

FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

Have you ever thought about your favorite gardening tool or tools? Those few items that no one but you is allowed to touch, much less use? Until a few weeks ago I would have said that with my Felco #2 pruners, my "Scoop" digging tool, my Mantis tiller, and of course, my John Deere Gator (my husband actually uses the Gator more than I do) I could handle 90 percent of my gardening chores. So of course, these items would have been at the top of my favorites list. But let me tell you what happened two weeks ago...



Calvin (my husband) and I had our two middle grandkids for the weekend. It was a beautiful Saturday, and Calvin said that it would be a perfect day to spruce up the yard by getting up pine cones and raking the flower beds. Braden (age 6) and Carter (age 4) love to help outside, so they were excited. They each had new Sponge Bob gloves that they were eager to try out, and their plastic rake, shovel, and hoe were in the back of their fully-charged, battery-operated Gator. Like I said, "perfect" day.

We started out of the house and the phone rang. Calvin and the boys went on outside, and I answered the phone. It was my Mother-in-law. She was having trouble breathing and needed me to come check on her. I told Calvin that I was going to check on his Mom, for him to watch the boys, and that I would be back in a few minutes. Needless to say, the few minutes ended up being six hours spent in the Emergency Room. After the six hours, Mrs. Bullock had a clean bill of health and I took her home.

All the time that I was gone, I wondered if the boys had let their Granddaddy get any work done in the yard. What I really was wondering was if they had driven him over the edge yet. As I drove up the driveway I noticed that my hosta bed had been raked. There were no pine cones in the yard; the pet cemetery had been cleaned up, and there was no sign of Calvin, Braden or Carter. As I entered the house, I found all three of them sound asleep in the family room. It seems that they had had their "perfect" day together. Mrs. Bullock was fine. And my yard looked wonderful.

The top of my favorites list now has three more "tools": Calvin, Braden and Carter.

See you Tuesday, March 10 at 9:30 a.m. for social time and at 10:00 a.m. for our meeting,

Pat

Pat Bullock

March Meeting

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

9:30 a.m. - Hospitality

10:00 a.m. - Meeting

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Henry Hughes will present a program on "The Winter Forest: How to Identify Trees." Weather permitting, we will go on a walking tour of the Hulsey Woods at the BBG. Henry holds B.A. degrees in forestry and horticulture, and an M.A. in horticulture from Texas A&M. He has worked for International Paper and joined the Birmingham Botanical Gardens in 2008 as its Director of Education.

Members Signed Up to Bring Snacks for the March Meeting

Nancy Nash

Betsy Cooper

Linda Systrom

Rhonda McClellan

Mary Hooper

Wanda Kiel

Janet Andrews-Smith

Jeannine McElroy

Madge Wilson

Stacy Pulliam

Donna Martin

Additional contributions are welcome. Members of the Hospitality Committee, please remember to come early to set up and make coffee and stay after to help clean up.

JCMGA MASTER GARDENERS ARE STAR VOLUNTEERS

Congratulations to the nearly fifty JCMGA members were recognized for their volunteer activities at February's Reach for the Stars awards program. They include:

Platinum Name Badge: Jan Holliday, Nora O'Connor

Gold Name Badge: Harold Deason, Frances Owens, Thelma Stichweh, Carolyn Wynn

Gold Star: Deana Cook, Bernadine Faulkner, Yvette Heath, Shelley Lindstrom, Larry Michalove, Dale O'Connor, Mitzi Owen, Anne Thomas

Silver Star: Edna Alderman, Jeannie Brasfield, Jeanne Clever, Blair Cox, Glenda Dicks, William Dodson, Tricia Farris, Cecily Graham-Chaney, Glenn Peoples, Martha Picardy, Vasha Rosenblum, Madelon Rushing, Mike Rushing, Bruce Steele, Sue Stinson

Bronze Star: Norma Aldridge, Pat Bullock, Bonnie Coggin, Steven Cooper, Marjie Elam, Holly Goettge, Fletcher Harvey, Richard Healy, Martha Henderson, Dean Hodge, Glenn Hodge, Ann Jones, Joyce Lawler, John Meier, Jo Anne Niden, Anne Parrish, Connie Prather, Janice Roberts, Janet Waters.

