

AUTAUGA COUNTY MGA

Nancy Waggoner

The Autauga County Master Gardeners Association (ACMGA) annual plant sale on April 26 was a great success. Thanks to signs posted throughout the community, word of mouth, and splendid weather, attendees were lined up long before the official sale start time. A variety of flowering plants, vegetables, herbs, shrubs and trees, donated by members, were available. A near sell-out netted an excellent financial return, providing our association with operating funds for the coming year. The sale is a great opportunity for networking as well, and it is always hoped that customers are future Master Gardeners!

Our association continues to reach out to the community with the ongoing Lunch and Learn program, led by EMG Jackie Raines and held monthly in a local church with guest speakers who present on various topics. So far this year, the program topics were Seed Starting for Your Summer Vegetables, Succession Planting, Hydrangeas in the Southern Garden, African Violets and Planting for Butterflies.

We are proud to announce that Debbie Boutelier, ACMGA member and AMGA president, was awarded the Madalene Hill Award for Excellence in Herbal Education by the Herb Society of America for 2025. Debbie, an Herbalist, earned her Advanced Master Gardener Certification in herbs. She chairs the Green Bridges Committee for the Herb Society and is well known for teaching statewide and nationally. Congratulations, Debbie!

Autauga County MGA President, Rose McCauley, continues to encourage participation in the Home-Grown National Park Project; keeping a backyard native landscape with wildlife and no invasives.



Autauga County MGs (L) (F-B) Sondra Henley, Susan Clapp, (R) (F-B) Rose McCauley, Ange Trimble, prepare for plant sale. Photographer unknown..

BALDWIN COUNTY MGA

Pat Greer

On Tuesday nights in March, Baldwin County Master Gardeners (BCMGA) held their annual education sessions. The topics included "How to Prepare Your Garden for Success," "How to Multiply your Plants through Propagation," "Nature Based Solutions in the Home Landscape" and "The Importance of Using Native Plants in Your Landscape". Our new Outreach Leader, Sara Seemes, is doing an excellent job with our public education programs.

In April, our Spring Plant Sale was a huge success for BCMGA. To Dolores Hammock and her able assistant, Karon Pennington, a job well done.

April 26 was the Delta Woods and Water Festival hosted by the Audubon Society. One of the events was a Sandpiper 5K run in which several of our MGs participated.

In May, we assisted the Loxley Library in hosting a Plant Swap. MG Sarah Duncan helped with the seed swap, giving out bulbs and other plants.

In June we're hosting our fun days with the Baldwin County children. The World of Frogs will be the focus on learning. We'll host two sessions, one in Bay Minette on June 17 and the second in Foley on June 24. Fran Posey-Eversole is chair for these events and has lots of helpers. Topics being presented include How Far a Frog Can Jump, The Diet of Frogs, The Sound of Frogs, The Life of Frogs and much more. Ribbit.



BCMG members at plant sale. L-R: Loree Hadley, Beth Robinson, Cassandra Rabren, Don Richerson. Photographer unknown.

BLOUNT COUNTY MGA

Renee Campbell

Blount County Master Gardeners Association (BCMGA) have had several educational meetings and a successful plant sale. We learned about hostas and the elegance they can bring to a shade garden. They are low-maintenance and even better that they're perennials. Hostas are grown for their foliage, not their flowers, and come in many shades of green. Some are tiny; some are absolutely huge. Hostas can be combined in your shade garden with astilbes, bleeding hearts and ferns, along with many other shade-loving perennials. Consider using hostas as a groundcover. Have fun planting these amazing foliage plants in your shade garden.

BCMGA held our annual plant sale on April 19. We had a great turnout and enjoyed sharing our plants and knowledge with all those who came out to support us.

Our May meeting was a lunch meeting with Susan Hagen giving a presentation on Arts and Crafts in the Garden. The presentation showed how arts and crafts are used in the garden. We learned they refer to the design style and natural materials used in the landscape and that these gardens tend to be at a smaller, more intimate scale.

BCMGA worked in our community garden in May. We're looking forward to sharing our bounty with the community. We are now busy preparing for the Blount County Fair in September and looking forward to a great summer.



