

Third Quarter 2026



Dirty Digs

September



ACMGA President
Rose McCauley

ACMGA members have been very busy!

On August 12th, we acknowledged our nine graduating interns with a catered lunch after our business meeting. Mallory Kelley reported the number of service hours each intern had earned, some of them received pins for the number of times they worked the helpline and each received a gift bag from ACMGA. The official graduation for all the 2026 graduating interns was held on August 18th in Elmore County (Central Alabama MGA was the host county for the class).

Autauga County began hosting the 2026/2027 intern class on August 13th. We welcomed 21 interns from Autauga, Elmore, Montgomery and Dallas Counties.



AMGA Website
Alabamamg.org



Autauga MG Website
autaugamastergardeners.org



Extension Website
mg.aces.edu



The irrigation system at the Demonstration Garden is being reworked and the beds are being improved with recommended amendments. Michael Camire and Randy Henderson have taken the lead on this project. We have one large bed to complete. Currently, that bed is growing sweet potatoes. Many thanks to everyone who has helped. We started during the hottest summer on record. Several of our new interns have contributed many hours on this project. Again, thank you to everyone!

Our Fall Plant Sale will take place at Spinners Park on October 24th. This is a 2-day event. Plant intake will be at the Park on October 23rd.

Rose



Awards & Honors

Adrienne Yarbrough



3rd Quarter Volunteer Hours/Awards Chair Dirty Digs article

From the start of 2026, the Autauga County Master Gardener Association (ACMGA) membership selected seven members to receive a Hummingbird Award. This award is specific to our Association. The award was created in 2012 to highlight the exceptional efforts of our certified members based on the hummingbird's characteristics: fast, industrious and beautiful.

Those individuals receiving this award are as follows:

Debra Atwell for her work with Sondra Henley updating the ACMGA 2026 Directory.

Bionca Lindsey for her work in conjunction with 4-H in preparing, selecting EMG instructors, working with Prattville Elementary School teachers to hold the first Junior Master Gardener class at Prattville Elementary School.

Cathy Brooks, Randy Henderson, and Bob Scheffler for their work pruning the rose bushes at the Extension's office building in Autaugaville.

Samantha Bowen for her excellent, enthusiastic and successful work as the 2026 ACMGA Plant Sale Chair.

Randy Henderson for his assistance in revising and upgrading the irrigation system at the Demonstration Garden, providing information to individuals at the Prattville Farmers Market, and working the registration table at membership meetings.

Susan Clapp for her dedication taking pictures at events and other functions; additionally getting members to present devotionals at monthly membership meetings.

Each of these individuals devoted their time and energy to succeed in each of their endeavors.

Adrienne

Autauga County **Master Gardeners Association** **Lunch & Learn 2026**

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 WATER PROVIDED

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 21 January | Bluebirds and Their Habitat
Janell Diggs, Advanced Master Gardener |
| 18 February | Container Gardening in Grow Bags & Small Spaces
Glenn Huovinen, Advanced Master Gardener |
| 18 March | Seedy Exchange ~ Bring your Seeds
Caylor Rolling, Horticulturist, Eat South Montgomery |
| 15 April | Hydrangeas
Maria Pacheco, Advanced Master Gardener |
| 20 May | Statewide Pollinator Census ~ Help us Count
Bethany O'Rear, Horticulturist, ACES |
| 17 June | Rain Barrels & Irrigation
Bronson Lubresky, Natural Resources, ACES |
| 15 July | Gifts Your Garden Gives
Linda Jarzniecki, Master Gardener |
| 19 August | Planting & Growing a Smoothie Bar
Mallory Kelley, Horticulturist, ACES & Deb Kelso, MG |
| 16 September | All About Pumpkins
Hayes Jackson, Horticulturist, ACES |
| 21 October | 10 Best Bugs in the Garden
Dr. Meredith Shrader, Entomologist, ACES |
| 18 November | Fall Blooming Camellias
Dr. Charles Mitchell, Retired Auburn Professor |
| 16 December | Water Features in the Landscape
Mary McCroan, Advanced Master Gardener |



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Prattvillage Garden

Dian Owens, Co-Chair



Our team of master gardener volunteers met on Tuesday mornings around 8:30 and worked approximately two hours. Here's some of the work done this quarter at Prattvillage Garden:

