

FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

What an educational and enjoyable time we had at the 2010 Alabama Master Gardeners Association Conference presented by the Capital City Master Gardeners of Montgomery at the Montgomery Renaissance Hotel and Spa. My compliments to this hard-working group for its professionally executed conference, which had excellent facilities, efficient registration, innovative breakout sessions, delicious meals and excellent speakers.

The conference options were pre-conference workshops or local tours. Two popular workshops were "Home-Grown Garden Critters" and Sister Schubert's "Enjoying the Fruits of Our Labor". I chose touring the Alabama State Capital, which I had not done since I was a child. Alabama has a beautiful capital, rich with history, not just the history of Alabama, but history that affected our entire nation.

Friday morning, Dr Doug Phillips, known to many of you for his APTV program *Discovering Alabama*, was the keynote speaker. Dr Phillips is an Alabama treasure with his educational program and his conservation efforts like the Alabama Forever Wild Program. Friday night, we had our AMGA Annual Awards Banquet; JCMGA's Juanita Smith received a Platinum name badge and Dale O'Connor received a Gold badge.

Saturday morning at the conference, we heard information about the 2011 AMGA Conference "Gardening for Life", presented by the Mobile Master Gardeners. Their idea is to collect MG projects from each association, such as project pictures and county logos, for use in the future. The deadline is August 31, 2010.

We were reminded that the AMGA at the state level has been working on an exciting and worthwhile project: Attendees voted on a distinctive license plate design for the AMGA. The license plate will cost \$50.00 from which the AMGA will receive \$42.17. Fifty percent of the proceeds will go to the AMGA Scholarship Endowment at Auburn, and 50% will fund other Master Gardener needs such as the MG intern scholarships, helpline reference materials and video equipment for the production of educational film clips. Production of the plates will not begin until AMGA members have at least 1,000 plates ordered. We will learn more about this license plate project later. (see photo below)

Thank you,

Bruce

Bruce Steele



APRIL 13th MG Meeting

Refreshments – 9:30 A.M.

Business Meeting – 10:00 A.M.

Speaker 10:30 A.M. – 12:00 Noon

This month's presentation will be "Fire Ant Myth Buster" by Tony Glover.

Read These New Books Now Available at the Library in Birmingham Botanical Gardens

The Backyard Beekeeper's Honey Handbook by Kim Flottum is a guide to creating, harvesting and cooking with natural honeys.

Interested in planting, preparing and preserving fresh food? Read *Grocery Gardening* by Jean Ann Van Krevelen.

Want to grow organic food in small spaces? Read *Grow Great Grub* by Gayla Trail.

Learn the simple pleasures of growing and cooking your garden's most versatile veggies by reading Doug Oster's *Tomatoes Garlic Basil*.

Also read *Talking Dirt: The Dirt Diva's Down-To-Earth Guide to Organic Gardening* by Annie Spiegelman.



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Master Gardener Conference 2012

Jefferson County Master Gardeners will host the 2012 state convention in Birmingham. We are in the process of getting the budget together and aligning the committees to handle the conference. If you are interested in a certain committee, please contact the committee chair. The list below is not an all-inclusive list of committees; others will be added if they are needed.

Registration Committee - Pat Bullock
Program/Publicity Committee - Camille Becker
Facilities/Fundraising Committee - Kathy Bass (AMGA)
Food Functions Committee - Anne Thomas
Hospitality Committee - Nancy Nash
Finance Committee - Edna Alderman
Book Sales/Signing Committee/T-Shirt Sales - Susan Jackson
Evaluation Committee

The steering committee will be made up of the committee chairs and Tony Glover. The steering committee will meet at 8:30 A.M. on April 13, 2010, prior to the regularly scheduled MG meeting.

Treasurer's Report

JEFFERSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION TREASURER'S REPORT: MARCH 2010 SUBMITTED BY BLAIR COX, TREASURER

Balance Forward: 2-22-10	\$12,915.90
Received:	\$708.51
Disbursements:	-\$1,534.48
Ending Balance: 3-24-10	\$12,089.93

Included in this report is the contribution to Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens in the amount of \$1,500 for the television installation in the GPIC.

Any member whose dues were not received by March 31st was placed on the inactive list.

Spring Plant Sale Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to help with in the BBG Bedding Plants Booth at the Spring Plant Sale on April 17th. If you wish to help out, contact Donna Taylor at donnataylor23@gmail.com or call 991.0625. You may also contact Mary-Bestor Tickle at 414.3962 or mtickle@bbgardens.org.