Bethany O'Rear (R) sharing with a shopper at plant sale. Photographer unknown

CALHOUN COUNTY MGA

Teri Gilbert

Calhoun County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) have been busy tending to our gardens. This is why we became Master Gardeners after all! Fortunately, we've had plenty of rain which has minimized the need for watering. However, the excess rain has helped the weeds greatly!

CCMGA members assisted with Earth Day at our Cane Creek home grounds in April. Area fourth graders learned many useful outdoor skills during the annual two-day event.

Our first Lunch and Learn Program of the year was April 30. Coco Huang spoke to us about Popular Easy-Growing Asian Flowers and Vegetable Gardening. Lunch and Learn programs are free and open to the public. Bring your lunch and join us the fourth Wednesday of each month now through September at Cane Creek Gardens, 77 Justice Avenue, Anniston.

CCMGA Interns finished their training in early May and were treated to a field trip to the Chilton Research Center and then over to Petals From the Past. CCMGs Ruth Sarro, Mary Rose, and Susan Waldron facilitated this year's MGA training class.

During our plant sale on May 10 at the Cane Creek Greenhouse, CCMGA Tom Gilbert held a free tool sharpening and repair clinic. Rusty, dull gardening tools went home with renewed life. Tom gave CCMGA members another opportunity to get their tools sharpened during our monthly meeting in May.

CCMGAs will participate in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census August 22 & 23. More information is at https://gsepc.org.



ACES Agent Jacob Turner (C) with CCMGA newest members Guy Dave Rose (L) and Tobias Bauer (R). Photographer unknown.

CAPITAL CITY MGA

Mary Eleanor Hines

Capital City Master Gardeners Association have been full of learning opportunities this Spring. We enjoyed a Rooftop Garden Field cooking class at Auburn in April that was well attended. In May, a Croissants and Containers workshop was held at a local church. A hydrangea propagating program will be held at Petals from the Past in June, and in July there will be a workshop on gourds with a theme "Christmas in July." This Spring we presented a class on Raised Bed Gardening at a local church as well as a class on Raising and Caring for Chickens for the Maxwell Officers Wives Club.

Our projects remain active with required maintenance to keep gardens well groomed and beautiful for the community to enjoy. Blount Cultural Park, EAT (Educate, Act, Transform) South, Lilly's Garden, Montgomery Botanical Gardens and Rose Morris House Garden have all been worked on by dedicated volunteers.

Our 2025 plant sale, which was held mid-April, was once again a huge success after months of organizing by the membership and interns. There were over 1,000 plants, including 600 tomato plants. Gross sales were what we hoped for and all plants that didn't sell were sold at Herb Day held locally two weeks later. Sales from that were an added bonus for CCMGA.

We add to our treasury by selling raffle tickets to members for a chance to win an item on our "gift" table. We have many varied and interesting items for raffle at each meeting.



Capital City Plant Sale L-R: Karin Carmichael, Alyana Hawkins. Photographer: Mary Eleanor Hines

CENTRAL ALABAMA MGA

Kelly Lafreniere

Hello all! Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association (CAMGA), in Elmore County, held its annual plant sale on Saturday, May 3. As promised by our WSFA weather meteorologist, it poured buckets that day! We were all very nervous about the turnout and decided to set up our plants and all our vendors in our county extension barn. It was a huge success! We had a wonderful turnout of people, sold most of our plants and decided we would have it in the barn every year! No rain or thunderstorms can stop a true gardener!

We celebrated Mary Ann Hatcher's Retirement from AMGA's Master Gardeners Helpline at our May meeting with delicious food and wonderful speeches. Mary has worked diligently and tirelessly for 17 years managing the helpline, often working more hours than expected of her. She was such an asset to CAMGA's helpline. She will be dearly missed but will continue to train her replacement and will be around as a resource. We wish her well.



Kerry Smith presenting a plaque to Mary Ann Hatcher for her 17 years of managing the AMGA's Master Gardeners Helpline.

