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AMGA Website
alabamamga.org

ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS
ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

AMGA PRESIDENT

Deborah Boutelier



As we leave spring behind and quickly move into summer, I hope everyone is having a beautiful and productive growing season thus far. We definitely have had abundant rainfall this season and everything is green and lush – including the weeds! I believe they are winning at the moment!!!

We recently had our Alabama Master Gardeners Association (AMGA) Board of Directors meeting and there are a number of exciting things coming. A special ad hoc Funding Committee brought a proposal to the Board that was approved with several items to benefit our local associations and our state membership. There is an article in this issue that describes the new benefits. It is my hope that these new benefits will spur other ideas or methods on how your state association can better partner with the local associations. Please share any ideas you may have with any Board of Directors member. We are here to help!

Shelby County is hosting the 2025 AMGA Fall Seminar on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, in Columbiana. The theme this year is *All About Pollinators*. If you haven't yet registered, there is a registration form in this edition of *Pathways*. This seminar has limited seating so register early.

Over the next two years, I would love to visit every local association to see some of the wonderful activities you are accomplishing in your community. If you have a particular time when this would be convenient or if you have an event you would like me to attend, please let me know. I want to hear from you! My email address is boutelierd@gmail.com

Always remember, time began in a garden.
Until next time,

Debbie

"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer."
— F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

AMGA VICE PRESIDENT

Julie Conrey

> "May flowers always line your path and sunshine light your day. May songbirds serenade you every step along the way." –
>
> Old Irish Blessing –

Happy summer! The Alabama Master Gardeners Association (AMGA) continues to move forward to benefit our members and their associations.

AMGA now has a 'library' of conference manuals. The manuals are from the 2020 event that was cancelled due to Covid, the 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 AMGA conferences. If your association would like information about hosting an upcoming conference, these manuals provide plenty of resources. Thanks to 2025 AMGA Conference Chair Sondra Henley and a few of her committee members. They have graciously volunteered for phone calls and zoom meetings to answer questions associations may have about hosting a conference. Please reach out to me for more information.

Is your association interested in hosting an upcoming state conference? These events come in all different shapes and sizes depending upon the hosting group. There is no 'one size that fits all' when it comes to planning a state conference. With at least two years' lead time, planning a unique event that features your area of the state and the theme your group selects can be a great experience for your members. Introducing EMG volunteers to areas of the state with which they are unfamiliar is an added benefit of hosting a conference.

Please know my door is always open and please reach out to me at julieconrey@gmail.com with any questions or concerns you may have. We are here to help!



ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
August 5, 2025
@ 10:00-12:00
Petals From the Past
Jemison, AL
All are welcome to attend

AMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
September 2, 2025
@ 10:00 – 12:00
Petals From the Past
Jemison, AL
All are welcome to attend

AMGA FALL SEMINAR
September 16, 2025
First Baptist Church
Columbiana, AL
(See page 7)

BLOUNT COUNTY FALL CONFERENCE
October 2, 2025
Blount County Multipurpose Center
Cleveland, AL
(See page 8)

AMGA FUNDING COMMITTEE

Julie Conrey, Chair

In 2024 The Alabama Master Gardeners Association (AMGA) established an ad hoc Funding Committee with a goal of allocating funds from AMGA resources to better assist local Extension Master Gardener Volunteers and their associations.

The Funding Committee recommended the following expenditures which were approved by the AMGA Board of Directors at its June 3 meeting;

- Increase Project Funding from $10,000 to $16,000 per year and reduce the amount of time between association requests from three to two years.
- Give away an early bird conference registration fee at the AMGA Fall Seminar in Columbiana on September 16. AMGA will also give away an early bird conference registration fee at the 2026 State Conference in Huntsville for the 2027 conference hosted by Jefferson County MGA. Awardees must be present to win, and the registration fees are non-transferable.
- AMGA will give a native plant to each attendee at the 2026 State Conference in Huntsville and will also provide an opportunity for one (1) CEU upon receipt of the native plant.

AMGA Funding Committee members are Julie Conrey (Mobile), Chair, Debbie Boutelier (Autauga), Roger Clarke (Jefferson) Deb Sanden (Cherokee) and Pat Parmelee (DeKalb).



