

FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

Each January we speak of new beginnings, and that's a good thing. I would, however, like to speak to the continuity, the maintenance and the enhancement of that which has come before. As an organization we were founded October 3, 1991, and over those 19 years, we have grown to 177 members as of December 14, 2009. If we encourage the Fall 2008 Night Class and the 2009 Day Class to be active in our organization, we will climb to 228 members.

We say at meetings to bring a Master Gardener friend – remember we have a pool of 51 new Master Gardeners who can be active and engaged participants in this organization. This is an organization in which we all work to increasingly bring more horticultural information to the people in our community and to improve their lives with community projects. At the January 12, 2010 meeting, look at the inactive members list. I am sure you will see the name of an old friend you have missed or a new friend to encourage to attend the February meeting.

Speaking of volunteering, you need to get your volunteer hours in NOW, so that in February at the Annual Reach for the Stars Awards Pot Luck Luncheon, you can be recognized for your hard work. The deadline for reporting your volunteer hours is January 15th. Also, at our beautiful banquet in November, not only did we enjoy great food, we had many members who signed up for the 2010 MG committees. If you did not get a chance to sign up for a committee, or do not know which committee you would enjoy serving on, please meet with me after the January 12th meeting. It's not too late to join a committee.

MG committees are AWARDS(6), AUDIT(2), COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT(4), EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS (2), HISTORICAL/SCRAPBOOK(2), YEARBOOK/DIRECTORY(2), HOSPITALITY(14), MEMBERSHIP/YEARBOOK(4), NEWSLETTER(2), SPEAKERS BUREAU(2), STATE ADVISORY(2), TELEPHONE(6), MAILING(2) and WEBSITE(2). I greatly appreciate those who have already signed up for a committee and look forward to working with additional members.

One last thing, for those who are interested, we have T-shirts to proudly identify you as a Master Gardener!

Bruce

Bruce Steele

January MG Meeting

Refreshments – 9:30 A.M.

Business Meeting – 10:00 A.M.

Speaker 10:30 A.M. – 12:00 Noon

January MG Speaker

The guest speaker for the MG January meeting will be Herb Lewis from Huntsville, Alabama, who will present a program on *Attracting Birds to the Home Landscape* from 1030 A.M. until 12:00 noon in the auditorium. This free program is open to the public after the MG business meeting concludes, and everyone is encouraged to bring friends. If you would like to bring friends, please call Tony Glover by noon on January 11th at 205-879-6964 ext. 10, or email gloveta@aces.edu, to reserve a seat. (Master Gardeners do not need to call unless they are bringing guests.)

New MG Officers' email Addresses

Bruce Steele - President,
pres@jeffcomg.org
Harold Deason- Vice President,
vice-pres@jeffcomg.org
Susan Jackson - Secretary,
sec@jeffcomg.org
Blair Cox - Treasurer,
treas@jeffcomg.org
Pat Bullock - Past President,
past-pres@jeffcomg.org

“Tony Talks”

I hope all of you have had a wonderful Christmas and Holiday Season. I don't know about you guys, but that first decade in the new millennium went by pretty fast. When writing a check, I still occasionally start the check date with 19 instead of 20. Time marches on, and this time of the year I find myself reflecting more and more on the old adage that what we do for others is one of the few lasting legacies we each will leave. Thank you for investing your time by volunteering in the various ways you do, and as we welcome the New Year, I want to encourage you to resolve to continue and even step up your efforts in this regard.

The New Year brings us a new class of MG interns who start their journey on January 14th. If you missed a class during your training, or just need a refresher, you may attend that class at no cost. (We may ask you to pitch in and help with something.) Take a look at this year's agenda at www.jeffcomg.org and let me know if you plan to attend a class. Normally, the room is awfully full, but for some reason our class is smaller than normal. (I expect 25 to 27 students when all is said and done.) By the way, the new BBG volunteer coordinator will be in this new class. Please take the time to meet and welcome – Mary-Bestor Tickle.

I plan to invite and encourage the new class to attend our first monthly meeting on January 12th, and I hope you will come and make them welcome. Herb Lewis will have an excellent program that I know you will enjoy. He was a presenter at last year's state MG conference and at our August night MG meeting. Check out the details in this newsletter and invite a friend to join us at the appropriate time.