CHEROKEE COUNTY MGA

Doug Ford

Cherokee County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) is up and running like all Master Gardeners associations across the great state of Alabama. Our president, Debbie Foley, has the association operating like a fine-tuned machine hitting on all cylinders. CCMGA held a two-pronged annual Spring Sale, one in Centre and one in Leesburg, resulting in one of our best sales yet. All plants were locally grown either in the middle school greenhouse or in the gardens of local MGs. We also offered garden related items made by the gardeners.

We garnered important inspiration visiting the wonderful Huntsville Botanical Garden. What a great place to stroll.

Until the weather becomes our enemy with high temperatures and humidity, the CCMGA will be out in full force around the county working on garden projects in parks, the senior center, and other public places. We are in close partnership with the City of Centre in landscaping our City Park. The transformation of the park is stunning for all who remember what it was before it met the Cherokee County Master Gardeners!

Lastly, we bid fond farewell to Extension's Dr. Brian Brown who is moving across the state to his hometown. Our loss is their gain as Brian will serve his new section of the state with his expertise that we came to rely on. Good luck, Dr. Brown!



Cherokee County Master Gardeners getting ready to work the Spring Sale. Photographer unknown.

CHILTON COUNTY MGA

Lanell Baker

Chilton County Master Gardeners (CCMGA) hit the road running this spring. Our plant sale was fantastic and was one of the best sales we've held thus far. Everyone did a great job of growing, propagating and labeling their plants.

We've been busy redoing our three gardens: the Demonstration Garden, the Recreation Center Garden and the Extension Office beds. Volunteers have weeded, pulled out the fall and winter plants, replanted with summer annuals and perennials, replaced and added fresh mulch and pine straw. With all the rain everything looks good and fresh.

Our Conservation Group has been on two field trips to locate and document the "Owl's Eye Ginger" plant. This is a threatened species found only in Autauga, Chilton and Elmore counties.

We have had some wonderfully informative and interesting learning programs during our regular meetings. We were invited to tour Wright's Nursery and view how they seeded and grew many greenhouses full of beautiful hanging baskets and flats of flowers. We learned how they filled their containers, as well as how they received and shipped out their orders.

May was our annual plant swap meeting. Judy Cobb invited CCMGA and their friends to her home in Rockford, Alabama for our meeting. Judy's home is on a large lake, so fishing was enjoyed by those who chose to fish. After our business session we had our plant swap. We chose a plant or took one from someone else. Much fun was had by all.



Chilton County MGs at Judy Cobb's lake. L-R: Hugh Nichols, Lanell Baker, Diane Clapp, Clem Clapp. Photographer: Audrey Giles.

CULLMAN COUNTY MGA

Ellen Hall

To balance out all the work we were doing for plant sales, Cullman County Master Gardeners chartered a bus for a trip to Gibbs Gardens in Ball Ground, GA on April 9.

Even though we were a little late for the tulips we had hoped to see, we were very impressed by the beauty of the gardens.

Our Spring Plant Sale on the last Friday and Saturday of April was a success, partly due to holding it inside a building at the fairgrounds – the Friday afternoon deluge didn't affect us much at all.

On May 30, we held our Awards Dinner to recognize the milestones reached by our members. We awarded one Bronze Star, one Silver Star, four Gold Badges, and one Platinum Badge. We also enjoyed some great food prepared by our members.

In between rain and thunderstorms, we have held workdays for all the gardens we maintain. Because of all the rain, the weeds have been thriving, along with the plantings. (As of May 31, I have recorded 34.85 inches of rain at my house this year.)

The flowers seem to be responding favorable to the precipitation. The wind, however, is a different story – the June 7 storms left trees down on many areas of our county.

Registration for the 2025 Intern Training Class, hosted by Cullman County, runs through June 30, with classes to begin mid-August.



Cullman County MGs at Gibbs Gardens. Photographer unknown.

EAST CENTRAL ALABAMA MGA

Susan Turner

The Wedowee Elementary School Garden has been a busy location for our group. Once a week for 10 weeks we exposed four classes of kindergarteners and first graders to the benefits of having a garden. Students planted onions, potatoes and edible snow peas. They would check on their plot in the garden, water their crop and talk about changes that occurred since the last visit. Students identified various products made from potatoes that they see in grocery stores. They harvested 29 pounds of potatoes and 10 pounds of peas. Teachers cooked the potatoes for their students to taste. Students picked and tasted the peas; we shared the remaining peas with school staff and teachers.

