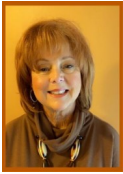




Dirty Digs

December



**ACMGA President
Sondra Henley**

The end of a successful year of gardening and community is approaching. Each of us has our own memories and accomplishments from the projects we chose to work on. We have shared our challenges and developed plans to make the most of the opportunities we faced.

Your new officers for 2025-2026 are President Rose McCauley and Vice President Michael Camire. You can find his Spotlight article

inside.

During our December meeting, we awarded the title of Master Gardener of the Year to Elijah Pugh. Elijah has been consistently active within ACMGA. His attention to detail as Treasurer highlights his skills and talents.

Moreover, his pleasant demeanor and availability are valuable assets for any officer. Be sure to check out his Spotlight article inside.

Inside this issue:

<i>Presidents Message</i>	1
<i>Chairmen Reports</i>	2
<i>Gardening Tips</i>	4
<i>Demo Garden</i>	6
<i>Sanitation Survey</i>	9
<i>Landowner Tour</i>	10
<i>Luncheon Recipes</i>	12
<i>Service Hours</i>	14
<i>Ornament Card Project</i>	19
<i>Spotlight</i>	20
<i>Chicken Salad Chick</i>	23
<i>PVG</i>	25
<i>RIP Sally</i>	28

Special points of interest:

- Gardening Tips
- Recipes
- Prattvillage Garden



AMGA Website
Alabamamg.org



Autauga MG Website
autaugamastergardeners.org



Extension Website
mg.aces.edu



Darlene Blumentritt received reimbursement for her Intern Class fee (scholarship award). You can find her Spotlight article, as well as the Intern Award article, inside.

I am excited to share that the ACMGA Board has agreed to establish the Long Range Planning Committee within our organization. This committee will have rotating members to ensure we bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas as we plan for future projects and fundraising efforts that align with our mission and vision while benefiting the community we serve. The new President will be responsible for appointing members to this committee.

Additionally, ACMGA is preparing for the 2025 AMGA Conference. The clock is ticking, and I hope you will actively participate in this significant event in our organization's history.

Merry Christmas to you and yours, be safe as you travel, and be rested.... you are going to need it!

Sondra

**ACMGA Vice President
Nancy Waggoner
ACMGA Programs/Tours**



Autauga County Master Gardeners are always teaching but learning as well. In October, our own Debbie Boutelier, Advanced Master Gardener and Herbalist, presented a program on Herbs in the Landscape. In November, Nate Taylor, Arborist and owner of Taylor Tree

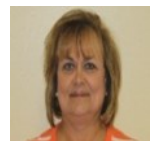
Services, discussed trees in the landscape: health, planting, and trimming.

In October, sixteen of our members enjoyed a great trip to Botanic in Opelika for lunch and shopping for plants and other gardening related goodies. Next spring, a trip to the Birmingham Botanical Gardens is tentatively planned.

Incoming Vice President Michael Camire will be planning programs and field trips. He will welcome your suggestions!

Nancy

**Cheri Cook
Hospitality Chair**



There was great membership and intern participation preparing decorations for the Landowner Tour in November. Fall colors in tablecloths, pumpkins, and leaves were festive.

Membership turnout was good.

For the Christmas Luncheon, black and white plaid tablecloths made a stunning backdrop for red Christmas ornaments in a cardinal theme. As always, there was more than enough to eat and drink, with members bringing their delicious dishes.

There were 50-55 members, interns, and spouses in attendance. A fun gift swap rounded out the occasion.

Cheri

Lunch and Learn Vicki Williamson



ACMGA hosts Lunch and Learn the 3rd Wednesday at 12 noon. The location is Trinity Prattville Church, 610 Fairview Ave Prattville, AL.

Bring a sack lunch and water is provided.

The 4th Quarter, 2024 opened with Henry Lucus from Capital City Master Gardeners, who shared his knowledge of Square Foot Gardening and Techniques to make the most of a small footprint with high yield.

He brought his collapsible grids for illustration. We had 20 in attendance.

In November, Mallory Kelley, our Extension Agent and Horticulturist, brought us into the holiday spirit with designing Christmas wreaths and garland from nature's bounty. Cheri Cook was the recipient of a drawing for a beautiful wreath made by Mallory.

We had a high attendance of 40!

In December we are looking forward to Judy May from Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association presenting Growing and repotting Orchids.

As I close my 3rd year of chairing the Lunch and Learn programs, I want to thank everyone for your support and encouragement!

Jackie Raines will be the new Chairperson for 2025. Merry Christmas!

Vicki

2024 Demo Garden
AICC Total Donation
1004 pounds



Awards & Honors Adrienne Yarbrough



The ACMGA Master Gardener of the Year for 2024 is Elijah Pugh, ACMGA Treasurer. Elijah was an intern and graduated in 2020. He serves on several

committees and is a dedicated volunteer at the Demonstration Garden. He gives his time and energy, shares vegetables and plants for transplanting, as well as his patience and kindness to all. We congratulate him for his contribution to our Association.