Begun in ten years ago on the state level, the program is designed to encourage Master Gardeners to keep records and report volunteer hours as requested by ACES. Recorded hours are used in justifying the resources expended by ACES to educate and train Master Gardeners.

For 2008, Jefferson County Master Gardeners reported 13,974 volunteer hours, an increase of 1,513 hours over 2007.

Don't forget to enter your 2009 hours into the on-line Master Gardener Service Report found on the ACES website at http://www.aces.edu/mg/volunteer_area.php. There is a tutorial on the site that provides instruction on how to set up and use your own personal report.



Nora O'Connor (l) and Carolyn Wynn (r) are among the six JCMGA members eligible to receive Platinum and Gold badges at the State Conference in April.

Thank you

Dear Master Gardeners:

Thank you so much for the visits, calls, cards, thoughts and prayers during this difficult time following the death of my Mother. Mothers are special and I will dearly miss her and her great gardens, but now she can garden without weeds.

Yours sincerely,
Harold Deason

Additional Evening Meetings Planned

Eighteen MGs attended the first-ever JCMGA night meeting on Feb. 24th at the BBG. Additional night meetings are planned for May and August, the dates and times TBA. The regular November meeting and Graduation banquet will be an evening meeting.

2009-10 DIRECTORIES ARE AVAILABLE

Copies of the new Membership Directory were distributed at the February meeting. If you missed the February meeting, be sure to pick yours up this month. Please check your information carefully, and notify Harold Deason or Fletcher Harvey with any corrections.

"Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn."

- Lewis Grizzard



MARCH GARDENING CALENDAR

FRUITS AND NUTS--Continue strawberry and grape plantings. Bud apples and peaches. Start planting blackberries. Remember, 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 maybe made, particularly if they are container-grown. Watch shrubs for harmful insects.

LAWNS--Plant bermuda, zoysia, and centipede in South Alabama. Seed bluegrass and grass mixtures in North Alabama. Fertilize established lawns.

ROSES--Watch new growth for aphids. Begin a spray or dust program. Begin fertilizing.

ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS -- Tender annuals may be planted in South Alabama. Check garden centers for bedding plants.

BULBS--Plant gladiolus every two or three weeks if a long blooming season is desired. Plant tuberous begonias in pots. Plant dahlias.

MISCELLANEOUS -- Check and repair sprayers, dusters, and lawn mowers. Control lawn weeds with chemicals. Delay pruning of fruiting shrubs such as cotoneasters, pyracanthas, and hollies until after flowering.

VEGETABLE SEEDS -- Plant hardy crops recommended for January and February. After danger of frost is past, plant tender vegetables.

VEGETABLE PLANTS--Plant cabbage, onions, lettuce, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts in North Alabama; plant tomatoes and peppers in lower South Alabama.

"Tony Talks"

Congratulations to all of you who received star awards and those who will receive Gold and Platinum name badges at the state conference. I doubt any county came close to the number of awards received by you folks. I know some of you are not concerned about personal recognition (you may even dislike it) but the numbers you report and the awards/recognition you receive is a reflection/gauge of the health of our local Master Gardener Association and collectively as a state program. In other words, when you report your hours you make me and our entire program look better to our Extension administrators and funding agencies. This is especially important in tight economic times when resources are limited. So thank you again for all you did in 2008 and for what you are going to do in 2009.

Having a regular monthly newsletter is going to go a long way in improving our communication and giving your MG association greater cohesion of purpose. Many of you are working on projects or conducting programs in your own community that I may not know about and I want you to use this newsletter to report what you are doing. Less than an hour ago (as I write this) I went through my annual work evaluation with Kerry Smith and thanks to your efforts I had many things to "toot my/our horn" about that you did. From my vantage point that is what the Extension Master Gardener program is all about. I spend time and energy (taxpayer money) on a small group of citizens (Master Gardeners) who in turn multiply my efforts exponentially by getting involved in your community. More and more we are being required to justify how much resources are being used for this program. The numbers you report tell part of the picture but we need stories to tell the whole picture. Kerry Smith has challenged me to set the bar for others in finding a creative way to tell our story.