Volunteer in the Library Birmingham Botanical Gardens

The Library at Birmingham Botanical Gardens is looking for someone who can translate our garden brochures into Spanish. If you are interested in doing this task, please contact Hope Long at 205.414.3931 or at hlong@bbgardens.org.

The Library at Birmingham Botanical Gardens also has two shifts open: Monday from 1-4 and Tuesday from 9-1. You will receive Master Gardener hours for volunteering in the library. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these shifts, or want more information about them, please contact Elizabeth Drewry at 205.414.3932 or Jason Kirby at 205.414.3967.

Volunteer Needed for Buck Creek Trail

The Alabaster Beautification Board is looking for volunteers to help with the Buck Creek Trail Wildflower Planting during the month of April. If you are interested in volunteering for this project, call Larry Stewart at 205.243.8741 or 205.972.6019, or e-mail Larry.Stewart@KBR.com.

The BBG Says . . .

3.26.10

Dear Blair
Please tell all of the Jefferson
County Master Gardeners that we
so appreciate their gift of \$1500
for the Video Monitor/TV in the
Gerlach Plant Information Center.
It is such an asset - And we

hope it will be a useful tool to the
Master Gardeners who man the
Hotline and the Information Booth.
Thank you for all you do for
Birmingham Botanical Gardens!
Sincerely Olivia Alston
Director of Development

Fletcher Harvey Says . . .

Harold Deason is doing an encore presentation of his acclaimed "Water Purification, Plants and Other Creatures of Kenya" program at Shades Valley Presbyterian Church on Wednesday evening, April 14th. Dinner is at 5:45, with the program following at 6:30. The menu for the evening is homemade fried chicken, creamed potatoes and field peas. The food is pretty good, but remember that Nancy Nash is not in the kitchen. At \$5 it's a bargain, good or bad. We would love for anyone to attend who cares to, but should you like to join us for dinner, you might give me a call at 879-4228, or send me an email at twoharveys@aol.com so we can throw another leg in the skillet.

Earth Day

Volunteers Needed

Four volunteers are needed to help with Earth Day at the BBG on April 25th from 11 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. They will hand out Extension literature and information about the MG program. Two volunteers per shift will each work a three-hour period. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Tony Glover at 205-879-6964, ext 15, or at 205-568-0005 (cell).

WANTED

Plants

Parents and children at Highlands School on Old Leeds Road are working hard in their butterfly garden, but they need more plants. If you have plants you are willing to donate, please contact Madelon Rushing at 205.956.3575 or at mlrushing@charter.net.



Gary Walker and Wendy Ulrich at the Home and Garden Show.

“Tony Talks”

The State Master Gardener meeting was a big success, and I came away with some ideas we can use in 2012 when Jefferson County hosts the conference. I was very pleased to see a large contingent of Jefferson County MGs. Next year's conference in Mobile should be a great trip, and they sound as if they are already getting ready to host the conference. The 2012 conference will be here before you know it, and I hope you are making plans to get involved by serving on one of the many committees.

We had a great evening meeting on organic gardening with over 70 folks attending. The evening events provide a great way for MGs to get some CEUs when day events are impractical for them, and also are a great outreach opportunity, as well. About 70% of the people who attended had never been to an Extension educational event in their life. Our next night event will be on June 22nd and will feature our own Sallie Lee on small-scale beekeeping. Even if you don't plan on keeping a bee hive in your backyard, it would benefit you as a MG to learn about these fascinating creatures that are part of your garden.

The Home and Garden Show was a big success, thanks to all of you who volunteered to help. The 2010 intern class also stepped up in a big way, and I very much appreciate their efforts.

The phone lines are starting to get a little busier with each warm spring day. We have several regulars on the GPIC helpline, but we could always use a few more. Please think about helping out during the busy season coming up. Just send me an email, and I will send you a link to the calendar so you can pick a good time to come.

The intern class is winding down, and I am excited about our new “crop” of volunteers. They had a great time at Petals from the Past (see photo) even though it was a bit chilly. As I mentioned earlier, they are already getting involved, and many have volunteered for this year's BBG plant sale. When you see and cross paths with these interns, please take time to give them a word of encouragement and congratulations.





Jefferson County Master Gardener Association Meeting Minutes for March 9, 2010

The JCMGA February meeting was called to order by President Bruce Steele at 10:06 A.M. in the BBG auditorium. Interns from the current MG class were welcomed. The February minutes and Treasurer's report as printed in *Roots & Shoots* were approved.

Old business: Bruce Steele mentioned that it was still possible to register for next week's AMGA conference in Montgomery. Also, the television in the GPIC area has now been installed.