AMGA MEMBERSHIP

Rose McCauley, Chair

Kerry Smith and I have been working diligently with our programmer, Chris, on changes to make the Service Report and Dues Tracker more compatible. We are getting there but it is a slow process. In our most recent discussion, we have decided to archive members who have not entered hours or paid dues in over thirty-six months. These members are not being deleted, they are just being hidden so they will not appear on any downloads or reports. They can be reactivated easily if someone decides to rejoin Master Gardeners.

Just a reminder, members must report a minimum of 25 service hours, at least 10 CEUs, sign the current Memorandum of Understanding and pay both local and state dues to earn the status of Certified Active in 2026.



AMGA NEWSLETTER

Sheila Bolen, Editor

Thank You! to all reporters, *Pathways* and *Happenings*, for tolerating my "nagging" emails for articles. Having been a reporter for many years I always gave a loud sigh (groan) when I received them from Patricia and Terri. It doesn't seem like a big deal to write an article until you have to actually sit down and do it. Then that dreaded word count and format – ugh. So, many thanks for your articles. I love reading about what your association has done, is doing, and plans to do. If your association has a webpage or Facebook page, consider adding a link to your article.

A word about pictures. If you have trouble attaching a picture to your article it is acceptable to send it in a separate email but please let me know if a picture is separate. Please try not to text them to me. If you must take a picture of a picture, PLEASE stand directly over and look down at the photo to take the picture. Pictures of pictures taken standing in front of the photo are difficult to get clear and sharp enough to use in the newsletter.

If you have any questions or suggestions, or if you want to submit a garden pathway picture for the front page of *Pathways* or *Happenings* contact me at mgbolshe13@gmail.com.

AMGA NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Amy Weis, Chair

Greetings! With all the updates to Alabama Master Gardeners Association's (AMGA) Administrative Documents happening this year, it has never been more straightforward to serve! Your current AMGA Board and Committees have worked hard to reduce ambiguity, conflicts, and confusion, especially where the Nominating Committee is concerned! If you have ever thought about serving at the state level, now is the time! We would love to hear from you! We are looking to fill two At-Large positions, and one Nominating Committee position. All three will start upon election at the State Conference in 2026. Please reach out to either myself, Amy Weis (Jefferson), amym426@gmail.com; Don Richerson (Baldwin), drdon50@bellsouth.net; or Janell Diggs (Capital City) ajdiggst23@yahoo.com with your questions and/or expressions of interest. You can find us at the next Advisory Council Meeting on August 5, 10AM at Petals From the Past. We look forward to hearing from you and putting our slate together for 2026!

AMGA PROJECT FUNDING

Kate Vogel, Chair

The purpose of the Project Funding Committee is to develop and administer a program that annually provides financial assistance to Alabama Master Gardeners Associations (AMGA), up to $2,000.00, for outstanding Master Gardener projects throughout the State of Alabama. While the individual association funds remain the same, AMGA has increased the total to be awarded yearly from the current $10,000.00 to $16,000.00 per year and has also changed the waiting period between awards from every three years to every two years.

At the 2025 AMGA Conference Cherokee County was awarded funds to double the footprint of the 21st Century Program serving "at-risk" students at Cherokee Middle School and Chilton Conty received funds for tools to continue maintenance on the Chilton County MGA Demonstration Garden. The 2024 Project Funding recipients were Wiregrass, Limestone, Master Gardeners of North Alabama, Lawrence, Blount and Calhoun.

If your association did not receive a grant in 2025, please consider submitting a request for funding by January 31, 2026, for next year. The funds are there - don't leave the money on the table. Put on your thinking caps and apply. The Project Funding Application and all criteria can be found at https://alabamamga.org/amga-project-funding-program/

AMGA SPEAKER'S BUREAU

Susan K. Hagen, Chair

As reported in the Spring issue of *Pathways*, The Alabama Master Gardeners Association Speaker's Bureau is actively investigating an expansion of topics on two "fronts" one designed to assist local association officers in conducting meetings and in writing internal communications, and the other designed to assist Master Gardeners in creating and delivering effective presentations. By the fall, we expect the Speaker's list to include options on simplified parliamentary procedure, agenda building, and crafting efficient emails. Currently a small group representing the Bureau, the Advanced Certification Committee, and Regional Agents is meeting virtually with Kerry Smith to develop a program to mentor-or coach- any Extension Master Gardener speaker in delivering a professional program. Of course, the Bureau continues to welcome speakers offering programs serving our original purpose of supporting local associations to with program options and providing public outreach. See https://alabamamga.org/amga-speakers-bureau-2/ for more information.