- Weeds and thug plant removal, beds cleaned of debris, shrubs fertilized, new path created
- Reduced size of two beds to make room for event chairs in front of chapel
- Thinned overly crowded plants and potted those plants for Oct 24-25 plant sale at Spinners Park
- Trimmed plants away from the wooden picket fence before its removal. Picket fence and gates removed, and black metal fence installed around the perimeters of the garden and side lawn
- Cedar arbor dismantled and repurposed as trellises
- Volunteers conducted garden tours for visitors & directed them to the Vegetable Demonstration Garden next to the library



Oxblood Lily, Schoolhouse Lily, Hurricane Lily,
Chili Lily *Rhodophiala bifida*



Long view with old picket fence gone



New sod



“Table movers” David Gordon and Dian Owens

Photos taken at Prattvillage Garden by Jane McCarthy & Dian Owens.

Lunch and Learn Susan Clapp



Last quarter’s Lunch and Learn was highly successful.

Speakers included Linda Jarzniecki who presented ‘Gifts Your Garden Gives’, Mallory Kelley and Deb Kelso presented ‘Planting & Growing a Smoothie Bar’, and Hayes Jackson provided a talk titled ‘All About Pumpkins’.



Linda Jarzniecki, Master Gardener



Hayes Jackson, Horticulturist, ACES



Deb Kelso, Master Gardener

Photos taken by Susan Clapp



MG Intern Report

Darlene Blumentritt

The 2026 Fall Master Gardeners class has started, and 20 interns are attending class at the Autauga County Extension Office in Autaugaville. Mallory Kelley is leading this great class. The interns are from Autauga, Elmore, Dallas and Montgomery counties. The interns are building friendships and learning from experienced master gardeners every week. Autauga county facilitators are Debra Atwell, Harriot Hobbs and Darlene Blumentritt. Robin Snyder and Pattie Brown are facilitators from Elmore County and Janice Jackson is the facilitator from Montgomery County. Everyone working together has provided an atmosphere which further encourages the interns to get involved and excited to start their volunteer work.

The class is moving quickly, and we are already starting week six. The interns have already learned so much from guest speakers from composting and vermicomposting presented by Paula Seamon and Rose McCauley. The interns came into a class with 50 different plants laying out on several tables. Everyone had a good time trying to identify each plant. Jane McCarthy presented the class with additional information on plant identification and pass-along plants. I don't think there is a plant out there that Jane doesn't recognize and the care that plant needs. She is always willing to share her knowledge with the interns. Rhona Watson has a wealth of experience and success with propagation and shared her knowledge on the subject. The interns had the opportunity to choose a plant and prepare it for propagation and bring it home. Hunter McBrayer spent an afternoon sharing his tips on pruning.

A change in venue allowed the interns the chance to tour the Elmore County Extension Office and gardens. They had their first opportunity to re-pot plants and earn some volunteer hours. Insects are an integral part of gardening. Anthony Yarbrough shared his knowledge of insects, beneficial and problematic and how to initiate IPM.

Of course, all this learning is a lot, and everyone needs a break. The interns enjoy lunch each week. Delicious food is graciously provided by the facilitators, Autauga and Elmore County master gardeners. Every intern has been paired up with a Bud-E who is a certified master gardener. Volunteer Bud-Es are there to help answer questions, support, and assist their intern as needed.

Darlene

Gardening Calendar – October

Kerry Smith, Frances Sledge, Dave Williams, and Ron Shumack

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



Fruits and Nuts

- Planting season for strawberries starts in south Alabama.
- Clean up orchard area.
- Remove broken limbs, old fruit, and debris from orchard floor.

Shrubs

- Plant new trees and shrubs in the landscape
- Water when needed.
- Note varieties of camellias and other landscape plants in bloom.
- Start mulching all shrubs that do not have a mulch.

Lawns

- Perform a soil test to determine if limestone is recommended and apply anytime this fall.
- If winter or spring weeds were a concern this year, apply preemergent herbicides.
- Fertilize fescue lawns at 1 pound slow-release nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- As fall rain returns, monitor for fungal disease in fescue.

Roses

- Continue insect and disease control practices.

- New rose catalogs will be coming in.
- Study closely; add some new varieties to your list.

