


## AUTAUGA COUNTY MGA

Bionca Lindsey

On November 21, 2025, we had the pleasure of graduating 21 of Mrs. Amber Williamson's third grade class at Prattville Elementary under the Texas A&M Junior Master Gardeners program. The students earned certification in Learn, Grow, Eat & Go. The 10 week/20 lesson program taught plant science, ecological principles, nutrition, and encouraged healthy food selections. Hands-on activities aided in reinforcing the learning objectives.

The instructors were Master Gardeners from Autauga County-Bionca Lindsey, Michael Camire, Rose McCauley, Soyna Moore, and Jackie Raines. Each week the children showed us how much they retained as they recited what they had learned the previous week. The students planted two types of lettuce which they have already harvested, Swiss chard, collard greens, broccoli, and cabbage donated by our 4H agent, Kacey Powell.

After the graduation Mrs. Williamson said, "I've had a whole week to reflect on my students' graduation from the Learn, Grow, Eat & Go program with the Autauga County Master Gardeners. To say I'm thankful and honored for this opportunity to have worked with such passionate experts in their field is an understatement! The skills and knowledge gained this last semester will undoubtedly stick with the kids (and me) for a lifetime. Not to mention, every lesson correlated with at least one (usually more) state standard and gave many opportunities for hands-on experiences, teamwork, and FUN! Thank you for the best experience. I can't wait for the next session!"



Junior Master Gardener graduates, class teacher and MG instructors Photographer: Soyna Moore



## BALDWIN COUNTY MGA

Deborah Marriott

Baldwin County Master Gardeners Association (BCMGA) is celebrating its 35th anniversary! BCMGA member, Loree Hadley, compiled an anniversary book and members can purchase this keepsake which highlights each of the 35 classes, Extension agents and other important milestones over the years.

It was a busy month in Baldwin County with a plethora of opportunities for volunteers to grow through continuing education or volunteering in various demonstration and community gardens and other service areas. The speaker for our October meeting was Justin Hammers, Urban Forester for the City of Fairhope. He shared information on the new Flying Creek Nature Preserve.

Mobile native Vaughn Drinkard spoke at our November meeting and shared information on his family's camellia legacy. Cornerstone Gardens in Mobile is a renowned garden and teaching center where his family cultivated rare camellia varieties. BCMGA members and the public were treated to an educational and informative presentation.

Carmen Flammini, Regional Extension Agent, provided a Master Gardeners tour of five demonstration gardens. BCMGA members assisted in maintaining gardens, visited Master Gardener Dolores Hammock's garden and volunteered in various community projects throughout Baldwin County.

BCMGA held their Christmas awards luncheon on December 10. Master Gardener Delores Hammock received the Wayne de la Rua award, a peer nominated award honoring a Master Gardener that made a significant difference in BCMGA. Officers and board members for 2026 were installed during this luncheon. Additionally, we are preparing to kick off our intern training class of 20 members in January 2026.




Anniversary Book cover
Photographer: Deborah Marriott

## BUTLER COUNTY MGA

Linda Jarzyniecki

"We are very excited and proud of you!" These words of high praise resounded from Extension Regional Agent Carmen Flammini to 13 interns of the Butler County Extension Master Gardener class at graduation as they transitioned from intern to Master Gardener. Carmen's enthusiasm was generated by her interns achieving over 900 hours of volunteer community service. They worked on three projects and two events over the duration of the course. With graduation behind them, newly elected officers and members officially became an association called Butler County Master Gardener Association (BTCMGA). Future community involvement is already being planned.

Intern projects included creating pollinator gardens at a local church and an assisted living facility and implementing and maintaining the Butler County Jail Kitchen Gardens. Many of the donated plants and seeds came from Linda Jarzyniecki's gardens at Limey Springs Farm. John Taylor, BTCMGA member, also had a speaking engagement at the Lion's Club that resulted in a subsequent donation of 60 yards of topsoil for the inmates' garden.

BTCMGA members are currently assembling science-based educational materials for public dissemination at the annual January tree seedling sale hosted by the Butler County Forestry Planning Committee. In addition, John Taylor and Butler County Extension Director Sharlean Briggs were interviewed by WAKA TV 8 reporter Teresa Lawson, for an upcoming broadcast.

BCMGA President, Linda Jarzyniecki, summed up the achievements and future prospects in one word: "awesome". We look forward to another outstanding intern class in 2026 with strong local support.




Butler County MGA members
Photographer: Sharlean Briggs

## CALHOUN COUNTY MGA

Tim Kaylor

Crisp air and shorter days of winter have arrived, bringing a time of reflection, renewal, and preparation for Calhoun County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA). Our gardens may be resting during the cold months, but CCMGA presses on. Here are just a few of the activities that have occurred since the fall edition.

- Establishment of our 501(c)(3) through the Community Foundation of N.E. Alabama.
- CCMGA Home Grounds Work Team continued maintaining the grounds.
- Election of a new board president and secretary and a CCMGA greenhouse representative.
- Repair, rejuvenation and elimination of half of the 64 Cane Creek Community Gardens raised beds. ACES Advisor, David West, was instrumental in this effort. He also negotiated with the City of Anniston to assume all grass cutting responsibilities at Cane Creek Community Gardens, which will result in a reduced workload for our Home Grounds Work Team.
- Preparation for the spring 2026 Intern class training.
- Celebration of the many successes of the Hobson City Community Gardens.
- Reorganization and planning at CCMGA greenhouse for seed starting and spring plant sale, which will feature Mother's Day bouquet creations.

We finished 2025 at our annual fun-filled Christmas celebration with great food and "Dirty Santa" fun. We're all excited about the new educational opportunities offered through our monthly meetings and Lunch and Learn presentations.