AMGA TRERASURER

Susan Steele

Please join me in thanking the outgoing Treasurer, Cecilia Adams (Morgan). Cecilia's attention to detail has ensured your Alabama Master Gardeners Association (AMGA) financial books, audits and budgets are in excellent condition as I begin my term.

I am delighted to welcome Wanda Smith (Tuscaloosa) as our AGMA Assistant Treasurer. Wanda, thank you for your willingness to serve.

As a reminder, any reimbursement request should be accompanied by an Expense Reimbursement form. To locate the form, access your Alabama Master Gardeners website at https://alabamamga.org/amga-corporate-information/amga-forms/ and scroll down to Expense Reimbursement Form.

I look forward to working with each of you and can be reached as follows:

AMGA
c/o Susan Steele, Treasurer
P.O. Box 3031
Decatur, AL 35602
Phone: 678-446-2692 Email: ssteele1954@yahoo.com

2026 CONFERENCE

Jennifer Johnson (MGNA), Soozi Pline (Limestone), Doty Henry (Morgan)

The 2026 Alabama Master Gardeners Association (AMGA) State conference, Gardening to the Moon and Back, will be held in The Rocket City, Huntsville, Alabama, May 6-8, 2026. The committee continues to work hard to fine tune all the details for several exciting and informative workshops and speakers so save these dates!

Hosted by the Extension Master Gardener Associations of Limestone, Madison and Morgan counties, the conference will have many pre-conference activities and tour opportunities available. Tours available include the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology, and the award-winning Huntsville Botanical Garden. In addition, both morning and afternoon garden-related workshops will be held in Murray Hall at the Huntsville Botanical Garden.

The 2026 conference objective is to use these tours, workshops and speakers to help garner new ideas to enhance outreach activities throughout the state. Through this we hope to achieve our goal of creating biodiversity through creative gardening concepts.

The conference will include inspiring speakers and informative topics including feature keynote speakers, Doug Tallamy and Harry Cotton.

- Doug Tallamy, nationally known University of Delaware professor of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology, NY Times best-selling author and co-founder of Homegrown National Park will present "Homegrown National Park".
- Harry Cotton, Director of the Alabama Nurserymen's Association, former COO and chief horticulturalist at the Huntsville Botanical Garden & co-author of *Easy Gardens for the South* will present "What is New in 2026: Must haves for Your Garden".

Other Speakers include: Jesse Akozbek, creator and hike lead for Feral Foraging; Darryl Patton, The Southern Herbalist; Edward Pate, Grow More, Give More: Galactic Benefits for School Gardens; Patrick Thompson, Curator of Oaks and Deciduous Azaleas at Davis Arboretum and Cindy Upton, NASA: Gardening in Space.

Registration to join us to soar to new heights at the 2026 AMGA State Conference - Gardening to the Moon and Back - opens January 15, 2026, so save this important date!



Celebrating Extension Master Gardeners!

Have you seen our new EMG Volunteer Program mission statement? Check it out from your service report, *Strategic Plan*. The strategic planning work group did a great job paring down the previous lengthy version to speak to the heart of our program – educating others.

Thinking about how each of us might fulfill the program's mission, what's your favorite topic to share with others? We each have our own passion for horticulture. Just one of my favorite topics is BUGS; insects to be precise. And to complete the cycle, I like to brag on several plants that host these fascinating animals.



One of my favorite summer/early fall plants is mountain mint. Its tiny flowers attract a variety of insects. My picture shows one of many scoliid wasp species on mountain mint. Do you know this bug? The female of these parasitoid wasps flies low to the ground "listening" for grubs, or beetle larvae. When detected, she digs into the soil, finds the grub, stings it into paralysis, and lays an egg on it. After the scoliid wasp larva hatches, it feeds inside the paralyzed grub.

If you're a bug watcher too, consider joining the *Great Southeast Pollinator Census* **August 22 & 23**. This citizen science project is from the University of Georgia and joined by many other organizations, including Alabama Extension. Join Alabama for the Great Southeast Pollinator Census - ACES Participate as many times as you'd like on these dates!

