

FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

During the course of our lives, we go through periods we feel are challenging, but then are surprised when they have a pleasurable outcome. For example, this year Mother Nature gave us a cold and rainy winter, only to reward us with a most beautiful spring. Everywhere we look we see a tree or shrub that seems never to have been so full of blooms. Perhaps a colder, rainier winter creates conditions that cause plants to perform better than we remembered, or perhaps we are just experiencing the wonder of another spring.

It was a wonderful spring at the Birmingham Botanical Garden's Spring Plant Sale. Rarely have I seen an array of plants so magnificent and so comprehensive. While I was working at the plant sale, I was encouraged to see that so many of the volunteers working there were Master Gardeners. How fortunate our patrons were to be able to tap into the vast amount of knowledge that Master Gardeners possess. More than 7,400 people were looking at plants, asking questions and searching for their favorite types of plant. We collected a total of over \$260,000.00 in just 3.5 days. The people that I spoke with at the sale were very impressed, and they also had a nice family outing.

Speaking of spring, my garden has had a few beauties that we have really enjoyed. First, there was a small tree peony that had only one enormous bud, but produced a beautiful light-pink bloom that was over 8 inches across and had the most astonishing fragrance, which we could smell throughout the entire garden. Then Susie's irises began to bloom in succession. The first to bloom was a tall – almost 3 feet – iris with magenta blooms that looked like a Louisiana iris. Next was the deep blue Japanese iris, followed by the wonderful little blue Siberian iris. Finally, a transplanted black bearded iris that had never done well bloomed, and to our surprise, the blooms were a dark purple.

I know that you, too, have many exciting garden stories that we would all love to hear. I look forward to hearing your stories at the next meeting.

Thank You.

Bruce

May 11th MG Meeting

Refreshments – 9:30 A.M.

Business Meeting – 10:00 A.M.

Plant Swap!

We will have our plant swap during the May meeting. You may bring as many plants as you like to share with other members, but you may swap only two plants. Please remember to not bring invasive plants.

JCMG Digital Directory

The Digital Directory containing all of the Jefferson County Master Gardeners is now available for your desktop. If you want a copy of the JCMGA Directory for your computer, please contact Harold Deason at hdeson@aol.com, and he will send you the link for the directory.

Rose Trials

A summary of the results of several rose trials being conducted at the Auburn University Ag. Research Unit in Brewton is found at the following link. A shrub rose cultivar trial, as well as an unknown disorder of Knock Out roses, is discussed.

<http://www.aces.edu/timelyinfo/PlantPathology/2010/April/TI2010.pdf>

BTW: If you are passing through the Brewton area, you may want to take a few minutes to view these and other ornamental field trials at the Brewton Unit. The rose trial is especially beautiful in mid- to late May when all the roses bloom.

“Tony Talks”

I can't believe another MG class is over. We have a great group of interns who have already plugged into many volunteer activities. I know you saw many of them at the BBG plant sale, which was a great success again. As I walked through the sale, I was amazed by the number of MGs who were working. Our intern class finished up with a wonderful tour of Aldridge Gardens, and, again, I saw more MGs there as well. The Jefferson County MGs are making a huge impact all over the place. Thank you all for what you do to make our cities and communities better places to live.

Our phone line (GPIC) volunteers have been very busy the last few weeks, and we are starting to get a few interns volunteering for this ongoing need, as well. Speaking of the phone line, I have planned a training program for veteran, and new, phone line volunteers for May 11th at 12:30, after the regular monthly meeting. If you currently volunteer on the phones, or are interested in volunteering, please make an effort to attend this one-hour training session. We will stream the training online for volunteers in other areas who wish to participate.

Jan Smith is working hard to make the newsletter a useful and interesting read each month, and she has done a great job. I would love to see more projects highlighted so everyone can see what you are doing and so others will get involved. Please consider submitting short articles (with photos) telling about any projects/programs you are involved with.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the plant swap (one of my favorite programs). Don't forget to bring a nice plant or two to swap (no invasive plants or Linda will get mad).

Treasurer's Report

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

Balance Forward: 3-24-10	\$12,089.93
Received:	\$51.00
Disbursements:	-\$89.76
Ending Balance: 4-26-10:	\$12,051.17

Plant Sale Photos

by Connie Barron



ABOVE: Glenn Peoples helping customers.



ABOVE: Nora O'Connor at the Hosta table.



ABOVE: Norma Aldridge and Bruce Steele.

What Are We Working On?