Photo – Elijah Pugh, Adrienne Yarbrough, ACMGA Awards Chair & Sondra Henley, ACMGA President.

Hummingbird Award Recipients for 2024 were Catherine Brooks, Samantha Bowen, Bionca Lindsey, Soyna Moore, Kim Wood, Cheri Cook, Patrick Cook, J.C. Scofield, Dawn Whitehead, and Darlene Blumentritt.

Each award recipient has gone above and beyond in their volunteer activities for our Association.



Darlene Blumentritt (left) and Dawn Whitehead (right) with ACMGA Awards Chair Adrienne Yarbrough .

Please thank the recipients for their exceptional efforts. Thank you for a wonderful and successful year.

Please remember to submit your hours in your Service Report on or before December 31, 2024.

Adrienne

Winter Gardening Tips

By Sondra Henley

Please see a complete monthly guide at:

<https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/fruits-lawn-garden/alabama-gardeners-calendar/>

Fruits and Nuts

January - Set out apples, peaches, pears, and grapes.

February - Start strawberry plantings.

March - Continue strawberry and grape plantings.

Shrubs

January - Plant shrubs and trees, including broadleaf, narrow leaf, and deciduous. Apply an ultrafine horticultural oil spray to all deciduous shrubs to help with control of insects and diseases. Spray when weather is on a warmer trend.

February – Spray plants with a fungicide before new growth

March - Monitor shrubs for harmful insects.

Lawns

January - Soil test and add limestone as recommended.

February – Continue with soil testing and liming if necessary.

March -Continue with soil testing and liming if necessary.

Roses

January - Plant roses

February – Continue planting roses; prune established roses early this month.

March -Watch new growth for aphids, begin a spray or dust program, begin fertilizing.

Annuals and Perennials

January - Plant hardy annuals

February – Replant hardy annuals

March – Continue planting hardy annuals.

Bulbs

January - Check stored bulbs and discard rotten ones.

February – late February plant canna, amaryllis, gladiolus, and zephyrettes

March - Plant gladiolus every 2 or 3 weeks if a long blooming season is desired. Plant tuberous begonias in pots. Plant dahlias.

Miscellaneous

January – Mow and bag your lawn clippings to keep annual winter weeds from seeding.

Prune winter-damaged limbs. Give house plants a bath in lukewarm water to remove dust.

February – Mow and bag your lawn clippings to keep annual winter weeds from seeding.

March – Repair lawn and garden equipment.

Vegetable Seeds

January /February - South: Plant hardy vegetables and root crops (garden peas, radishes, mustard, spinach, turnips). Start cabbage, broccoli, lettuce, and Swiss chard seeds in cold frames.

March - **Central and North:** Plant all hardy crops recommended for January and February (garden peas, leafy greens, and root crops).

Central and South: Continue planting carrots, lettuce, and radishes. Plant sweet corn and squash. South Alabama can start planting beans, melons, and southern peas in late March.

Vegetable Transplants

January - Central: Plant cabbage and cauliflower transplants. Wait until the end of January to plant Swiss chard, mustard, transplants, and onion sets.

February – South and Central: Plant asparagus, cabbage and broccoli, and certified seed potatoes for Irish and red- skinned varieties.

March - **Central and North:** Plant asparagus, onion sets, and lettuce. Plant certified seed potatoes for Irish and red- skinned varieties in early March.



DEMONSTRATION GARDEN FOURTH QUARTER REPORT



Glenn Huovinen

Despite the hot weather of 2024, as of December 4 we donated 1004 pounds to AICC. This represented 34 different varieties of fresh Fruits and Vegetables. The 2024 Intern Class toured the garden. We have a very dedicated Demo Garden Crew.

Please consider joining our crew when we work at the garden on **Tuesdays 8-10 AM** year around weather permitting.

2024 Demo Garden AICC total donation

1004 pounds

**34 different varieties
of
fruits and veggies**

SPRING GARDEN			
	START SEEDS	SPRING PLANTING DATES	DAYS TO MATURITY
BEETS	***	FEBRUARY	55-65
BROCCOLI	1-15 JANUARY	15-Feb	50-72
CABBAGE	1-15 JANUARY	15-Feb	60-110
CAULIFLOWER	1-15 JANUARY	15-Feb	50-72
BRUSSELS SPROUTS	1-Mar	21-Apr	90-120
LETTUCES	1-15 JANUARY	1-15 MARCH	40-90
ONIONS	1-Dec	15-Feb	60-115
CELERY	1-Jan	1-Apr	110-120
*** START SEEDS IN GROUND			

Membership Committee

Jane Boysen

The Membership Committee presented the first annual scholarship to the intern most deserving from the graduating class in August 2024. A committee made up of Jane Boysen, Shannon Mayes, Bionca Lindsey and Mallory Kelly looked at criteria such as completion of the Master Gardener class work including quizzes, attendance of course, completion of 50 hours horticulture related activities and many other criteria.