New business: Dianne Brannon told us about a horticultural therapy program at the Glenwood Center for autistic children and adults. They want to use plants (especially herbs) to stimulate the senses and would like to receive any such plants that we would like to share. Karen Mitchell updated us regarding the Children's Garden at the United Cerebral Palsy Center. She has met with the staff. This will be a year-round project, and she could use some more volunteers.

Nancy Nash requested volunteers sign up to bring refreshments next month. Harold Deason noted that the Turkey Nature Preserve in Pinson still needs birdhouses, particularly bluebird houses.

Bruce reminded us that the annual Spencer Lecture will be held Thursday, March 11th at 6:30 P.M. Also, on Thursday, March 25th, from 5:30 - 7:00 P.M., Fred Spicer will describe the new BBG Master Plan.

We were reminded once again that the BBG Spring Plant Sale will be held on April 15-18, and that many more volunteers are needed. Mary-Bestor Tickle, the BBG volunteer coordinator, was in attendance and indicated that her particular needs at this time are mostly for cashiers and for volunteers for the Thursday night members-only presale. Volunteers will also be needed for Earth Day on April 25th. This year will be the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, which is not a fundraiser, but a free festival to the public. Another volunteer opportunity will be for the Glorious Gardens event, to be held on Mother's Day weekend, May 8 - 9. Volunteers for Glorious Gardens will receive a free ticket. Mary-Bestor Tickle should be contacted if anyone wishes to volunteer for any of these events. Mary-Bestor also read a thank-you note from one of the children who had visited the gardens with her class.

The Hydrangea Society is sponsoring a "Lunch and Learn" at Aldridge Gardens on March 24th from 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. James Horton will speak on "Hydrangeas 101". The cost is \$10.00 without lunch, or \$20.00 with lunch. The program is free to Hydrangea Society members.

Fletcher Harvey announced that the Shades Valley Rotary Club will sponsor its Botanical Bash on April 9th. The funds generated by the event go toward the BBG intern program. The cost is \$35, and all MGs are invited.

Harold Deason showed slides of his mission trips to Kenya to install clean water initiatives at various sites. He also showed photos of the plant, animal and bird life there.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Jackson
Secretary, JCMGA



The Three Sisters
Corn Beans Squash

Want to Help Make a Three-Sisters Garden?

If you want to help make a three-sisters garden at Aldridge Botanical Gardens, call Vasha Rosenblum at 910-3211, or e-mail her at vashan1@bellsouth.net for information.

In case you aren't sure, the three sisters are corn, beans and squash. The corn and pole beans are planted on top of large mounds that are about 3 feet apart. The squash are planted in between and cover the ground to keep it cool, conserve moisture and keep weeds down. This is a Native American agricultural method with many myths and a few facts that explain how it works. We are putting one in at Aldridge for demonstration purposes and to enhance a Native American focus next fall.

Spring Plant Sale Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to help with in the BBG Herb Booth at the Spring Plant Sale. If you wish to help out, contact Donna Taylor at donnataylor23@gmail.com or call 991.0625. You may also contact Mary-Bestor Tickle at 414.3962 or at mtickle@bbgardens.org.

Calendar of Events March 2010

The calendar information is presented in the following order: Date/Event/Time/Location/ Contact Information/Description

- 4/6 **Mr. Cason's Vegetable Garden Stroll** 2:30 - 3:30 P.M. Each Tuesday Callaway Gardens
<http://www.callawaygardens.com/Callaway/eventscal.aspx>
- 4/8 **Behind the Scenes -- Greenhouse Tour** 2:30 - 3:30 P.M. Each Thursday Callaway Gardens
<http://www.callawaygardens.com/Callaway/eventscal.aspx>
- 4/9 **Community Garden Workshop** 2:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M. Bessemer Public Library 205 879-6964x11 leesall@aces.edu
- 4/10 **Mom-n-Me Art Class** 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon BBG www.bbgardens.org or 414.3958
\$30 Members/\$35 Non-Members Traditional roles do not apply to Mom-n-Me art! Sometimes the child may lead the painting as the adult follows their directions. Artist Laurie Ann Kramer will guide you and your child through the process of creating one unique piece of art. This is a super fun way to spend quality time with each other. Creating memories through art!
- 4/11 **Plant Wars: Invasion of Non-Natives** 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. Aldridge Botanical Gardens 682-8019 www.aldridgegardens.com
\$5 What is an invasive plant? What plants will be good or bad for our yards and the environment? Dr. Enloe and Dr. Loewenstein, from Auburn University, will identify the invaders lurking in our yards and explain what we can do to control them. They will also share the importance of biological diversity and how we can use native plants to restore the ecosystems that have been destroyed by invasive plants. Each attendee will receive from Aldridge Botanical Gardens a 96-page publication that includes lists of invasive plants, color photographs and suggested control methods.
- 4/16-17 **Antiques in the Garden** 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. info@petalsfromthepast.com 205-646-0069
Join us once again for our annual Antiques in the Garden. Antique dealers from several neighboring towns will be set up in the garden as well as local craft dealers. Our gardens should be in full bloom. A great way to spend a spring day!
- 4/16 **BBG Spring Plant Sale 2010** BBG Mary-Bestor at 414.3962 or mtickle@bbgardens.org or www.bbgardens.org for details



