
29	30 *Mansion Gardens Workday 9-11 a.m.*	