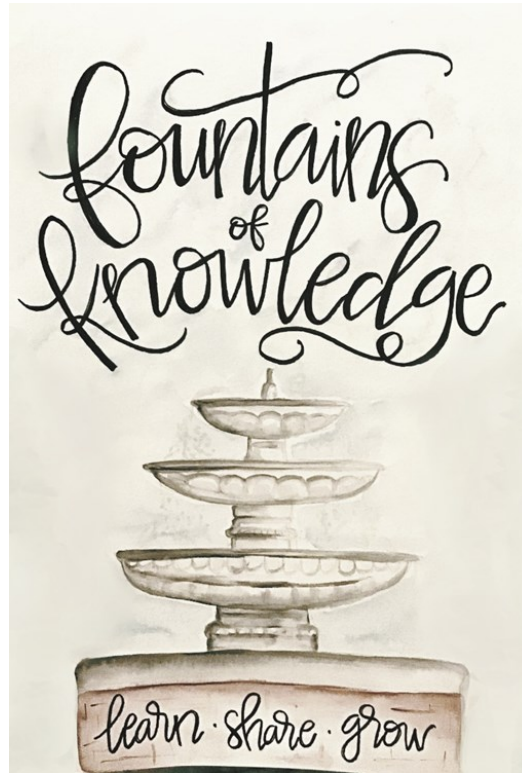


After reviewing all the qualifications of several candidates, Mrs. Darlene Blumentritt was awarded the scholarship which was the reimbursement of registration fees for the Master Gardener course. Darlene not only completed the work, but has gone way beyond volunteering after graduation. She is active with the Demonstration Garden, attends both membership and board meetings, attends Lunch & Learn meetings, works Arbor Day, works plant sale and was an Intern Coordinator for the August 2025 class.

This scholarship award has been a dream of mine for several years and I was so excited to present the award to such a deserving Master Gardener!!

The membership committee has also been busy sending cards to the membership when they need a word of encouragement and sending material to those persons interested in the Master Gardener program.

We are looking forward to another great year and a new scholarship recipient in 2025!



Join Us
in
Prattville, Alabama
for the
2025 AMGA Conference & Business Meeting
April 3 – 5, 2025
First Baptist Church Prattville
Hosted by
Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

For more details:

<https://autaugamastergardeners.org/amga2025conference/>

Sanitation Survey

Please Help

Jenny Ryals

My name is Jenny Ryals, I am a Ph.D. student at Mississippi State University. I am administering a sanitation survey to consumer gardeners across MS, AL, LA, and AR as part of my Ph.D. work.

The goal of this survey is to educate consumers on effective strategies for disease control and learn what areas are lacking in their sanitation strategies.

All responses to the questions will be kept anonymous and published only in summary form. The information provided will allow us to learn more about what sanitation practices may be commonplace and how these practices may affect changes in production/sales and production costs (supplies, equipment and labor, and management time) associated with the sanitation practices reported by respondents.

This survey is completely voluntary and will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The participant does not have to answer all the questions. Again, all responses will be anonymous and identification such as name or email address will not be collected. Names will never be connected to the answers. Privacy will be carefully protected, and answers will be combined with those of the other people who are participating in this project.

The survey can be accessed via the link or QR code provided:

https://msstate.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4NRd4WYuRcdz9bw



If you would please share this around to any other gardeners you know, I would greatly appreciate it!

Thank you for your time

Jenny



Editors note. The text for this article was derived from an email communication and has been modified slightly for Dirty Digs. The original email is available upon request.

2024 Fall Landowner Tour

Darlene Blumentritt

Several ACMGA members and interns attended this year's landowner tour organized by the Autauga Forestry and Wildlife Stewardship Council. This educational event was hosted by David and Virginia Reed at their large Round Rock Farm.

ACMGA members and interns participated in a variety of ways. Cheri Cook organized volunteers to decorate multiple tables with fall decorations. Generous sponsors throughout the county contributed and donated items for the door prize drawings including our own organization. Angie Trimble made a beautiful fall basket filled with goodies for donation. The winner commented, "my wife is going to love this gift".

The event started with a presentation on Alabama reptiles. If anyone was still trying to wake up, this presentation of lizards, turtles and venomous snakes got your attention. The speaker focused on safety, avoidance, and what to do if bitten by a venomous snake.

We loaded up on trailers for a tour of the land with presentations along the way. This included fish pond management for quality fishing. Who knew you need to apply weed killer and fertilizer to ponds?

Bobwhite quail habitat basics taught us how important it is to have areas for quail to live, hide and protect their young.

The 3rd stop was my favorite. Six of the cutest bird dogs demonstrated their training and hunting skills wagging their tails along the way.

The last stop was a talk on forestry and best management practices. It was interesting to learn how logging companies selectively cut trees, provide preventative erosion measures and maintain roads. When I see a log truck now, I have a better understanding of what the logging company's job involves.

We returned to enjoy lunch provided by Fat Boy's BBQ family farm style on the beautifully decorated tables.



Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

Lunch & Learn 2025

3rd WEDNESDAY of EVERY Month
12:00-1:00 P.M.