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- 4/17 **Designing for Summer Color** 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. Aldridge Botanical Gardens 682-8019 www.aldridgegardens.com
\$15 Members/\$18 Non-members For color that pops, come learn to use Alabama wild flowers with heat-tolerant annuals, perennials, and biennials in your garden from June through September! Using a PowerPoint presentation plus actual samples of various demonstration plants, you will learn how to combine color, texture, and contrast to create bold color in your mixed summer garden.
- 4/17 **Healing Properties of Herbs** 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon BBG www.bbgardens.org or 414.3958
\$20 Members/\$25 Non-members In times past, every home had a kitchen closet space for herbs, an herbal medicine chest used for the remedies needed for commonplace health problems. These herbs were used to maintain good health, for food, at the first sign of colds or flu, for the common aches and pains associated with overwork or arthritis, and for digestive disorders. Join Phyllis as she discusses the healing properties of several commonly used herbs and answers your herbal questions. If weather permits, the class will include a walk through the Barber Alabama Woodlands and the Kaul Wildflower Garden to identify important traditional medicinal herbs and discuss their uses.
- 4/17-18 **Huntsville Botanical Garden Plant Sale** <http://www.alabamamg.org/>
- 4/17-18 **BBG Spring Plant Sale 2010** Mary-Bestor at 414.3962 or mtickle@bbgardens.org or www.bbgardens.org for hours
- 4/21 **Lunch & Learn: "Flower Power"** 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon Aldridge Botanical Gardens 682-8019 www.aldridgegardens.com
\$19 Members/\$23 Non-members This seminar is a live floral demonstration by award-winning celebrity floral designer Scot Wedgeworth who has created events for celebrities like Elton John, Dolly Parton, Miley Cyrus and many more. See images and hear stories of past events Scot has created for his clients. Behold his amazing demonstrations, learn special tricks of the floral trade and do-it-yourself home entertaining ideas with flowers that are sure to blow your guests away! This is an excellent opportunity to meet with friends or members of your garden club for an exciting morning to learn more about floral design. (with or without lunch afterwards)
- 4/24 **Seminar: "What's the Buzz?"** 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. Aldridge Botanical Gardens 682-8019 www.aldridgegardens.com
\$15 Members/\$18 Non-members "Without bees, we cannot survive. Over the past three years, more than 50 billion honeybees have died."Reese Halter, PhD. scientist/visiting professor, University of Alabama. Why do we care about bees?especially those buzzy little creatures that produce 'liquid gold' - honey! Why are honeybees important to us, and what would our world be like without them? Come and learn more about our relationship with "sister bee" and her role in our environment and our gardens. Discover what is happening to her world, and how we can support her survival. This class is not aimed specifically at beekeepers, but for 'bee folks', those who want to become better acquainted with *Apis mellifera* and her sisters. Also available will be contact information for those class participants who **do** wish to possibly become beekeepers.
- 4/24 **Specialized Rain Gardening: Principles and Design of Small Rain Gardens** 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon BBG www.bbgardens.org or 414.3958
\$10 Members/ \$15 Non-members Rain gardens catch, filter, and hold storm water. They are simple gardens designed in pocket-like depressions to capture rain water from your roof top, driveway, and upland areas and then allow the rain water to slowly soak into the ground over a period of a day. If you are not collecting your roof runoff in a rain barrel, you can extend your gutter downspout to flow into a rain garden so that your runoff infiltrates and provided ground water recharge. If you are using a rain barrel, you may direct the overflow to this garden. (Taught by Tony Glover and Fred Spicer.)
- 4/25 **Earth Day at the Gardens** 1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. BBG <http://www.bbgardens.org/earth-day.php>
- 4/25 **Rockin in the Gardens** 1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. Aldridge Botanical Gardens 682-8019 www.aldridgegardens.com
\$15 If you're planning a wedding, don't miss this event. Select music for that special day. Hear the music of nine bands and five individual musicians specializing in everything from rock to classical. Sample delicious offerings from our approved caterers and peruse photography from members of our Photography Guild.