What I have in mind is for you to write short "success" stories about things you are doing. Each month I want one or two stories from the Jefferson County MG membership. When you carry out a project or coordinate an event just drop me a note of a couple or three paragraphs telling the "who, what, where, when, why" of the event and outcomes you observed. This does not need to be a grand event. You might have a "success" story that says: I was a guest speaker at an Elementary School and did a presentation on growing seedlings. We had 22 students who started marigold seedlings and learned about the lifecycle of annual flowers. Maybe, you could tell a little story about feedback the teacher or a student gave to you as a quote in your story.

Send these "success" stories to me as they happen (before you forget the details). I will use these in the newsletter and accumulate them to develop the report Kerry has challenged me to develop. She in turn will use the stories in her annual report at the end of the year. A digital photo can help tell the story.

I want each of you (which is most of you) who are involved in any plant group, BBG plant sale, docent, Aldridge Gardens, Jones Valley Urban Farm, Love Lady Center and the dozens of school/community activities to write at least one "success" story and send it to me. Just this one little thing will make a huge impact towards convincing my superiors and our funding agencies the Master Gardener program is worthy of their (taxpayer) support.

Spring is just around the corner and I hope it proves to be a great one for you. I hope many of you have made plans to attend the state Master Gardener conference in Huntsville. We will be the host region in 2012 and we will be asking the North Alabama Master Gardener Association to support us, so let's support their efforts this year.

JCMGA Business Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2009

President Pat Bullock called the meeting to order. She requested that all cell phones be either turned off or put on vibrate, and personal conversations be kept to a minimum due to individuals with hearing concerns.

Pat announced that Harold Deason had lost his mother and asked that we remember his family in our thoughts and prayers. She recognized first-time visitor David H. Jackson, a member of the Fall 2008 night MG class.

Pat introduced Annette Drummonds, from the ACES staff who asked for volunteers to work in the ACES Office, answering calls, taking messages and filing.

Vasha Rosenblum, a member of the JCMGA and the Birmingham Quilters Guild displayed the Guilds' donation quilt. She had tickets available for anyone who wanted to buy a chance on it. She informed us that the BQG participates in a Cuddle Quilt program, Operation Kid Comfort and Operation Rescue. The BQG will hold its bi-annual quilt show June 20-21, 2009 at the Oak Mountain Middle School.

The minutes from the January meeting and the January Treasurer's report were published in the February newsletter. Pat called for a motion to accept both as they appeared in the newsletter. A motion was made and seconded with a unanimous vote following.

Old Business:

Members were reminded that the annual dues are still payable. Anyone who has not remitted their dues by Feb. 23, 2009 will be removed from the active members list until dues are paid.

Newsletters were sent to 233 members by e-mail with six returned: Beverly Brandan-Rives, Wanda Collins, John Doran, Barbara Thomas, Amanda Sheehan and Karen Janowski. A member from the floor said that Ms. Collins now lives in Arizona. Anyone having information on these members, please contact either Pat or Anne Thomas. An additional 36 newsletters were sent out by mail.

Charles Barber complimented Tricia Farris on the excellent production of the "Roots and Shoots" newsletter. Tricia announced that the deadline for the March newsletter is Feb. 23. She also mentioned the scrapbook from last year. It is located in the ACES office for viewing.

A poster with all the new committee members was posted for viewing. Members were urged to contact their respective chairman. The "Snack" sign-up book was available at the back of the room, and Pat encouraged all members to volunteer to bring food at least once per year. Pat reminded everyone of the importance of the Sign-in Sheet. This is the official attendance record that Tony Glover is required to maintain.

New Business:

A trial night MG meeting will be held Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009 at 6:00 p.m in the East Room of the BBG. Sallie Lee will present a program on "Alternatives to Commonly Used Invasive Plants."