In addition to our regular monthly meetings, I am working on several workshops for this spring. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is introducing a new program called *Alabama Smart Yards* that will focus on gardening with an eye towards environmentally sound practices. Also, I am planning an Organic Gardening workshop and a Rain Garden program to start the ball rolling. These and other CEU opportunities and details will be coming your way later.

Happy New Year to one and all, and I hope to see you on January 12th here at the BBG.

Volunteers Needed

Four volunteers are needed for the Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens Annual Member Dinner.

DATE: January 21, 2010

TIME: 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm

LOCATION: Garden Center Auditorium

Two Volunteers are needed for the payment table. They will be trained to take cash, check and credit card payments.

Two volunteers are needed for to check coats. They will offer to hang guests' coats.

BENEFITS: Free Dinner!

Also,

Over 200 volunteers are needed for the **Spring 2010 Plant Sale** from **April 15th - 18th**. Volunteers are needed for the loading zone, as cashiers, as floaters, for hospitality, as line monitors and as people counters. It's never too early to sign up!

Contact Mary-Bestor, Volunteer Coordinator, at 414-3962 for details.

Welcome to . . .



Mary-Bestor Tickle

A native of Jasper, Alabama, Mary-Bestor Tickle grew up visiting The Gardens during frequent trips to Birmingham to visit family. While attending college in Rhode Island, she earned a degree studying the ecology of wetlands of coastal Georgia. She joins the staff of The Gardens after several years working in environmental and medical nonprofit organizations.

When welcomed, Mary-Bestor had this to say, “A new year, a new job. When my husband and I decided to move to Birmingham from Atlanta, I felt that I was coming home. When I started working at The Gardens in November 2009, I knew I had arrived. A native of Jasper, Alabama, I grew up visiting The Gardens during our frequent trips to the “Magic City”. From an early age I was struck by the beauty of this green oasis nestled so close to the highway. As an employee, I feel honored each morning as I turn in 2612 Lane Park Road to see community groups arriving for a meeting in the Garden Center amidst joggers and strollers enjoying our winding paths. The Gardens are part of Birmingham’s personality – known, utilized, and loved by many.”

Graduation

Banquet

Over 100 attended the 2009 MG Graduation banquet this year to help welcome 46 new MGs who completed their requirements to become fully fledged Jefferson County MGs. In addition to the wonderful meal, all attendees were treated to a most interesting presentation on Ginger Lilies by Hayes Jackson with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.



FROM LEFT: Outgoing President Pat Bullock with David Jackson, a new MG graduate, and Bruce Steele, the incoming president.

Calendar of Events January 2010

Sunday, January 24

“Landscaping for Curb Appeal: Enhancing Your Home”

2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Instructor: John Russell, Landscape Architect

\$15 Members/\$18 Non-Members

Class size is limited. Pre-registration requested.

Create a powerful first impression of your residence. Learn how to incorporate a landscape design that reflects both your home’s architecture and your sense of style – from first impressions of your home to the entrance at the front door. In the first class segment, John Russell will use a Power Point presentation to teach general landscape principles. Next, he will select 3 homes of class participants to use as teaching examples from which we all may benefit. Upon registration, you will be given an email address if you wish to send to Mr. Russell an image of the front of your home for potential use in class.

Location: Aldridge Botanical Gardens, 3530 Lorna Road, Hoover

For more information, call 682-8019 or visit www.aldridgegardens.com.

Saturday, January 30

“ ‘Crape Murder’ and Pruning for Form”

9:30 - 11:30 A.M.

Rain Date: Sunday, January 31. 2 - 4 P.M.

Instructor: Rip Weaver, Executive Director, Aldridge Gardens

\$15 Members/\$18 Non-Members

Class size is limited. Pre-registration suggested.

Crape Myrtles are perhaps the most beautifully branching, flowering trees in the world! However, there are crimes being committed against them! Have you driven around the Birmingham area and noticed ugly knotted, gnarled, pitiful scars and wounds on these once lovely trees? Because everyone else makes a horrid ritual of butchering these ornamental trees, many “gardeners” think they also must top these once beautiful plants. Come join Rip Weaver as he teaches us how to correctly prune crape myrtles, and, weather permitting, he will also demonstrate out in The Gardens the pruning of other of our favorite shrubs and specific landscape plants.