United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham's Hand-In-Hand Early Learning Program

What is Hand-in-Hand? Since it opened in 2001, United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham's Hand-in-Hand Early Learning Program has been a premier early learning program in the United States. The Hand-in-Hand Program serves 185 children with, and without, disabilities each year who learn side-by-side in a model inclusive environment. The program allows children with disabilities to learn from their peers, while children without disabilities learn to recognize the common humanity of everyone, as well as compassion, at an early age.

The program centers around a garden because children are active learners with a natural curiosity that requires hands on experience. They learn from doing, and gardening is unsurpassed in providing hands on opportunities to seek information, observe changes and learn new skills. Gardening experiences also offer a springboard for learning math, science, reading, writing and social studies. Gardening inspires art through its use of design, color, visual stimulation and beauty, as well. Equally important, gardening improves fine and gross motor skills, fosters cooperative and social skills, enhances self esteem and inspires creativity.

What are MGs involved with Hand-In-Hand doing? We are currently working to incorporate soil amendments and prepare all of our beds for planting. We will be preparing raised rows in the field area to plant corn, pumpkins and beans. We work with the classroom teachers and aides, answering their gardening questions and providing any needed advice on plants and care.



UCP Children's Garden Project:
The Elizabeth Naro Saia Garden



MG David Harris helping the 4-year-olds
plant tomato seeds.



Kelly Boone working with 4-year-olds.
filling window boxes before planting
nasturtium seeds.

Volunteers Needed

For Hand-In-Hand

United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham's Hand-in-Hand Program currently needs help with its activities.

Volunteers are needed to incorporate soil amendments, prepare beds and plant vegetables. Six MGs are needed to work in pairs as mentors for groups during this school year, which ends in July. These volunteers will work with the classroom teachers and aides, answering gardening questions and providing advice on plants. Because the children need consistency, a pair of MGs will work with each age group of children. (There are two classes).



ABOVE: MG Myron Pierre assisting 3-year-olds
with the drainage layer of a window box.

Spring Fever?

Jefferson County Master Gardener Association Meeting Minutes for April 13, 2010

The JCMGA April meeting was called to order by President Bruce Steele at 10:00 A.M. in the BBG auditorium. The March meeting minutes and Treasurer's report were approved as printed in *Roots & Shoots*.

Dianne Brannon reported progress on the horticultural therapy program at the Glenwood Center for autistic children and adults. Karen Mitchell also reported that the children's Hand-in-Hand garden at the United Cerebral Palsy Center was going well. Madelon Rushing reported on an ongoing garden project at the Highlands School. They need soil and pebbles and would like suggestions for places to purchase these items at reasonable prices. Fletcher Harvey mentioned that the Botanical Bash of the Shades Valley Rotary Club was a success. This event raises money to support a summer intern at the BBG.

Robert Eskew reported that the Birmingham Rose Society Rose Show will be held May 8-9 (Mother's Day weekend). The Dunn Rose Garden at the BBG will also be part of the Glorious Gardens Tour the same weekend.

Bruce Steele reported that plans for the 2012 Alabama Master Gardeners' Conference to be hosted by Jefferson County are proceeding, and we will soon be contacted to help with the myriad tasks that this endeavor will entail. Harold Deason asked for ideas for a theme/logo for this conference.

Bruce noted that to date the Jeffco Master Gardeners have reported a total of 14,941 CEU and volunteer hours for 2009.

Nora O'Connor gave a report on the State Advisory Committee regarding upcoming garden events in the state: Lee County will host a garden tour May 15-16 in the Auburn-Opelika area, and the Shoals Master Gardeners will host a garden conference on July 15th. Details of an ACES-sponsored workshop to be held in Hanceville will be announced at a later date.

Wayne Boldin demonstrated his invention of a large portable watering container made from a 55 gallon canister purchased from Coca-Cola. He plans to use this in the Tropical Plants booth at the upcoming BBG spring plant sale and offered it for use by other groups who might need it.

The program for our May meeting will be our annual plant swap with Linda Emerson. Members can bring as many plants as they wish but can only put two of them in the swap.

Tony Glover gave a presentation, entitled "Fire Ant Myth Buster". He suggested we go to www.extension.org/fire+ants for followup information. One CEU can be awarded for attending this presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Jackson
Secretary, JCMGA

Looking for a way to give back while sharing a love for plants and people? Join the BBG's Garden Docents. No experience is necessary. All you need is a willingness to learn and attend a monthly training session. Contact Mary-Bestor at 414.3962 or mtickle@bbgardens.org for more information.

BBG's Glorious Gardens Features Seven Stunning Gardens

Birmingham Botanical Gardens' biennial Glorious Gardens Tour returns to Birmingham on Mother's Day weekend. Five residential and two public gardens comprise this year's tour, each with its own celebrity, whether it is an array of horticultural gems, architectural complexity or stunning views. The two-day event is slated for Saturday, May 8th from 10 A.M.–5 P.M. and Sunday, May 9th from Noon–5 P.M.