The new directories were distributed. Please contact Harold Deason or Fletcher Harvey with any corrections. New t-shirts have arrived and are available for \$10 each at meetings and in the ACES office.

A "Reach for the Stars Award Program" handout was made available to all attendees, explaining the program, its purpose, how to report hours, the reporting period, and the categories of recognition. Pat announced that JCMGA members reported 13,974 volunteer hours for 2008. She noted that there were probably more volunteer hours that were not reported and urged all MG's to record their hours as they complete volunteer time.

Announcements:

Shelly Busby needs one strong/physically fit volunteer to help work with Tropicals at the Spring Plant sale. MG's Wayne Boldin and JoAnn Niden are co-chairs with the Tropicals and need help with the unloading.

The Lee County Extension office in Opelika will offer a workshop on grafting Japanese Maples on Feb. 25 from 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. There is a fee and registration is required. Space is limited.

The 17th Annual Plant Dig sponsored by Keep Birmingham Beautiful Commission will be at the Northside/New Georgia Landfill on Saturday, Feb. 21 from noon - 4:00 p.m. To volunteer call Atrie Robinson at 781-0598.

Festival of Flowers will be held in Mobile, AL March 25-29, 2009. For more information call 251-639-2050 or 1-877-777-0529. The web site is: www.festivalofflowers.com

Kerry Smith requested that we announce a new book that may be of interest to MG's. *Rain Gardening in the South* by Dr. Helen Krauss and Dr. Anne Spafford will be available in April for \$19.95. It is available for pre-ordering for \$16.

At 11:00 a.m. on Feb. 27, Linda Franzo, owner of the Passionate Platter in Slidell, Louisiana, will present a cooking class at Petals From the Past. Fee is \$18.00. Call 205-646-0069 for more information and to make reservations.

Bruce Steele awarded the prizes from the name badge and sign-in drawings. Vasha Rosenblum won the sign-in drawing and Dale O'Connor won the name badge drawing. One extra gift was also awarded. Bruce announced that the program for March will be "The Winter Forest" presented by Henry Hughes. Weather permitting, we will be outside for a portion of the program.

The meeting was turned over to Nancy Nash, chairman of the Awards Committee, who presented the "Stars". There were two Platinum Name badges, four Gold Name badges, eight Gold Stars, 16 Silver Stars and 19 Bronze Stars awarded. Name badge recipients will receive their badges at the April AMGA State Conference in Huntsville.

Bruce Steele said the blessing on the Pot Luck lunch that followed the meeting and then adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Stinson,
Secretary

New Service Project at Hoover Library



(left to right) Nora O'Conner, Colette Scott, Hope Long, Anne Bloomer, and Tricia Farris attended the opening of the Plaza at the Hoover Public Library

Several JCMGA members were on hand for the grand opening of the Plaza at the Hoover Library on February 8, 2009. They shared plans for a new garden adjacent to the outdoor reading area, and showed some of the plants that will be used in the landscaping. The area will be planted and maintained by Master Gardeners, headed by Hope Long.

Grow With a BBG Plant Group

Do you fancy ferns or have a passion for perennials? You'll find like-minded gardeners in one of the Birmingham Botanical Garden's volunteer plant groups. Groups include:

- ABC (annuals, biannuals, climbers)
- Bog Garden committee
- Carver Garden committee
- Fern
- Herb
- Hosta
- Japanese
- Natives
- Perennials
- Trees and Shrubs
- Woodlands

Several of the groups meet on a regular schedule throughout the year; others work in preparation for the BBG's Spring and Fall plant sales.

For a volunteer application and more information about plant group schedules, contact BBG Volunteer Coordinator Carolyn Snow at 414-3962 or e-mail her at csnow@bbgardens.org.