Trinity Prattville Church, 610 Fairview Ave., Prattville 36066



BRING A SACK LUNCH FREE PROGRAM DRINKS PROVIDED

- 15 January** **Seed Starting for Your Summer Veg**
Mallory Kelley, Horticulturist, ACES
- 19 February** **Garden Tools & Maintenance**
Mike Forster, Capital City Master Gardener
- 19 March** **Hydrangeas in the Southern Garden**
David Doggett, Advanced Master Gardener
- 16 April** **African Violets**
Susan O'Conner, Advanced Master Gardener
- 21 May** **Planting for Butterflies**
Jane Mobley, Advanced Master Gardener
- 18 June** **Landscaping with Herbs**
Debbie Boutelier, Advanced Master Gardener
- 16 July** **Daylilies for Your Garden**
Terese Goodson, Capital City Master Gardener
- 20 August** **Muscadine Season is Here!**
David Lawrence, Commercial Horticulturist, ACES
- 17 September** **Techniques for Growing Sprouts & Microgreens**
Janell Diggs, Advanced Master Gardener
- 15 October** **Zone Maps: New, Old & Untrue?**
Hayes Jackson, Horticulturist, ACES
- 19 November** **Holiday Decorating with Nature**
Jane McCarthy, Horticulturist & Master Gardener
- 17 December** **Plants off the Beaten Path**
Robin Snyder, Central Alabama Master Gardener



ALL ARE WELCOME! For more information, contact the
Autauga County Extension Office (334) 361-7273.

Recipes from Board Luncheon

Sondra Henley

Dawn Whitehead

Snow on the Mountain

(Feeds appx 20)

- Chicken Sauce
- 4 cans chunk white chicken (do not drain)
- 1 lg condensed cream of chicken soup
- Put in pot mix together
- Add
- 2+ cups whipping cream or half-and-half
- Stir on low until hot , will stick to bottom if not continual stirred.
- Add to crockpot on warm.
- **Note: I doubled this recipe and half the sauce left over**
- Make enough rice for 1/2 to 1 cup servings per person.
- Opt. You can add 1/2 to 1 tsp poultry seasoning or seasoning of your choice (curry, etc.)
- Condiments: the following are suggestions
- Raisins
- Olives, black
- Olives, green
- Capers
- Green onions chopped
- Tomatoes, diced
- Apples, peeled & chopped
- Mandarin oranges, drained
- Pineapple, drained
- Almonds, sliced
- Peanuts, chopped
- Chow mien noodles
- Opt. Curry powder
- Lastly-coconut shredded (Snow on the Mountain)

Eggnog Spice Cake with Bourbon Custard Filling and Eggnog Buttercream



Cake instructions:

<https://www.southernliving.com/recipes/eggnog-spice-cake-bourbon-custard-filling-eggnog-buttercream-frosting>

Instructions on making chocolate leaves:

<https://www.southernliving.com/white-chocolate-candy-leaves-8746859>

Calculating Your Service Hours

Updated 2021 by Dani Carroll, County Extension Agent

As an Alabama Master Gardener volunteer, you represent the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. As a representative, your goal is to help people improve their quality of life by sharing research-based, non-biased information.

All volunteer service must be accepted or approved by the Local Master Gardener Coordinator. Volunteer hours are entered into the on-line service report at www.aces.edu/mgmanager.

The Master Gardener Program is a program of the Alabama Extension System. Under federal law, as part of the land grant universities (Auburn University and Alabama A&M), there is an important responsibility for bringing university-based education to Alabamians. Extension does this through our outreach programs like Master Gardeners and reporting these activities to the federal government is required. When you volunteer as a Master Gardener, you are representing the land grant universities. You play an important role in this national network. So YES, it is important for local and county MG groups to report these community activities because these are proof of your contributions in the land grant network.

Four guidelines for validating volunteer work:

- Will it benefit the community?
- Is it associated with a non-commercial group?
- Is it related to gardening, the environment, or an Extension program?
- Are you helping people learn?

If you can answer yes to these four questions, then the activity meets the mission of the Master Gardener program and you should count it in your annual service report for volunteer hours.

You will more effectively represent the program and its mission when considering a variety of audiences to interact with during your volunteer activities. Examples: All documented hours relate to business meetings OR all hours related to writing a single article in the quarterly newsletter OR all hours are in an annual bed at the botanic garden – these are one sided and perhaps miss the mission of the MG Program.

Following are examples for activities that count toward Master Gardener service hours.

Intern Master Gardener Volunteers

- Any activity accepted or approved by the Local MG Coordinator counts as volunteer hours. The extension agent may request some of the Intern's time be done on a specific project or type of volunteer service. Interns are required to participate in and report a minimum of 50 volunteer hours to accomplish certification (i.e. 10 of these 50 hours are to be done working the Master Gardener Helpline).
- Attendance at extramural educational meetings counts as volunteer hours.
- Travel time to and from a volunteer activity or to and from an educational workshop counts toward volunteer hours.
- Participation in Alabama Master Gardener association meetings (local and/or state) counts as volunteer hours.
- Drive time to monthly MG association meetings ONLY counts when you are an intern. Once certified, you ONLY count drive time if you are involved with a committee giving a report or have a specific responsibility at the meeting.