Eleven of our members attended the AMGA Conference and Annual Business Meeting in Prattville. We enjoyed an informative conference with awesome workshops, speakers, exhibits and shopping! It provided an excellent opportunity to get to know each other outside our local activities.

Our Annual Plant Sale was May 3. Members grew herbs, vegetables, trees, shrubs and flowers to sell. We provided helpful advice to our community on growing a productive garden. This is definitely a team effort, and we are proud of the results.

In May, Mandy Pearson, Program Director for Camp Lee in Anniston, presented a program on the art and science of herbal remedies. Mandy showed us how to make soothing salves harvested from products grown in our area. The community was invited to this educational presentation.



East Central Alabama MGs after workday at school garden. Photographer Barry Morris.

JACKSON COUNTY MGA

Bill Caudill

Did you check out the Strawberry Full Moon?

At our April meeting, Jackson County Master Gardener (JCMGA) Wilma Brockett gave a presentation on butterflies we are raising at the Jackson County Park Butterfly Habitat: Monarch, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Eastern Black Swallowtail and their life cycles. Beds at the habitat will be planted with host plants for these butterflies by JCMGA and the Jackson County Garden Club will plant nectar plants. Volunteers are asked to check the area daily.

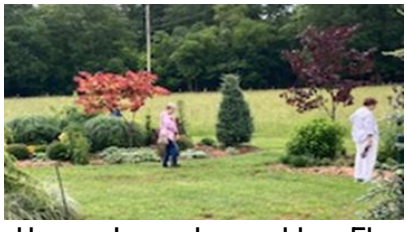
We held another successful plant sale on April 12. Many of our members supplied plants and Bonnie Plants again donated plants for our community garden. Thank you for all your work and dedication.

Our May meeting had Tab Kerwin, Extension MG, presenting "Native Plants for Birds and Butterflies". She covered the benefits of growing native plants and understanding the needs of birds and butterflies. Topics she covered were planning a native garden, selecting plants, preparation and planting, and long-term care and maintenance.

On May 24 we hosted our Destination Gardens Tour. JCMGs Janet Hansen, Connie Goff, Gail Horning and Wilma Brockett's gardens were toured and other gardens at Gorham's Bluff were toured.

Our annual Ice Cream Social will be held July 3 at Gorham Park at 5 PM.

We are told the Jackson County Extension office will be moving July / August. Be sure you check out our Facebook page: alabama_jcmga



Shannon Hansen's garden and her Flamethrower Redbud. Photographer Bill Caudill.

JEFFERSON COUNTY MGA

Mary Hendley

It's been a busy spring and summer for the Jefferson County Master Gardeners Association (JCMGA), with great speakers, including our favorite Extension Agent, Bethany O'Rear, doing a deep dive into the upcoming Great Southeast Pollinator Census. JCMGA is excited to get the community engaged with this important citizen science project and is already making plans to increase participation for next year. Bethany was the recipient of this year's Gary Murray Award for Outstanding Service and Dedication at the AMGA Conference and Business Meeting in Prattville.

We are so excited and look forward to welcoming Master Gardeners from around the state to the 2027 AMGA Conference, to be held in Birmingham. Committees are up and running. It seems like it's a long way off, but if you talk to anyone who has planned an event this big, with so many moving parts, it's critical to get started YESTERDAY! Thanks to the Autauga County Master Gardeners and to the Limestone, Madison & Morgan County Master Gardeners for sharing hindsight and foresight with us! See you there.



JCMGA presented ACES Agent Bethany O'Rear with a cake to celebrate her winning the Gary Murray Award for Outstanding Service and Dedication. L-R: Bethany O'Rear and Hospitality Committee member Janie Howell. Photographer unknown.

LAWRENCE COUNTY MGA

Phyllis LeMay

Lawrence County Master Gardeners (LCMGA) have had a busy spring. To prepare for our plant sales, our association upgraded Wanda Birge's 16x20 greenhouse. We added heat and put down a new floor, making the greenhouse the perfect place to propagate and protect the tender plants we were growing for our upcoming community sales. Now, with the greenhouse in good shape, we look forward to using it for many years to come.