TREASURER'S REPORT

FEBRUARY, 2009

Balance Forward: 1-26-09 **\$16,385.94**

Received:

AMGA Dues \$ 70.00
Local Dues 180.00
T-Shirt 190.00

Sub-Total **\$440.00**

**Special Education Fund Donations
(Voided Refund Checks)**

Ck. #1825 - \$75.00
Ck. #1836 - 75.00
Ck. #1838 - 75.00
Ck. #1842 - 75.00

Sub-Total **\$300.00**

Total Received: **\$740.00**

Bank Adjustment:

Voided Checks:
Ck. #1827 - \$75.00
Ck. #1844 - 75.00
Ck. #1846 - 75.00 + **\$225.00**

Disbursements:

#1859 - AMGA- State Dues 2009 - \$ 295.00
#1860 - Pat Bullock-Admin. - 21.30
#1861 - Bruce Steele-Door Prize - 27.46
#1862 - Tony Glover-MG Class Exp. - 36.67
#1863 - Harold Deason-T-Shirts - 1490.28
#1864 - Anne Thomas-Treas. Supplies - 44.58

Total Disbursements: **\$1915.29**

Balance: 2-23-09 **\$15,435.65**

Dues owed to AMGA - \$ 70.00
Sp. Education Fund - 1888.00
Active Alumni - 110.00

Budget Items - Expenditures:

Dues Pd. to Alabama MG Assoc. - 295.00
MG Class Expenses - 36.67
President - Supplies/Postage 21.30
Door Prizes 27.46
Treasurer - Postage/Supplies 44.58
T-Shirts 1490.28



**Daylight
Savings Time
begins
March 8th.**



GARDENER'S BOOKSHELF

Check out these new books at the BBG library.

-Bulbs in the Basement, Geraniums on the Windowsill: How to Grow and Overwinter 165 Tender Plants. 635.932 McG

-Plant-driven Design: Creating Gardens that Honor Plants, Place, and Spirit 712 OGD

-Designing and Planting Small Gardens: a Practical Guide to Successful Gardening in Smaller Spaces 712.6 McH

-Creative Vegetable Gardening 635 LAR

-Hope Long



19th Annual
Alabama Master
Gardener Association
State Conference
April 2 - 4, 2009
Huntsville, AL
www.alabamamg.org

The Master Gardeners of North Alabama (Madison County) in cooperation with Master Gardeners from Limestone and Morgan counties will host the 2009 Alabama Master Gardener Association Conference, *A Garden for All Seasons*, in Huntsville, April 2-4, 2009.

Conference activities begin at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens with a variety of workshops and guided tours of the Huntsville Botanical Gardens, Trillium Garden and Nature Trail. A complimentary welcome reception at the HBG will be followed by a barbecue dinner. Activities continue on Friday and Saturday at the Von Braun Civic Center with a variety of programs and workshops. Speakers include Harvey Cotten, of the Huntsville Botanical Gardens; Joe Lamp'l, host of PBS's *GardenSMART*, Patricia Lanza, author of *Lasagna Gardening*, and professional nature photographer J. Paul Moore. The registration fee is \$90.

More information and registration forms are available on the Alabama Master Gardener web site at www.alabamamg.org.



Volunteers Needed For Garden Conservancy Tours

The Garden Conservancy has requested volunteers to help with garden tours on April 18 and June 13, 2009, 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Four gardens will be open to the public on April 18. Bill and Linda Brock's garden at 104 Windwood Circle in Gardendale boasts 23 different trillium, 80 fern varieties, 20 native azaleas, 50 different hydrangeas, 18 viburnums, and over 100 wildflowers. The Logan garden at 3301 Dell Road is an array of garden rooms designed by Mary Zahl, including a woodland garden, formal terrace, shady walled garden, swimming pool area, "English" garden, and vegetable garden. Troy and Randi Rhone's cottage at 921 Euclid Avenue contains French and English garden antiques with a formal perennial garden, rose garden, and vegetable garden. June Mays's garden at 3514 Country Club Road is composed of 16 garden rooms reached from a central alley. A secret garden, sedum tower, scented fire pit terrace, sun and shade gardens, garden shed, and art pieces are among its features.