Certified Master Gardener Volunteers

- Any activity accepted or approved by the Local MG Coordinator counts as volunteer hours. To encourage Certified MG's to stay active in the program, we request that they report half the volunteer hours required of Intern MG's. This is a minimum of 25 volunteer and 10 CEU hours.
- If you do not achieve these hours each year, your name will be removed from the MG Association roster even if dues are paid.

- Time spent in Master Gardener Association business meetings counts as volunteer hours and the time spent listening to the speaker counts as CEU hours.
- Drive time to monthly AMG association meetings ONLY counts when you are involved with a committee giving a report or have a specific responsibility at the meeting.
- Travel time to volunteer activities counts as volunteer time.
- Time spent listening to an educational speaker or topic should be counted as CEUs. When entering your CEU hours into the service report, please supply a description of the event such as: the location, speaker, topic presented.
- Labor in your garden or someone else's in preparation for a program is volunteer time.
- Time spent working the MG Association Plant Sale and time spent preparing and planting the plants for the sale is counted as volunteer time.
- Time spent preparing food counts as volunteer time, but only for MG association meetings, MG programs or workshops and MG intern classes.
- For Members of the Herb Society, a Garden Club, Tree Society, Bluebird Trail, etc..... (Any clubs or societies that relate to the MG Program and has to do with gardening, plants, trees, water quality, insects, birds)- For those club meetings you can only count the educational program time as a CEU, NO volunteer time for the business meetings. Time spent working with these clubs or associations to provide education to the public can counts as volunteer time.

Defining CEU's

These guidelines will help you decide if an activity should count toward CEU's:

Does the activity have a specific learning objective?

Is the speaker at the activity a recognized authority in the subject presented?

If you answer yes to these two questions, then count the activity toward your CEU's. If you are still in doubt, ask an Extension agent.

You should also count CEU time spent researching a subject in preparation for teaching/presenting that subject to an audience.

Count CEU's by the number of hours present in the activity (example: you attend the Fall AMGA CEU workshop; there are three speakers each giving a one hour program; this equals 3 hours of CEU's).

Why do my hours have to be reported by December 31 or sooner?

Extension must compile an annual report of activities, numbers of contacts, impacts and results to the federal government at the beginning of each calendar year. Therefore, it is crucial to the accuracy of our report that you have your hours entered online by December 31 of each year. Reporting timely also ensures that you are recognized when it is time for the Hours Coordinator to turn in names for awards.

Common Questions:

I attended a workshop on pruning, how many volunteer hours do I receive?

If you attended a workshop on pruning, these hours count as CEUs NOT volunteer time. No contacts are counted. If you were the speaker or instructor, this would count as volunteer time (as would the drive time). You would count the participants as your contacts if you were the instructor.

I attended the monthly master gardener association meeting, how many hours do I count?

Time spent in Master Gardener Association business meetings counts as volunteer hours and the time spent listening to the speaker counts as CEU hours.

Drive time to monthly AMG association meetings ONLY counts when you are involved with a committee giving a report or have a specific responsibility at the meeting.

At a MG Association monthly meeting, ONLY the educational speaker for the meeting can count each person present as a contact.

We went on a field trip to the botanical gardens in Mobile and drove 3 hours to get there. How does this count?

The time spent at the botanical gardens on a tour learning about the plants is CEU. Drive time does not count for CEUs.

Our local association would like to attend a charity event for XXXXXXXX. How do we count this as hours?

This is great news! Associations build friendships and do a lot of fun things together. But this may not count as volunteer hours. If you attended to teach and / or further knowledge for participants, just ask me if it can be approved for hours.

We have a fundraiser for the association coming up, and I am spending a lot of time in the demonstration garden preparing for the sale (tour, workshop, etc.). How do I count this?

Drive time and time spent preparing for the fundraiser counts as volunteer hours. There are no contacts for this.

Original article: [Log Hours - LEE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS OF ALABAMA](#)

<https://www.leemg.org/log-hours.html>

Enter your hours: [Extension Master Gardener Service Report Login](#)

<https://www.acesagmg.site/login.php>

ACMGA Mission

We improve the lives of Autauga County residents through research-based horticulture education delivered by a dedicated, trained and involved Extension volunteer team.

ACMGA Vision

As Autauga County Extension Master Gardener volunteers and ambassadors, we aspire to:

- Teach all generations
- Inspire a lifelong pursuit of research-based Knowledge
- Serve as environmental stewards
- Draw all people to the joys of gardening

The Ornament Card Project

Sondra Henley

The Ornament Card project began in 2023 and is continuing into 2024. The Autauga County Master Gardeners Association (ACMGA) will participate in the annual Tree Trail along the Autauga Creek Creekwalk in downtown Prattville. This walk supports the Family Support Center in downtown Prattville. Their mission is to enhance the quality of life for children and families in the River Region through education, advocacy, and employment. ACMGA covered the \$300 fee for the Christmas Tree and sign, which allows us to showcase that ACMGA decorated the tree.