There's no need to know each insect by name. You'll record them by groups – Bumble bees – Carpenter bees – Honeybees – Small bees – Wasps – Flies – Butterflies/Moths – Other Insects. Choose one plant in your yard that shows insect activity, preferably LOTS of activity. Observe this plant for 15 minutes and count the number of insect visits per each insect category. Then, make your count count by clicking the "Count" link, https://gsepc.org/count/ , to record your August observations. Use the Insect Counting & ID Guide, GSePC-Counting-Guide.pdf to learn some common southeastern pollinators. They created a Counting sheet/log too, Counting-Sheet.pdf .

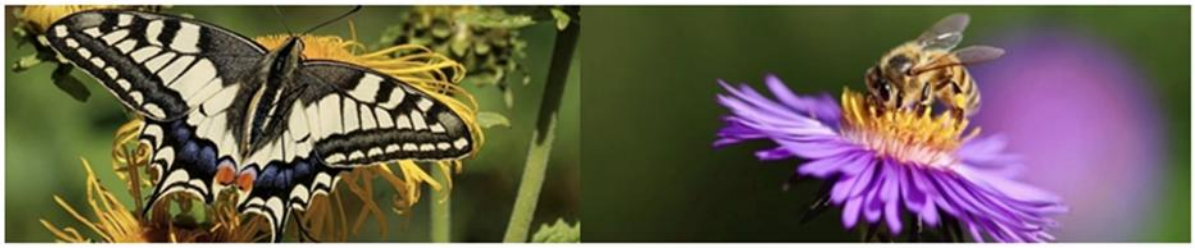
Local Volunteer Hours Managers – Please add "Pollinator Census" for a location under "Other Extension Activities" in your county. Thank you for your help!

This activity is a terrific illustration of our mission in action. Please recruit participants. It would be amazing if every local MGA participated.

Thank you for all that you do to share and teach others about the joys of gardening 😊

Kerry

All About Pollinators



Alabama Extension Master Gardener 2025 Fall Seminar

September 16, 2025

First Baptist Church of Columbiana

208 N Main Street, Columbiana, AL 35051

Seed Swap: Bring packaged, labeled seeds.

8:30-9:00	Registration & Seed Swap Dropoff
9:00-9:15	Welcome
9:15-10:15	Benefits of Pollinators in Our Gardens: *Debbie Boutelier*
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:30	Alabama Native Plants for Pollinators: *Jason Powell*
11:30-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:30	Beneficial Nighttime Pollinators: *Allyson Shabel*
1:30-1:45	Break
1:45-2:45	Pollinator Friendly Pest Control: *Dani Carroll*

Questions: Contact Elizabeth York 205-616-7648 e.york24@yahoo.com

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Registration form, Please print. **Registration Deadline: September 2** (Max 200 participants)

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

Phone_____**Email**_____

Fee: $40

Lunch included, select below:

___Chicken Salad Croissant

___ Pasta Salad (Vegetarian)

Make check payable to SCMGA

Mail check and registration form to:

Sue Owen

350 Howard Hill Dr

Wilsonville, AL 35186-7250

Gardening for Birds, Bees, Butterflies, and Bugs

October 2, 2025

Blount County Master Gardeners' Fall Conference

4 CEUs






Blount County Multipurpose Center
6700 County Road 1. Cleveland, AL 35049

8:30 a.m. Registration
9:00 a.m. Jim Jacobi, ACES: Backyard Bugs: They're Coming
10:00 a.m. Allyson Shabel, ACES: How Gardeners Can Help Honey Bees

11:00 a.m. Lunch and shopping with Jason

12:30 p.m. Scot Duncan, Executive Director AL Audubon: How Gardeners Can Help Birds and Biodiversity
1:30 p.m. Paulette Ogard, Author and Butterfly Researcher: Creating a Haven for Butterflies: Your Yard and Beyond

For information, contact Sherilyn Osborne, 205-382-0791 (leave a message) or sherilynosborne@bellsouth.net

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Registration form, please print

Name:_____

Address:_____
City / State / Zip:_____

Email / Phone #:_____

Vegetarian requirement:_____

Make $40 registration fee check payable to Blount County Master Gardener Association. Mail to Sherilyn Osborne, P.O. Box 13, Locust Fork, Alabama, 35097

America's Patriotic Victory Gardens

During both World Wars, America's agricultural production became a powerful military tool.