Host Gardens

The country estate of Catherine and Doug Coltharp. Their garden, framed with climbing vines and boxwoods, is tidy and precise and contains a plethora of flowers.

Joy and Beau Grenier's garden, which provides a surprising rural escape in the heart of Redmont.

The garden of Pam and Mike Hale, a quintessential "gardener's garden," whose centerpiece is a stunning waterfall that trickles down into a koi pond.

The minimalistic garden designs at Leslie and Elton Stephens's country home, along with their newly-planted arboretum.

Kim and Peter Weinheimer's seven acres, containing beautiful natural rock formations, stacked stone walls with perennial beds, vegetable gardens, hydrangea gardens and a nature trail with many native plants.

Calendar of Events May 2010

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

- May **Concerts in the Gardens** (See website for dates.) Aldridge Gardens.
http://www.aldridgegardens.com/index.php/component/option.com_eventlist/Itemid,166/
- May 5 **Cherokee Leaf Pounding** 10:30 A.M. – Noon. Aldridge Gardens.
http://www.aldridgegardens.com/index.php/component/option.com_eventlist/Itemid,166/
- May 6 **Members' Only Plant Sale** 3:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. Aldridge Gardens.
http://www.aldridgegardens.com/index.php/component/option.com_eventlist/Itemid,166/
- May 7 **Behind the Scenes Greenhouse Production Tour** 2:30 P.M. – 3:30 P.M. Calloway Gardens
<http://www.callawaygardens.com/events.aspx>
- May 7-8 **Spring Plant Sale** 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. Aldridge Gardens.
http://www.aldridgegardens.com/index.php/component/option.com_eventlist/Itemid,166/
- May 8 **The Doctor is in! What's Bugging You?** (Plant pests and diseases) 10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. Aldridge Gardens. http://www.aldridgegardens.com/index.php/component/option.com_eventlist/Itemid,166/
- May 8 **Please Mr. Florist, Cancel the Flowers – Linda Askey** (Flower Arranging) 10:30 A.M. Petals from the Past <http://www.petalsfromthepast.com/events.html>
- May 8 **Orchid Workshop for Beginners** 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. Huntsville Botanical Gardens
<http://www.hsvbg.org/index.php?mainID=2&subID=2&type=events>
- May 8-9 **Glorious Gardens Tour** Sat. 10:00 A.M. – 5 P.M., Sun. Noon – 5:00 P.M. BBG BBG
<http://www.bbgardens.org/adult.php>
- May 9 **Dahlias for the Home Garden** 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. Huntsville Botanical Gardens
<http://www.hsvbg.org/index.php?mainID=2&subID=2&type=events>
- May 9 **Birmingham Rose Show** Noon – 6:00 P.M. BBG <http://www.bbgardens.org/plant-group.php>
- May 13 **Innovative Vegetable Production Strategies: High Tunnels, Rainwater Collection and Shiitake Mushrooms** ACES Marshall County <http://www.aces.edu/gwcal/month.php>
- May 14 **Rain Gardening Workshop** 9:00 A.M. – Noon. ACES Jefferson State Community College, Pell City Campus. <http://www.aces.edu/gwcal/month.php> or Tony Glover.
- May 15-16 **Alabama Bonsai Society 2010 Bonsai Show** Sat. 11:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. & Sun. Noon – 4:00 P.M. BBG
<http://www.bbgardens.org/plant-group.php>
- May 15 **Success with Herbs in the South – Debbie Turner** 10:30 A.M. Petals from the Past
<http://www.petalsfromthepast.com/events.html>
- May 15-16 **Tour of Huntsville Gardens** 1:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. Huntsville Botanical Gardens
<http://www.hsvbg.org/index.php?mainID=2&subID=2&type=events>
- May 15-17 **Master Gardner Plant Sale** 7:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon. ACES Anniston
<http://www.aces.edu/gwcal/month.php>
- May 17 **Orchid Society Plant Auction** 5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. Huntsville Botanical Gardens
<http://www.hsvbg.org/index.php?mainID=2&subID=2&type=events>
- May 22 **Raising Urban Chickens** 10:00 A.M. – Noon. BBG <http://www.bbgardens.org/adult.php>
- May 22 **Fern Festival and Sale** 8:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M. Huntsville Botanical Gardens
<http://www.hsvbg.org/index.php?mainID=2&subID=2&type=events>
- May 22 **Squirmy, Wormy Bins (Family Education)** 9:00 A.M. – 10:30 A.M. Aldridge Gardens.
http://www.aldridgegardens.com/index.php/component/option.com_eventlist/Itemid,166/
- May 23 **Wonderful World of Hydrangeas** 1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. Huntsville Botanical Gardens
<http://www.hsvbg.org/index.php?mainID=2&subID=2&type=events>
- May 29 **Eddie Aldridge's Propagation Workshop** 10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. Aldridge Gardens.
http://www.aldridgegardens.com/index.php/component/option.com_eventlist/Itemid,166/

Alabama MG Conference

Photos by Connie Barron



ABOVE: Dale & Nora O'Connor looking at the gardens in the governor's backyard.