Annuals and Perennials

- Visit flower shows and gardens.
- List desirable varieties of mums.
- Clean up flower beds immediately after first killing frost. Plant half-hardy annuals, such as snapdragons.

Bulbs

- Plant tulip, hyacinth, daffodil, crocus, Dutch iris, anemone, and ranunculus.
- Watch planting depth. Dig caladiums; clean and store in a warm place.

Miscellaneous

- Renew mulch around shrubs and rose beds.
- Loosen mulches that have packed down.
- Spray with oils before freezing weather to kill scale, mites, etc.
- Remove all dead stems and trash from flower beds.
- Transplant into small pots any cuttings taken earlier.

Vegetable Seeds

- **South:** This is the last fall month to plant the winter garden. Plant carrots, collards, kale, mustard, onion seeds, radishes, spinach, and turnips. Plant Swiss chard in early October.
- **Central and South:** Continue planting winter-hardy crops such as beets, carrots, collards, kale, parsley, and spinach.
- **North:** Plant onion seeds and radishes in early October.

Vegetable Transplants

- **Whole state:** Continue planting winter-hardy transplants.
- Soil test garden soil and apply limestone as recommended anytime this fall.



Gardening Calendar – November

Kerry Smith, Frances Sledge, Dave Williams, and Ron Shumack

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



Fruits and Nuts

- Select sites for plantings.
- Start mulching strawberries, blackberries, and grapes.

Shrubs

- Plant shrubs, trees, and vines.

Lawns

- Perform a soil test to determine if limestone is recommended and apply anytime this fall.
- Fertilize fescue lawns at 1 pound slow-release nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- As fall rain returns, monitor for fungal disease in fescue.

Roses

- Get rose planting underway.
- Use a soil test as a basis for fertilization.
- Look for new varieties.

Annuals and Perennials

- Plant hardy annuals such as larkspur, poppies, pansies, bugloss, candytuft, and ornamental cabbage and kale.
- Get sweet peas into the ground.

Bulbs

- Continue spring bulb planting.
- Put lilies of the valley in a shady place.

Miscellaneous

- Plant screen plantings for privacy on the patio.

Vegetables

- Use cold frames for tender, cool-season vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Swiss chard, lettuce, mustard, onions, radishes, and turnips.



Gardening Calendar – December

Kerry Smith, Frances Sledge, Dave Williams, and Ron Shumack

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



Fruits and Nuts

- Plant young pecans and other deciduous fruit trees and grapes.
- Select budwood.
- Start dormant pruning of established fruits.
- Protect all young trees from rabbit damage by placing wire around the base of the tree.
- Put on dormant oil sprays for scale.

Shrubs

- Planting is still the main activity but delay in case of freezing weather.
- Get your soil tested and be prepared for spring gardening.

Lawns

- Perform a soil test to determine if limestone is recommended and apply it any time this month.
- Dig out wild garlic, chickweed, *Poa annua*, dandelion, and other winter weeds.

Roses

- Add plants to rose garden.
- Mulch all plantings.

Annuals and Perennials

- Plant hardy annual seeds without delay. Have you thought about violas?

Bulbs

- Continue spring bulb planting.

Miscellaneous

- Shrubs, trees, and indoor plants make excellent gifts.



Upcoming Birthdays

OCTOBER

James Hussey 10/03

Dawn Whitehead 10/14

Linda McCullough 10/20

Pam Hattemer 10/21

Randy Henderson 10/25



NOVEMBER

Glenda Armstrong 11/01

Valera Brown 11/08

Dale Huff 11/10

Katherine Chapman 11/10

Darrue Sharpe 11/10

Deborah Boutelier 11/14

Terri MacLaren 11/15

Jane McCarthy 11/17

Sondra Henley 11/19

June Booth 11/21

Shannon Mayes 11/27

DECEMBER

Linda Blackwell 12/01

Soyna Moore 12/03

Jackie Raines 12/03

Sheila Pearson 12/07

Paula Seamon 12/12

Jonna Turberville 12/16

Debra Atwell 12/20

Catherine Brooks 12/22

Cheri Cook 12/25

Mallory Kelley 12/30



Please let us know if we missed your birthday



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 December 31st
Please submit articles, no later than December 15

Prattville Garden
139 1st Street, Prattville, AL 36067

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>



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