We held three plant sales during April and May and were quite successful, despite torrential rains and high winds, which at times threatened to topple our tents. While we weren't exactly "Singin' in the Rain," Gene Kelly style, we maintained high spirits to the end. Our Master Gardeners were real troopers, soldiering on under adverse conditions.

Our members have also spent considerable time creating a second outdoor classroom at the Lawrence County Signature School (LCSS) in Moulton. The school's Junior Master Gardeners, some of their parents, and the Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF) Outdoor Classroom Team joined forces to install over 700 feet of ADA compliant pathways. In addition, we began a small fruit orchard at the school, developed a songbird sanctuary, established a native plant garden, and added a small greenhouse on campus.

We are excited to welcome Sandra Terry, a graduate of the spring AMGA Intern class. We look forward to her future as a member of the LCMGA.



Developing pathways at LCSS during workday. Front to Back: Avy Elmore AWF, Mattilen McIntyre EMG Intern, Levi Curry, Student, Annie Curry, teacher.

LIMESTONE COUNTY MGA

Bobbi McFadden

When Nancy Hodges and Deb Price, Limestone County Master Gardeners (LCMGA) and administrators of "Gettin' Dirty at the Library", decided to apply for the Alabama Master Gardener Search for Excellence (SFE) Award for Workshops and Presentations, they didn't know what to expect. When "Gettin' Dirty at the Library" won the SFE award they were delighted and submitted the program for the 2025 David Gibby International Master Gardener Search for Excellence Award. Imagine LCMGA's excitement when they were notified "Getting Dirty at the Library" won Second Place!

"Gettin' Dirty at the Library", a monthly educational presentation series, is held the second Tuesday of each month at the Athens Limestone Public Library. Presenters are drawn from local subject matter experts and include staff from botanical gardens, local universities, Master Gardeners and ACES agents. Topics are often recommended by participants then vetted. Live presentations are followed up with a podcast interview with Limestone County Master Gardener, Emily Clem, or another Master Gardener. Free to all, both "Gettin' Dirty at the Library" and "Talkin' Dirty at the Library" are available in partnership with the Athens Limestone Public Library. Podcasts are available via Apple Podcast; an Apple account or iPhone are not required.

The program, started by an extension agent, was adopted by LCMG in 2011 and has successfully grown since. Nancy and Deb believe that meeting all the objectives, instructional methods used, advertising, partnerships, and attendee participation, in addition to having a podcast available on the library website, were contributors to winning these prestigious awards.



Gettin' Dirty at the Library banner at Limestone Public Library. Photographer: Bobbi McFadden

MARSHALL COUNTY MGA

Jo Drueen

Marshall County Master Gardeners (MCMG) have been busy planning and preparing the garden to supply Marshall County CASA with produce during 2025. Individual Master Gardeners (MG) have been busy presenting various topics to organizations seeking information/more knowledge.

Boaz Library requested speakers and MCMG provided information on the following topics:

- Nikki Johnson and Jane Staton: garden prep and distributed MG applications and soil test boxes.
- Elaine Hild: planting
- Nikki Johnson: harvesting

Albertville Library requested a speaker and again MCMG took to the podium.

- Michelle Baily: Presented information on raised garden beds and distributed information on MG activity happening locally/nearby counties.

Colony Garden Club requested a speaker for two of their meetings.

- Elaine Hild: Presented Herbs for Bees
- Elaine Hild: Presented Trees for Yards

Blount County Master Gardeners needed a speaker.

- Elaine Hild: Presented Herbs

The Garden Club Convention held in Huntsville

- Elaine Hild assisted the State Park Naturalist during the Wildflower Hike.

Marshall County RSVP for Veterans requested mentorship for bucket gardening.

- Elaine Hild, Michelle Baily, and Jane Staton are working with the Veterans and guiding them to successfully grow and harvest produce using 5-gallon buckets in a program called Vet4Vets.

Many thanks to all the MCMGs who are out there sharing their knowledge.