Laura Schumm

During World War 1, a severe food crisis emerged in Europe as agricultural workers were recruited into military service and farms were transformed into battlefields. As a result, the burden of feeding millions of starving people fell to the United States.

In March of 1917—just weeks before the United States entered the war—Charles Lathrop Pack organized the National War Garden Commission to encourage Americans to contribute to the war effort by planting, fertilizing, harvesting and storing their own fruits and vegetables so that more food could be exported to our allies. Citizens were urged to utilize all idle land that was not already engaged in agricultural production—including school and company grounds, parks, backyards or any available vacant lots.

Promoted through propaganda posters advocating that civilians "Sow the seeds of victory" by planting their own vegetables, the war garden movement (as it was originally known) was spread by word of mouth through numerous women's clubs, civic associations and chambers of commerce, which actively encouraged participation in the campaign. Amateur gardeners were provided with instruction pamphlets on how, when and where to sow, and were offered suggestions as to the best crops to plant, along with tips on preventing disease and insect infestations.

The endeavor was so well received that the government turned its attention to distributing canning and drying manuals to help people preserve their surplus crops. In addition to the appeal to men and women, the federal Bureau of Education initiated a U.S. School Garden Army (USSGA) to mobilize children to enlist as "soldiers of the soil." As a result of these combined efforts, 3 million new garden plots were planted in 1917 and more than 5.2 million were cultivated in 1918, which generated an estimated 1.45 million quarts of canned fruits and vegetables.

By the end of World War I, the campaign promoting home gardens—which by then were referred to as "victory gardens"—had dropped off, but many people continued to maintain them.

Shortly after the United States was drawn into the Second World War, victory gardens began to re-emerge. Once again, commercial crops were diverted to the military overseas while transportation was redirected towards moving troops and munitions instead of food. With the introduction of food rationing in the United States in the spring of 1942, Americans had an even greater incentive to grow their own fruits and vegetables in whichever locations they could find: small flower boxes, apartment rooftops, backyards or deserted lots of any size. Amid protests from the Department of Agriculture, Eleanor Roosevelt even planted a victory garden on the White House lawn.

Some of the most popular produce grown included beans, beets, cabbage, carrots, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, peas, tomatoes, turnips, squash and Swiss chard. Through the distribution of several million government-sponsored pamphlets, fledgling farmers were advised to maximize their garden's productivity by practicing succession planting and were encouraged to record the germination rates of seeds, along with any diseases or insects they may have encountered, in order to minimize waste and improve their garden's output the following year.

Throughout both world wars, the Victory Garden campaign served as a successful means of boosting morale, expressing patriotism, safeguarding against food shortages on the home front and easing the burden on the commercial farmers working arduously to feed troops and civilians overseas. In 1942, roughly 15 million families planted victory gardens; by 1944, an estimated 20 million victory gardens produced roughly 8 million tons of food—which was the equivalent of more than 40 percent of all the fresh fruits and vegetables consumed in the United States.

America's Patriotic Victory Gardens | HISTORY

I know you're asking yourself "How does this relate to the world we live in now, to us as Alabama Master Gardeners?" Food insecurity has been around for millennia and, even in the fast-paced world we live in today, too many go to bed hungry – hunger is not biased. The United States came to the aid of the world in 1917 by growing food for those in need overseas – the original Grow More, Give More. Today we do our part with community gardens, donating to food banks, to senior citizens who can't get out and garden but still live on their own, to whoever is in need of food. We, as Alabama Master Gardeners, are growing our own Victory Gardens! Job Well Done! to all the Local MGAs, Job Well Done! Editor

Pathways
Summer
2025



ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

alabamamga.org

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Got Questions?

?

We've Got Answers

alabamamga.org



NEXT ARTICLE FOR PATHWAYS DUE SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

2025 - 2027 AMGA BOD OFFICERS

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Kim Johnson, Jackson
Angela Whorton, Etowah
Term 2025 – 2028
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2026 MGNA/LIMESTONE/MORGAN MGAs
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2027 JEFFERSON COUNTY MGA
Katherine Ennis

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