To create the cards, we selected the flowers, designed the cards, and organized a workday on Thursday, November 21, to make the ornament cards. In 2023, over 500 cards were taken, so we decided to print 400 of each flower for the current year. We used the Autauga County Extension office to organize the project. We printed 200 sheets of paper featuring 2 amaryllis and 2 camelias per sheet. Each picture had corresponding information about ACES, ACMGA, and AMGA on the back. The cards were then cut apart, arranged on laminate sheets, laminated, and then cut apart again with rounded corners. We punched holes in the cards and tied ribbons onto them to hang on the tree. Additionally, thirty cards were placed in Ziplock bags.

On December 1, 2025, ACMGA selected a tree. We returned on December 2 to decorate it with lights and ornament cards. Members of ACMGA signed up to check on the tree every other day throughout December and replenish ornament cards as needed. Any leftover cards will be used at our annual plant sale and during the ASK A MG events at Home Depot.



Photographed: Val Brown, Linda Hicks and Glenn Huovinen, Vicki Williamson, Cindy Deane and Adrienne Yarbrough, Carolyn Gray, Kim Huggins, Lanell Tatum, Karen Montgomery, Susan Clapp and Darlene Blumentritt,

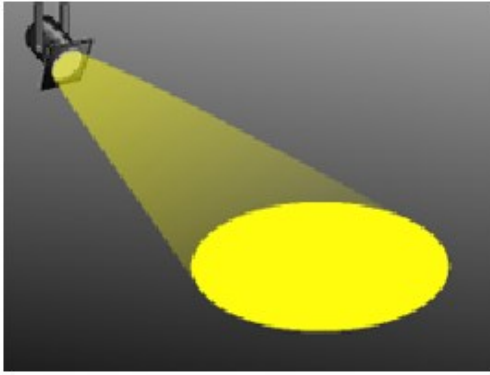


Catherine Brooks, Sharon Kochik, and Dian Owens Photo by Sondra Henley

Not photographed: Michael Camire, Shannon Mayes, Jane Boysen, and Sondra Henley.

Photographs by Sondra Henley





SPOTLIGHT

Darlene Anne Blumentritt



Status in life: Married to Dr. John Blumentritt. We have 3 children and 3 grandchildren. Our son Chris is a Maj in the USAF stationed at Scott AFB, Illinois. Our daughter Sonja is married to a WO3 in the Army, and they are stationed at Yokota AB, Japan. Our youngest daughter Ashley is married, and she and her husband live in Mandeville, LA.

Education: Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Career: I have been an ER/Pediatric critical care nurse since 1978. I switched to a school nurse in 2012. Cindy Salyer invited Jane McCarthy to speak at one of our Spinner meetings. That was the first time I had heard of the master gardener program. I immediately wanted to take the course but did not realize the classes were during the day. I was the school RN at Prattville High School then. I retired in January 2023 and applied for the next master gardener class.

Hobbies: I love yard work, organizing, and cooking

Favorite food: Hot wings

Favorite plant/flower: Hydrangea

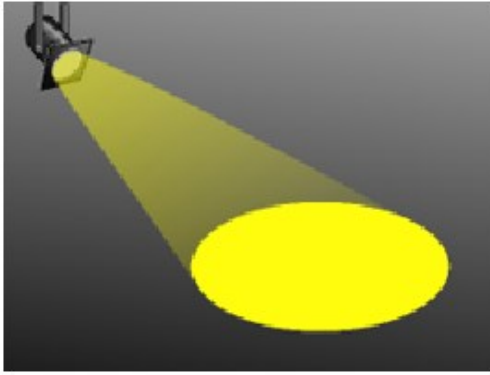
I have always wanted to visit: The Holy Land

My favorite book or author: Anne of Green Gables written by Canadian author L.M. Montgomery. My mother was born and raised in Quebec Canada. She used to say she named me after her favorite book as a child. In the book, Anne is always reminding people her name is "Anne with an E" which is how I spell my middle name. I am anxiously waiting for the 3rd book by Rebecca Yarros in January. I never expected to love a story about war college, riders, and dragons.

How long have you been a resident of Autauga County? 8 years. My husband is a retired USAF pilot. He was offered a job at Maxwell AFB teaching for Air University. We moved here from Schertz, Texas in 2016.

What is your favorite thing about Autauga County? The friendly people and beautiful downtown Prattville. I attend St. Joesph's Catholic Church and volunteer to water and maintain their beautiful flower gardens.

Other comments: I enjoyed the Master Gardener program more than I imagined. I have learned so much, and the members have been incredibly supportive. At graduation, I was recognized for contributing 198 volunteer hours, and I can honestly say that every hour spent volunteering brought me joy. Additionally, I am involved with Spinners, a women's volunteer organization that supports the local community through financial grants. This is my second year serving as President.