Location: Aldridge Botanical Gardens, 3530 Lorna Road, Hoover

For more information, call 682-8019 or visit www.aldridgegardens.com.

January Garden Calendar

FRUITS AND NUTS – Set out apples, peaches, pears, and grapes. Start grafting pecans. Prune dormant trees.

SHRUBS – Plant shrubs and trees, including broadleaf, narrowleaf, and deciduous. Graft camellias in South Alabama. Spray all deciduous shrubbery with a dormant spray to control diseases and insects. Spray when weather is on a warming trend.

LAWNS – Soil test before setting up a fertility program.

ROSES – Visit nurseries and garden centers to select varieties. Start planting.

ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS – Plant hardy annuals.

BULBS – Late plantings of Dutch bulbs will flower if planted now. Lilies of all types, except Madonna, may be planted. Check stored bulbs and discard rotten ones. Make indoor plantings of amaryllis, callas, and gloxinias.

MISCELLANEOUS – Prune winter-damaged limbs. Give houseplants a bath in lukewarm water to remove dust. To keep poinsettias that have finished flowering, turn pots on their sides and let them dry completely. Cut them back lightly. Keep them in a temperature of 55 to 60 °.

VEGETABLE SEED – Plant hardy vegetables, root crops, roots and tubers in southern-most areas. Plant lettuce, cabbage and broccoli in coldframes.

VEGETABLE PLANTS – Set out cabbage plants.

Junior Master Gardener Class at Aldridge Botanical Gardens

Two Junior Master Gardener classes meet year round at Aldridge Botanical Gardens. Each child gardens in his or her own 3' x 5' raised bed. One group is 10 home school children who meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month from 2:00 – 4:00. The other group is 11 children who meet monthly on a Saturday from 9:30 – 11:30. Vasha Rosenblum is the instructor for the classes and would like very much to have some Master Gardener volunteers for more one-on-one help with the children who range in age from 8 years to 15 years. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Vasha at vashan1@bellsouth.net, or call her cell at 910-3211.

Wednesday Meeting Dates

January 13 & 27
February 10 & 24
March 10 & 24
April 14 & 28
May 12 & 26

Saturday Meeting Dates

February maybe 7th
(not yet determined)
March 13
April 10
May 8 & 22
June 12 & 26
July 10 & 24
August 14
September 11
October 9
November 13



Treasurer's Reports

JEFFERSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S REPORT: NOVEMBER, 2009

Balance Forward: 10-26-09 \$11,709.18

Received:

- 2010 Dues (State) 40.00
- 2010 Dues (Local) 108.00
- Graduation Banquet 420.00

Total Received: \$574.00

Disbursements:

- Ck. #1893 – Pat Bullock . . . 8.40
(Postage)
- Ck. #1894 – Anne Thomas . . 181.56
(\$169.90 MG Class Exp.
\$ 11.66 Grad. Banq.)
- Ck. #1895 – Anne Thomas . . 250.00
(Honorarium – Pat Bullock,
\$100.00; Tony Glover,
\$100.00; Annette
Drummonds, \$50.00)
- Ck. #1896 – Hayes Jackson . . 100.00
(Speaker)
- Ck. #1897 – Tony Glover . . . 110.24
(Grad. Banq. Exp.)
- Ck. #1898 – Char House . . . 1076.00
(Grad. Banq. Ex.)
- Ck. #1899 – Pat Bullock . . . 78.24
(Honorarium – Anne
Thomas & Lou Stinson)
- Ck. #1900 – Kim Strifert 10.50
(Refund of Reservation)
- Ck. #1901 – Martha &
Maurice Picardy 34.00
(Free 2010 Dues)

Total Disbursements: \$1848.94

Balance: 11-28-09. \$10,434.24

Certificate of Deposit 5,000.00

- (AMGA Grant \$1000.00
- Ck. # 1891 Grant Exp.
(See Oct. Report) - 36.98
- Balance of Grant 963.02



JEFFERSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

TREASURER’S REPORT: DECEMBER, 2009

Balance Forward: 11-28-09. \$10,434.24

Received:

- 2010 Dues (State) 50.00
- 2010 Dues (Local) 132.00
- Graduation Banq. 220.00
- T-Shirt 10.00
- 2010 Spring MG Class . 3200.00