On June 13, the Rhone cottage will again be open, along with the garden of Louise and John Wrinkle, 2 Beechwood Road, a spectacular and varied estate garden featured in *Earth On Her Hands*. The garden of John and Diane North, 1429 Morningside Drive, cascades down a hillside in sweeps of perennials and grasses designed by John Wilson, who trained with the nationally-recognized firm of Oehme and Van Sweden before returning to Birmingham. The garden of Jeff and Linda Stone at 86 Country Club Boulevard is a traditional garden around a Tudor house. The collaboration of landscape architect Nim Long and garden designer Kim Weinheimer, it packs a lot into a relatively small space – bluestone terraces, boxwood, flowering shrubs, perennials, and annuals.

Public gardens open both days are the Birmingham Botanical Garden, Aldridge Gardens, the Birmingham Southern Ecoscape, and Jones Valley Urban Farm.

Volunteers are needed to help sell and take up tickets, act as docents, and transport visitors. For additional information, contact June Mays at 324-7476. Each volunteer will get one free admission ticket that will allow them to visit one additional garden. Also, they will be invited to a party at Mike and Paula Rushing's house the evening of April 18th.

The Garden Conservancy is a national, nonprofit organization founded in 1989 to preserve exceptional American gardens for public education and enjoyment. Half of the proceeds from the garden tours will be used to benefit the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 12 Virginia Beeland Spencer Lecture. Speaker: Mary Palmer Dargan, ASLA, "Timeless Landscape Design", 6:30 p.m., BBG. Reserve FREE tickets by calling 205-414-3965 or e-mail sbusby@bbgardens.org.

March 14 A Sustainable Approach to Gardening-Part 2. Edwin Marty, Exec. Director of Jones Valley Urban Farm will discuss plant selection, planting, care and maintenance of edibles incorporated into your landscape. 10:30 a.m. "Who is Hiding in Your Backyard? Hate bugs but worried you might accidentally kill the dog? ACES agent Taylor Hatchett will discuss safe pest management methods. 1:00 p.m., Petals from the Past, Jemison. For reservations, call 205-646-0069.

March 14 Seasonal Flower Bed Design. James Horton, BBG Director of Horticulture, will teach tricks of the trade for designing and planting seasonal color beds in the landscape. 9:00 a.m. - noon, BBG. Cost: \$30 BBG members/\$40 non-members. Register online at <http://www.bbgardens.org/adult.php> or call 414-3950.

March 22 Medicinal Plants of North America, noon - 5:00 p.m., BBG. Clinical herbalist/educator Tellur Fenner will present a program on plants used historically and presently in American herbal practice. Cost: \$40 BBG members/\$80 non-members. Class size limited. Register online at <http://www.bbgardens.org/adult.php> or call 414-3950.

March 28 Backyard GROWceries. First in a series of gardening workshops for beginning gardeners. 10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m., Shelby County Library. For more information, contact Tony Glover at 879-6964/ext. 15 or online at <http://www.aces.edu/~gloveta/> under the upcoming events link.

April 2 - 4 "A Garden for all Seasons" 19th annual Alabama Master Gardener State Conference, Huntsville, AL. For conference information and reservations: www.alabamamg.org.

April 16 - 19 Birmingham Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale, Colonial Brookwood Village, old Bruno's location.

Volunteer Opportunities

Annual Rose Pruning, March 7, 8:00 a.m. - noon. Bob Eskew will lead volunteers in pruning roses in the BBG rose gardens.

Gary Gerlach Plant Information Center HelpLine. MG volunteers are needed to man the help line and answer gardening-related questions from the public. For information, contact Tony at 205-879-6964/ext. 15 or e-mail gloveta@aces.edu

ACES office, Beaty-Hannah Center, BBG. Volunteers needed to help answer phones, file, etc. For information contact Annette Drummond at 879-6964.

BBG Spring Plant Sale, April 16-19. Volunteers are needed to help with all aspects of the annual plant sale. For more information, contact Volunteer Coordinator Carolyn Snow at 414-3962 or e-mail csnow@bbgardens.org.

Docents needed at Aldridge Gardens and Birmingham Botanical Gardens. For more information, contact: Aldridge Gardens - Colleen Bedics, 682-8019; BBG - Carolyn Snow 414-3962 or e-mail csnow@bbgardens.org.