ABOVE: Alabama MG Conference attendees



ABOVE: Nancy Nash (Left) looking at the gardens in the governor's backyard.



ABOVE: Ann Thomas, who won the prize at the governor's house.



ABOVE: MGs on the steps of the governor's house.



ABOVE: Harold and Mary Jo.

May Garden Calendar

FRUITS AND NUTS: Continue spray program. Keep grass from around trees and strawberries. Peaches and apples can still be budded.

SHRUBS: Newly planted shrubs need extra care now and in coming weeks. Don't spray with oil emulsions when the temperature is above 85 degrees F.

LAWNS: Now is the best time to start lawns from seed. Water new lawns as needed to prevent drying. Keep established lawns actively growing by watering, fertilizing and mowing. Spray weeds in lawns with proper herbicides.

ROSES: Spray or dust for insects and diseases. Fertilize monthly with complete fertilizer or rose special. Container-grown plants in flower may be planted. Prune climbing roses after the first big flush of flowering.

ANNUALS and PERENNIALS: Later plantings of bedding plants still have time to produce. Watch for insects on day lilies.

BULBS: Summer bulbs started in containers may still be planted. Do not remove foliage from spring flowering bulbs. Do not let seedheads form on tulips and other spring flowering bulbs.

MISCELLANEOUS: Mulch new shrub plantings if not already done. Avoid drying out new shrub, tree and lawn plantings.

VEGETABLE PLANTS: Plant tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and sweet potatoes.

The Turkey Creek Nature Preserve

The Turkey Creek Nature Preserve was created to protect endangered species. Turkey Creek is home to three endangered species of fish: the Vermilion Darter (*Etheostoma chermocki*), the Watercress Darter (*Etheostoma nuchale*) and the Rush Darter (*Etheostoma phytophilum*). Both the Rush and Vermilion Darter occur only in Turkey Creek and nowhere else in the world.

In addition to its significant biological diversity, the Turkey Creek watershed has historical significance. Several prehistoric Native American sites have been documented on the property. In addition, the home and mill of David Hanby, one of Alabama's most aggressive early industrialists, and a pioneer in the development of Alabama's coal industry, has been documented within the preserve. The preserve also contains the ruins of the Mount Pinson Ironworks, a small forge and foundry built in 1863 that supplied horseshoes for Confederate troops during the Civil War. Since the 1870s, historical accounts record extensive use of the Turkey Creek Falls, located within today's Nature Preserve site, for picnicking and outdoor recreation. Some of us can remember our grandparents' and parents' stories of their visits to Turkey Creek.

The Turkey Creek Nature Preserve is a private initiative to protect endangered species. Turkey Creek was preserved through the efforts of the Land Trust, which combined approximately \$1.5 million from the Jefferson County Greenways Program with \$750,000 in private landowner contributions to secure support from the Alabama Forever Wild Program, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Jefferson County and others to help establish the 700-acre Turkey Creek Nature Preserve and Greenways. Currently, Land Trust efforts have created almost \$10 million worth of conservation projects in the watershed, and an interpretive center is in the works.

The Turkey Creek Nature Preserve is owned by Alabama's Forever Wild Program. It is co-managed by Forever Wild, the Land Trust and a local community group called START (Society to Advance the Resources at Turkey Creek). The tract is managed as a Nature Preserve and thus hosts a number of recreational opportunities, including hiking and nature photography.

The Turkey Creek Nature Preserve is seeking volunteers to help with their projects. It is located at 3906 Turkey Creek Road in Pinson, Alabama, and open Wednesday through Sunday from 8-6. You may contact the preserve at 205.680.4116 or by e-mailing tsteele@bsc.edu.

For more information about the preserve, and great pictures, visit the preserve's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pinson-AL/Turkey-Creek-Nature-Preserve/47642608219>.

For more information about the darters at Turkey Creek, check out these websites:

Vermilion Darter: <http://www.outdooralabama.com/Fishing/freshwater/fish/other/darters/vermillion/>

Rush Darter: <http://www.outdooralabama.com/fishing/freshwater/fish/other/darters/rushdarter.cfm>

Watercress Darter: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watercress_darter