MASTER GARDENERS of WALKER COUNTY

Sandra Courington

It's not over until the Master Gardeners hang up their hats – and that won't be anytime soon!

At the beginning of 2024, the Master Gardeners of Walker County (MGWC) were at a crossroads. Membership was low, officers were discouraged, and volunteer projects lacked the hands to complete them. What was once a thriving group seemed on the verge of fading away.

Then came a spark of hope: a new group of enthusiastic Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Interns, many supported by a CAWACO grant. Excited to join forces with existing members, they dove into projects and quickly embraced the EMG mission.

By Fall 2024, MGWC began actively recruiting for the Spring 2025 class at local festivals and plant swaps. Our association awarded five scholarships, helping welcome 14 new interns.

We connected with passionate local gardeners, some of whom are now enrolled in the Fall 2025 class.

Thanks to this renewed momentum, MGWC has more than tripled its membership in 2025. We've hosted a successful spring plant sale, launched a new website, and partnered with the Alabama Power Service Organization, Miller Chapter, to create and maintain a therapeutic garden for residents at Cordova Health and Rehabilitation.

We're now excited to lead the development of a bird and pollinator garden near the Walker County Extension Office, which will serve as a hub for community education beginning in 2026.

MGWC is back—and growing strong!



MGWC plant sale. Photographer unknown.

MOBILE COUNTY MGA

Cindy Findlay

Summer is here, along with the heat and humidity down here on the Gulf Coast! We must embrace it and work our gardens in the mornings. Mobile County Master Gardeners (MCMGA) have several community gardens under our care: our Demonstration Garden at Jon Archer, which we built, planted, monitor and harvest daily; seven raised beds at Wilmer Hall for Children; gardens at Taylor Park, and a vegetable garden at Central Presbyterian. MCMG's are keeping very busy.

The Jon Archer building (Mobile County Auburn Extension offices) has been closed for roof work since the last week of March! WE ARE HOME!!!! We were able to move back at the end of June. Much happiness and activities abound!

Our Intern class for the fall Intern Program has started being vetted and interviewed. This is the summer activity we love due to our commitment to mentor and assist the Interns for success. We've had our Mentor Committee meeting and our Intern Brunch is being planned.

A note on our Spring Festival. Master Gardeners are nothing if not adaptable! The location was changed to the Mobile Botanical Gardens as they were kind enough to let us use space on their grounds! Our speakers were informative, and it was a successful festival. MCMGA invites you to the 2026 Spring Festival. Fun will be had!



Spring Festival 2025, shoppers by trailers of $3 vegetables for sale. Photographer Cindy Findlay

MORGAN COUNTY MGA

Julia Chenault

While our annual plant sale was successful, traffic and sales were down a bit from last year. Now the greenhouse crew is in clean-up mode and will soon be preparing for the 2026 sale.

We are delighted to report that attendance at our Lunch and Learn series has increased dramatically this year. We planned out the year with a topic suitable for each month.

Representatives from the six area schools that received our grants this school year reported at our May meeting on how they used their funds. What a great group of horticultural/agricultural students with such enthusiastic leaders! We learned that we have a lot to learn from them and hope to schedule some future tours of their school gardens and greenhouses.

We're having steady participation at our Ask A Master Gardener table at our local farmer's market. Everyone is enjoying the brand-new facility in Decatur. The market is a go-to place several mornings a week now, but especially on Saturdays.

Several of our members have been busy leading gardening workshops at some of the libraries in the county, including Decatur. In early June member Norris Johnston travelled to his home state of Arkansas and made a presentation to their 2025 State Master Gardener Conference. His talk was entitled "Water you Thinkin," covering the role of water in horticulture as well as protection and conservation of this valuable resource.

We continue our delivery of small potted plants to Hospice of the Valley to be given to their patients.



Teachers and students from area schools receiving grants from MCMGA school year. MCMG Theresea Goode, grant chairperson far right. Photographer: John Godbey.

PIKE COUNTY MGA

Buriece Gracey

We are pleased to report that our recent plant sale was a resounding success, showcasing the strong support for our initiatives.