SPOTLIGHT

Michael H. Camire



Status in life: Married to Sally Manning-Camire for 38 years. We have 6 children (4 boys, 2 girls), 10 grandchildren (7 girls, 3 boys) and 14 great-grandchildren.

Education: Master of Arts: Organizational Management, Bachelor of Science: Management, Community College of The Air Force: Associate of Science: Contract Management

Career/Retired from: I joined the United States Air Force (USAF) in February 1974, specializing in the Contracting field (procurement), and I retired in February 1994 from Gunter Air Force Base in Alabama. After my retirement, I accepted a position in the local community with Information Management Services, where I worked as a Project Manager until June 2010. From June 2010 to June 2017, I served as a Quality Assurance Engineer at Periscope Holdings, supporting state procurement systems. Additionally, my wife, Sally, and I owned and operated an exotic bird and feed store in Prattville from 1998 to 2018. Since 2018, I have enjoyed taking a vacation every day.

What led you to your career? I entered the Air Force a few months after graduating from high school and they chose my career from that point on. As for our brick-and-mortar store, I always loved birds and had them growing up. It started when we rescued a few birds and then had to increase our income to care for and feed them properly, hence the establishment of the warehouse/store.

What brought you to Autauga MGA or the MG Program: I've always enjoyed gardening. I grew up with us having a garden to help feed the family. I found MG from attending a plant sale but couldn't commit until I retired due to my traveling commitments. In 2023, I signed up for the course and jumped in with both feet.

What are your hobbies? My current hobbies include gardening, caring for exotic birds, and internet marketing. Sally and I often go on 3-4-day getaways to various locations.

Favorite food: Pretty much anything that Sally makes, especially her meatloaf.

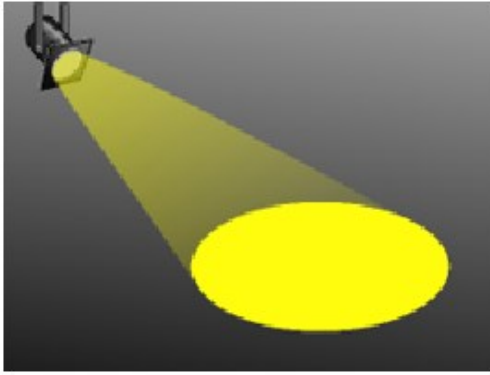
Favorite plant/flower: Succulents

I have always wanted to visit: The Vatican, Rome, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel.

Favorite book or author: Most books I read are about self-development, Internet Marketing and lately AI.

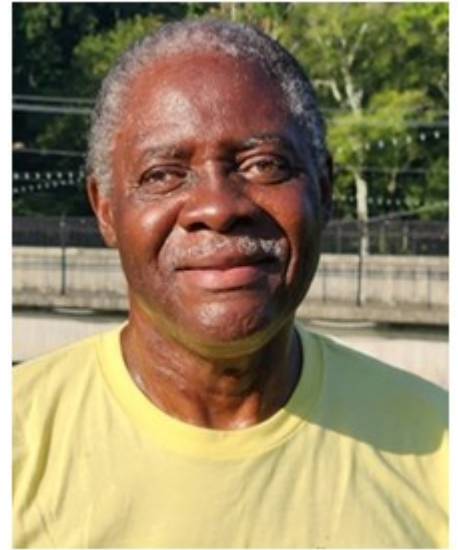
How long have you been a resident of Autauga County? We moved to Prattville in 1994.

Favorite thing you like about Autauga County? We liked the small-town atmosphere Prattville had. It was a sad day when I saw Cobbs Ford Rd farm on fire from the Interstate to make room for the shopping mall. That was the beginning of the end of the small-town atmosphere in Prattville. We still do enjoy all that the city does for the community, the city fest, farmer's market, special events, Prattville Gardens, the parks, etc.



SPOTLIGHT

Elijah Pugh



Status in life: Married 37 years to Janet. We have three children, boy-girl twins and a younger daughter, and two baby grand daughters.

Education: Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry from Howard University

Career/Retired from: Retired Chemistry Professor

What led you to your career? A love for math and science.

What brought you to Autauga MGA or the MG Program? An interest in vegetable gardening and an opportunity to continue learning about gardening.

What are your hobbies? Tennis, bicycle riding and vegetable gardening.

Favorite food: Baby Lima Beans

Favorite plant/flower: Tomatoes and hot peppers

Favorite book or author: Bible

How long have you been a resident of Autauga County? Four years

Favorite thing you like about Autauga County? Its ruralness

Other comments: Enjoy teamwork.



Shout out to Chicken Salad Chick and Jane Boysen! Sondra Henley

Jane approached Kristi Johnson, manager of Chicken Salad Chick and together they planned a day and time for a fundraiser for the Autauga County Master Gardeners Association, which will host the 2025 Alabama Master Gardeners Association Conference.

November 14, from 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Master Gardeners and local Prattville residents supported this fundraiser by putting their lunch receipts in a basket. That’s all we had to do!

This fundraiser raised \$311 for ACMGA.

