Jefferson County Master Gardeners Association, Inc.

Members Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2026 / Auditorium / Birmingham Botanical Gardens / 2612 Lane Park Road, Birmingham, AL 35223

The Meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by President Katherine Ennis

- The President announced that the speaker would be the first item on the agenda.

The Educational Program began at 10:10 AM

Amy Weis introduced Samantha Hill and Shana Heartsill of "The Plant Ladies". They are professional horticulturist and landscape designers, with Samantha holding degrees in horticultural science. Shana has 38 years of experience in the landscaping business here in Alabama. Together, they offer practical knowledge of the area and horticultural science. They follow the practices of Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott of Washington State University. Their presentation today was "Landscaping with Native Plants".

Their methodology is:

- Remove invasive plants that rob native plants of light, water, and growing space. To ensure the best removal method for woody plants, they follow the cut-stump herbicide treatment model. This entails cutting the plant to the ground and applying herbicide to the cambium *within one minute of making the cut*. This prevents resprouting and protects nearby natives and other desired vegetation. Vines, grasses, and seedlings require other methods such as hand removal followed by treating the root connection with herbicide.
- Minimizing soil disturbance is important. Preserving the soil is important because bare soil can bring weed seeds to the surface, disturb beneficial organisms, and protect nearby tree roots.
- To address both soil compaction and erosion, they use arborists' wood chips, which are a combination of bark, chips, wood, and leaves. This is not a soil amendment, but a layer put on top of the soil. This application needs to be added thick enough to suppress weed germination. The amount placed will decompose by half in about six months if adequate water is applied. After this time, and when temperatures are cooler, the new trees and shrubs are planted.
- Designing a plan that is low maintenance with appropriate plants for the site, aiming for greater biodiversity. It is not just about how the area will look after the project is finished, but providing wildlife with food, shelter, and nesting habitat.

The Educational portion of the meeting was concluded at 11:06 am and was immediately followed by the Business Meeting.

- A motion to accept the minutes of the August 11, 2026 meeting was made by Joann Turner and seconded by Jennye McCreary.

First Order of Business - Announcements - President - Katherine Ennis

- The JCMGA Reunion Reception will be next Tuesday, September 15th. Today is the last day for registration. This will be held in the Ireland Room,
- Blount County is holding its one-day seminar on October 1st. Registration closes September 18th. The cost is $45.00.
- The Intern Graduation is scheduled for November 10th. This will be in place of our regular meeting. We are working on getting it catered.
- We will have a Board of Directors Meeting immediately following this meeting. All conference committee chairmen are asked to attend,
- Misha has organized a list of ideas for the silent auction at the conference. The list is in the back.
- If you have something or ideas for the swag bags, please let leadership know.

Second Order of Business - Announcements for Bethany O'Rear.

- The pollinator census has a preliminary count of 41,000 compared to 9,000+ in 2025, but you have until September 14 to turn in your count.
- Just a reminder: to be/remain active, you have to have recorded 25 volunteer hours, must accrue 10 education hours, and must pay your dues by December 31st of each year. If you do not meet all of those requirements, you will be inactive. However, if you are still interested in part of the association, but are not accruing volunteer hours anymore, there is an alum status. If you do not keep your membership for 3 years, then you have to completely recertify to get back in the program.
- Registration for the '27 class opens November 1 until December 12. There are quite a large number of people who have emailed to be put on the list before it goes public.
- There is an option called Garden U online, which gives you just the knowledge without the required volunteer hours. If someone goes through this online course and soon after decides they want to become a master gardener, there is a path. But the person will have to do the in-person labs, which are only offered during the regular class. This means the participant will have to wait until the class comes around the following year.

Third Order of Business - Conference & Committee Reports

- Community Service - Volunteers are needed for the Fiesta Birmingham, October 26th. Email Misha for details.
- Helpline - Help is needed to cover the shifts for the Help Line. Please contact Susan McNamara if you can be of assistance, or if you want to learn how to work the Help Line.
- Hospitality - Volunteers are still needed for this committee. Make contact with Janie

- Katherine wanted to remind everyone that we are having a vote next month for our '27 officers. The nominees are:
    - President - Katherine Ennis
    - Vice President - Beth Elliott
    - Treasurer - Nelda Creel
    - Associate - Sandy McCarthy
    - Secretary - Jennye McCreary
    - At Large Director - Beverly Vonder Pool
    - At Large Director - Karen Kaetz

The educational portion concluded at 11:30 am, with door prizes to follow.

ATTEST BY:

Jennye McCreary

Jennye McCreary, Secretary

Katherine E. Ennis

Katherine Ennis, President