Our team recently embarked on two enriching field trips. First, we visited Goshen High School to explore their impressive hydroponic garden, gaining valuable insights into innovative growing techniques. Following that, we took a trip to Montgomery Botanical Garden, where we also stopped at a local nursery. These experiences provided inspiration and practical knowledge that can enhance our future projects.

We successfully hosted a series of Lunch And Learn meetings featuring several expert speakers. These sessions enriched our knowledge base and sparked engaging discussions on various gardening topics.

Our dedicated master gardeners are actively weeding and planting in the pollinator bed at the Pioneer Village of Alabama. Their hard work is instrumental in promoting local biodiversity and enhancing the community's green spaces



Pike County MGs at Montgomery Botanical Garden L to R: Samantha Earnest, Buriece Gracey, Leigh Caulk, Sarah McKenzie, Jane Stroud. Photographer: June Moore

SHELBY COUNTY MGA

Kate Vogel

At our April meeting, Shelby County Master Gardeners Association (SCMGA) member Kim Sprouse-Howell spoke on Herbs: Knowledge and Preservation.

Our May meeting was a field trip to member Deb Elliott's shade garden in Helena. Deb became a Master Gardener after losing 75 trees on the property in a tornado. Also in May, SCMGA President Elizabeth York presented a program on Container Gardening.

Blueberry picking and a hot dog roast at member Kate Vogel's family blueberry farm was enjoyed by members and guests at our June meeting.

Ongoing Projects for SCMGA include:

- 2025 Fall Seminar in Columbiana September 16.
- Grace Klein Community Chelsea – this is an as needed project.
- Family Connection Alabaster – Landscape the shelter entrance. This will be an intern project with MG follow-up periodically.
- Family Connection – Raised Bed Gardening with Kids seasonally.
- Upgrading the front of the Shelby County Extension office building will be a 2025 Intern Project.

SHOALS MGA

Dwight James

The official start of Summer is only seven days away but what a busy Spring our group has been involved in and enjoying.

With AMGA's annual conference in April being held in Prattville, we were fortunate to have 12 members, as well as our Extension agent Makahla Holloway, attend. With all the excellent speakers and tours, it was an annual conference to remember!

After the conference, it was back to plant sale preparation duties in our greenhouse, as well as some individual plant sitting responsibilities at our homes. What a plant sale it was! Despite rain on the first day, Saturday broke clear and sunny, and our customers responded. Our plant sale broke all previous records. Many members were engaged in seed starting, plant digs, potting, plant rescues, watering schedules at the greenhouse, loading plants and plant set up. It is such a tremendous group effort. Pam Arias and her team made sure it was a success. We had a complete sell-out as a result of everyone's energy and efforts!

No sooner than the plant sale was in the books, our focus turned to pending and ongoing projects. Designing and implementing the landscaping of two Habitat for Humanity homes proved challenging and very rewarding. Ivy Green, the home of Helen Keller, was ready for the discriminating eyes of our members to prepare it for all the annual visitors from all over the world. All the grounds and beds were pruned, weeded and made presentable.



Shoals MGA conference attendees, Photographer unknown.

St. CLAIR COUNTY MGA

Pam Garrison

The official start of summer is not far off. I'm glad the true heat of that time is not currently with us. This spring has been record-breaking for the amount of rain we have accumulated and has made it difficult to plan workdays for our various projects.

Our yearly plant sale was indoors, and we had a building full of wonderful plants that our members grew. It was a success, and the community came out to support it. It is so rewarding to see everyone and to share personal knowledge about plants.

A project was started last year by the class of 2024 interns. They built, prepared and planted raised beds at the Pell City Boys and Girls Club. Two of those interns still maintain it through weekly visits to keep it growing well and weed free. The kids have loved being a part of it and learning where their food comes from.

Many workdays are spent at Lakeside Park on the native walking trail keeping it in good shape. A group of us recently spent a hot morning there putting down pine straw to deter the weeds. We did a good bit of weeding and pruned the plants that have already bloomed.

Our monthly meetings have had so many wonderful speakers. Many thanks to Ed Sims, our Vice President, for finding a diverse and interesting number of presenters.



St. Clair MGs L-R: Melanie Chandler, Sara Zannis, Marianne Landman, Pam Garrison, Sherry Moore, and Carolyn Pennington at Lakeside Park. Photographer unknown.