Thank you Jane and everyone that helped with this successful fundraiser. Jane is planning another fundraiser in the near future.



Jane Boysen and manager, Kristi Johnson

Jane Boysen and Shannon Mayes welcoming customers and making sure everyone puts their receipts in the basket!

Upcoming Birthdays



JANUARY

Rita Nichols 01/06
Deborah Brooks 01/07
Alfred Booth 01/07
Glenn Huovinen 01/09
Marjorie Hannah 01/26
Kim Wood 01/31



FEBRUARY

Lisa Carrick 02/02
Cheryl Ayala Winter 02/08
Janice Jackson 02/11
Samantha Bowen 02/25
Gladys Elliott 02/28

MARCH

Amy Richardson 03/07
Darlene Blumentritt 03/13
Pam Olson 03/15
Billie Willis 03/16
Rose McCauley 03/27



Please let us know if we missed your birthday

Prattvillage Garden

Jane McCarthy, Chair



The Prattvillage Garden Master Gardener volunteers have been busy tending the PVG beds during this fall's brutal heat and minimal rain.

- hosting/educating guests such as the Fall 2024 MG intern class on one of their class field trips
- planting new shrubs... *Abelia* 'Rose Creek', False Cypress, and Oakleaf hydrangeas
- sorting the large inventory of "ACMGA plant sale pots"
- installing new soaker hoses in the Chapel bed
- cutting back perennials and prepping for winter
- planting snapdragons, dianthus, violas, parsley, and calendulas for winter color
- refreshing the stone edging around the herb garden
- moving the round concrete table and benches to a shady location
- planning a new pathway in the classroom bed
- clean-up in the Herb Garden and perennials tucked in for winter; *Camellia sinensis* bloomed for first time!
- decorating the garden for Christmas by installing the membership tree, putting up fresh greenery (including mistletoe), and hanging the twig stars



Lori Terrell shares the history of PVG chapel & garden's 29-yr history of ACMGA volunteers with 2024 interns.



Jane McCarthy shares PVG design elements



“Weight-bearing” & “yoga” workouts required



PVG volunteers sort & store plant sale pots.



Intern Nancy Strong volunteers at PVG.



PVG chapel decorated for Christmas.



ACMGA membership tree.



PVG decorations are from nature.



Names of 3 ACMGA members on the tree.

First 5 photos by Dian Owens & last 5 photos by Jane McCarthy.

A heartfelt thanks to all the ACMGA volunteers at the Governor's Mansion in this year's Candlelight Tours... Anne Carr, Terrie MacLaren, Jane McCarthy, Dian Owens, Kathy Quinn, Robin Snyder, but especially Harriet Hobbs!... the Elf on the Shelf!



RIP Sally Terrell

Dian Owens

Sally Terrell was our Prattvillage Garden's mascot. Sally passed away in December, 2024. She will be missed. Rest In Peace sweet, beautiful girl.



Lunch and Learn Christmas Wreaths and Garlands

Mallory Kelley

Vicki Williamson



Editors Corner

John Carrick



Happy new year! Wishing everyone a blessed and wonderful 2025.

Congratulations and a big thank you to Rose McCauley and Michael Camire for stepping up to take on the roles of ACMGA President and Vice-President. While the roles of President and Vice-President can be demanding at times, we are blessed to have some truly amazing ACMGA members who will no doubt provide their expertise and talent to support Rose and Michael in their new roles.

Normally, I am not a big fan of New Years resolutions, but I did like the “12 New Year’s Resolutions for Gardeners” article from Horticulture magazine. You can read the article at:

<https://www.hortmag.com/gardeners/12-new-years-resolutions-gardeners>

The article was originally written in 2017 and updated in 2020, but is still relevant and has some excellent points. The first item on the list is “Clean out the shed and go through old materials.” - so now I know what I will be working on come January.

Please email any web site feedback/related items to: web@autaugamastergardeners.org

If you have any articles, pictures, etc., to be included in the Dirty Digs newsletter, please email them to: dd@autaugamastergardeners.com

Newsletter feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

May God continue to Bless each and every one of you.

Johnny

Autauga County Master Gardeners Association

Autauga County Extension Office

2226 AL-14 W, Suite E
Autaugaville, AL 36003

Phone: 334-361-7273



Autauga County Master Gardener Volunteers are...

Motivated – to share their knowledge and expertise.

Accessible – to other Master Gardeners, horticulture and Extension professionals, and the public.

Service-oriented – to enhance their communities and the environment.

Trained – by Cooperative Extension in current horticultural practices.

Excited – about meeting other people who enjoy gardening.

Research ambassadors – who provide cutting-edge horticultural information to consumers.

Next Issue March 31st
Please submit articles, no later than March 15

Prattvillage Garden
139 1st Street, Prattville, AL 36067

Images courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

You can reserve the garden for an event—contact Party in the District

Honor Bricks:
<https://donationbricks.com/acmga>



AMGA Event Page:
<https://mg.aces.edu/autauga/events-calendar>