Total Received: \$3612.00

Disbursements:

- Cash - Tony Glover 12.96
(Refreshments)
- Ck. #1902 - Bruce Steele . .17.00
(Free 2010 Dues*)
- Ck. #1903 - Mike Rushing .17.00
(Free 2010 Dues*)
- Ck. #1904 - Nancy Nash . 17.00
(Free 2010 Dues*)
- Ck. #1905 - AMGA 395.00
(4-2009 Dues &
75 - 2010 Dues)
- Ck. #1906 - AMGA 25.00
(5 - 2010 Dues)

Total Disbursements:483.96

*10 Free 2010 Membership Dues
given at Graduation Banquet)

Balance: 12-28-09 \$13,562.28

Certificate of Deposit (12-18-09) \$ 5,084.09

Special Education Fund \$1,888.00

AMGA Grant (balance as of 12/29/09) 963.02

177 Active Members for 2009

Potential Freeze Damage to Landscape Plants

The good news is the weather was relatively cool this fall and plants did start to acclimate to the cold weather. The bad news is it is really cold, and, for marginally cold tolerant plants, acclimating to extreme cold is not possible. This is especially true of most sub-tropical plants and half-hardy perennials. The news is better for more cold hardy species of woody plants. In these plants cool temperature initiates the accumulation of sugars, modification of proteins and changes in cell membrane permeability, which are all associated with an increase in overall cold hardiness. While most plants require both short days and lower temperatures to develop full cold hardiness, some plants harden only in response to low temperature regardless of the day length.

Once leaves and stems of evergreens harden enough to withstand freezing, being frozen makes them even hardier. The freezing response is strictly localized and is not translocated from one part of the plant to another. In other words, if lower leaves are acclimated to freezing, that does not necessarily mean the upper leaves are also hardened. That is why plants will sometimes burn back from the youngest leaves while the interior has little damage.

For woody landscape plants, low temperature injury, often called freeze damage, can be caused by intra- or extra-cellular ice formations within the plant. When intra-cellular ice is formed, crystals originate within the protoplasm of plant cells. This type of ice formation would be extremely rare in Alabama, and it is unlikely to have occurred during this cold spell. The other more likely type of freeze damage occurs when extra-cellular ice forms during normal cold winter conditions. When freezing conditions exist, water moves out of plant cells in response to the low temperature and back into cells when the temperature rises above freezing. This type of freeze damage is not lethal to most woody plant species that have been properly acclimated and are cold hardy to at least zone 7a in North Alabama and zone 7b in Birmingham and Central Alabama. Injury can occur; however, if the cells are dehydrated for relatively long periods of time, or subjected to very low temperatures.

For more cold hardy woody plants the freezing and subsequent rapid thawing can be even more damaging than a sustained cold period. It would be better for the plants to thaw slowly to avoid bark splitting. If you have shrubs or young trees with exposed trunks, you may consider wrapping them before they start to thaw to prevent this rapid thawing action.

Normally, we don't have a problem with root damage, but a little extra protection may be useful with prolonged cold temperatures. Apply a layer of mulch, 2 to 3 inches deep, after the soil freezes to keep the soil cold rather than protect the soil from becoming cold. This practice will reduce injury from plant roots heaving (coming out of the soil) because of alternate freezing and thawing. Plants that benefit from this practice include perennials, rock garden plants, strawberries and other shallow-rooted species. A mulch maintains a more even soil temperature and retains soil moisture as well.

Apply bark products, composts, pine needles, straw, hay, or any one of a number of readily available materials from the local garden center. Also, pine boughs or remains from Christmas trees can be propped against and over evergreens to help protect against damage from rapid thawing mentioned earlier. Place this cover on the southern exposed side of the plant where the sun strikes the tree causing rapid thawing.

Winter annuals such as pansies and flowering kale should survive, but pansy blooms will be knocked off, and they won't look very good for a few weeks. Less cold hardy cool season annuals such as snap dragons may not make it through this event. Most turf grass should make it through the cold unless it was fertilized too late in the fall or planted too early to root in well before the cold hit.

Only time will tell how much damage plants have sustained, but keep an eye on marginal woody plants this spring because they may be more susceptible to borer and beetle attacks after winter cold injury.