TALLAPOOSA COUNTY MGA

Calvin Johnson

Tallapoosa County MGA (TCMGA) recently toured a picturesque lakeside garden created by Mr. Jim Scott, a retired Montgomery attorney. Master Gardeners and Interns were treated to a two-hour walking tour along a dozen natural paths alongside Lake Martin's dam area. Scott's garden is a design masterpiece of Alabama flora and a challenging walking experience with winding trails and cutback paths. It amplifies the natural beauty, vibrant colors and spontaneous growth of the lake's native habitat.

As an interlude to the hilly walking tour, Mr. Scott had natural stone crafted into comfortable seating benches with some sunny areas, some overlooks and some wooden bridges with breathtaking views around many large, forested areas. He also added sunny rest areas for gardeners to relax and enjoy group discussions on plant care, participate in gardening educational meetings and luncheons.

Mr. Scott also added a "secret sunny spot" to locate his personal underground wine cellar! In total, it is a perfectly crafted garden exploration displaying his collection of beautiful artifacts which add color and dimension to a garden tailored to his choice.

Finally, he had an extensive irrigation system with drip irrigation as well as timed area beds added to ensure year-round water for needy plants, shrubs and trees. TCMGA will remember this tour as a highlight of its season— displaying attention to detail as well as the proper nurturing of a large personal, year-round garden of extraordinary beauty.



TCMGA Interns and MGs Tour Mr. Scott's Lake Martin hillside showplace. Photographer unknown.

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY MGA

Dan Sutton

Tuscaloosa County MGA (TCMGA) has been active in the second quarter of 2025 with special projects along with our regular weekly projects. Workshops on building portable Salsa Garden arrangements were taught by members Wanda Smith and Andrea Harrison. These events were publicly advertised and resulted in several non-members participating. This gave us a chance to promote our association.

Our Spring Pass-Along Plant Sale, held in April, was our most successful to date. We partnered with a local high school Ag program and assisted in their Spring plant sale. Many of their unsold plants were then donated to us for our plant sale. We use our plant sale to fund scholarships for students pursuing an Ag-related college path. On June 4, ten TCMGA associates took a field trip to Auburn. A tour of Young's Plant Farm *Trial Garden* was fascinating, as we enjoyed seeing hundreds of varieties of plants they were testing before committing to production.

Following that, we enjoyed a trip to Auburn University's Culinary Science Center with a guided tour by Jack Maruna (Department of Horticulture-Culinary Sciences Program Coordinator). Jack explained the Department of Horticulture's close relationship with the Culinary Science Center. A tour of the rooftop garden was incredible. Topping off the trip was a visit to *Botanic*, a large new concept garden center / restaurant / music venue in Opelika.



TCMGA at the AU Culinary Science Rooftop Garden. Photo by Jack Maruna

WIREGRASS MGA

Kelly Bexley

The weekend after our successful spring plant sale found Wiregrass Master Gardeners Association (WMGA) in Prattville for the annual AMGA State Conference. We were very excited when Andy Hundley was awarded the Fred Evans ACES Intern of the Year award and Jan Shirley with Top Hours. It was rewarding to learn, be inspired, laugh and connect with other Master Gardeners from around the state. We are looking forward to next year in Huntsville and bringing more members!

Spring was busy with teaching about the Kitchen Garden during the Living History program at Landmark Park, cleaning up our greenhouse and nursery at the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens, and welcoming eight Junior Master Gardeners.

We have no monthly meeting in July, but we'll be busy having fun teaching our annual six summer classes to Hawk-Houston youth at Aunt Katie's Community Garden, holding monthly Lunch and Learn programs, making plans to teach summer camp classes at Landmark Park and preparing for our annual fall plant sale to be held the first weekend of October. We hope the heat, humidity and gnats this summer are minor irritants, and that we enjoy whatever blessings our gardens give.



WMGA members at 2025 AMGA State Conference. Photographer Unknown

Happenings
Summer
2025



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Got Questions?

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We've Got Answers

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NEXT ARTICLE FOR HAPPENINGS DUE SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

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