As we look ahead to 2026, CCMGA remains committed to growing together, learning from one another, and cultivating a greener future for our association and our community.



CCMGA 2026 Officers. L-R: Deirdre Giddy, Dave Rose, Angela Davis, Landon Rivers.
Photographer: Tim Kaylor

## CAPITAL CITY MGA

Mary Eleanor Hines

As I write this, another year is almost behind us. It's been a successful year with our dedicated volunteers working monthly in the local gardens that are Capital City Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) projects.

Lilly's Garden, a book written by CCMGA member and garden chairman, Ann Oldham, is a story about the garden written in memory of her daughter, Lilly. Lilly's Garden is located on the grounds of Forest Avenue Elementary, where Lilly was a student. The garden is one of CCMGA's projects, and its volunteers are dedicated to keeping it showy. The garden is a learning tool for the school's students. First graders harvested sweet potatoes in October.

EAT (Educate Act Transform) South has moved from its original downtown location to a newer one on the grounds of a local school. Unfortunately, the grounds are questionable for gardening. While waiting for a more suitable location, two raised beds have been built by a volunteer.

A silent auction was held at our October meeting which helped cushion our funds.

New officers for 2026 have been elected and nine interns graduated at our November meeting. They worked 612 volunteer hours collectively.

Our education programs have been successful with several workshops during the fall that were well attended.

There have been outdoor classes at Montgomery Botanical Gardens during the fall for the benefit of the community. The gardens received a gift from the city of 1,000 daffodil bulbs to be planted for spring beauty, as the gardens draw many admirers.



CCMGA volunteers planting snapdragons at Montgomery Botanical Gardens L-R: Gigi Langford, Lynne Kuhlmann, Racille Casey
Photographer: Cathy Maddox

## CENTRAL ALABAMA MGA

Kelly Lafreniere

Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association (CAMGA) has been busy this last quarter organizing and participating in different events around the county. Our interns are very active and participated in many of the events as well. Some of these events included the Senior Project we organize every year at the Wetumpka Senior Center. This year we taught seniors how to make living obelisks. We had a propagation class for the interns where they propagated and potted up over 300 plants at the house of Central Alabama Master Gardener Kelly Lafreniere.

CAMGA participated in Wetumpka's annual Dickens Christmas by passing out lavender sachets attached to information on how to become a Master Gardener and about our plant sale held the first Saturday in May.

Recently we planted plants at the Kelly Fitzpatrick Center for the Arts in Wetumpka, where we followed the design for a native plant/pollinator garden created by Jason Powell, owner of Petals from the Past. Jason joined us at the Center and helped with the planting.

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CAMGA MGs at Kelly Fitzpatrick Center. L-R Jason Mattox, Carol Richey, Cindy Augustine, Jason Powell, Kim Schellenberg, Rebecca Ridley. Photographer: Unknown

## CHEROKEE COUNTY MGA

Doug Ford

Hello from Cherokee County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) and Happy Holidays!! The Christmas spirit is high in Cherokee County, and CCMGA has been involved in several holiday events. In November, the City of Centre hosted its first ever Holiday Art in the Park to help ring in the season. CCMGA had a booth adjacent to the Cherokee County Extension Service booth and shared information to neighbors, visitors, artists and vendors about being/becoming a Master Gardener. We also held a small plant sale that was profitable.

The Cherokee County Historical Museum sponsors the annual Parade of Trees each Christmas to allow local organizations to compete for prizes and pride. CCMGA hopes to win first place again this year.

The holiday event of the season is coming up very soon. The Master Gardeners Christmas party will take place in Centre with spouses, significant others, and local leaders invited.

Even as we celebrate, the work of Master Gardeners goes on with motivation and satisfaction. CCMGA has some new faces among us as we welcome new interns from the fall classes. We're also welcoming our new Home Horticulture Agent, Jason Somerville. Jason is based in Marshall County and is going to love working in Cherokee County.

From all of us in Cherokee County, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



CCMGA's Pencil Cactus Christmas tree at Cherokee County Historical Museum Parade of Trees. Photographer: unknown

## CHILTON COUNTY MGA

Lanell Baker

It seems only yesterday 2025 started. It was a great year for Chilton County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) with great speakers and programs, wonderful field trips and fun, and learning experiences outside of the classroom.

We participated in the Landowners Tour at Parnell Farms and properties in Maplesville, Alabama. Some of our group helped with the tour of the land while other volunteers decorated the tables and served lunch to everyone after the tour.

Several of our Master Gardeners taught classes during the Classroom in the Forest Event with over 300 fourth graders attending. There were different stations to visit, so CCMGA volunteers helped get them to the correct station and lunch before sending them back to their respective schools. Both events were sponsored by the Chilton Natural Resource Council.

We've put our demonstration garden to bed for the winter months. In addition, we've planted all our fall plants in the Recreation Center bed, put out fresh pine straw, dug up crinum lilies and cut back the roses. The lilies have been potted up and placed in our shade house to grow until our spring sale.

The interns have done a fantastic job of taking care of the extension office beds and they look great. Our Conservation Group is watching the Cane Brake Pitcher Plants. A couple of the plants have been staked so we can monitor their progress as they grow.

Our final meeting for 2025 was December 9, followed by our annual Christmas luncheon and "Dirty Santa" gift swap.



Chilton County MGs at Classroom in the Forest. Photographer: Clem Clapp

## COFFEE COUNTY MGA

Kowanda McBride

On October second, the Coffee County Master Gardeners (CCMGA) had a great time helping the Coffee County Extension office with its annual petting zoo event. Our members enjoyed spending time with kindergarten students, talking about seeds and letting the children touch and explore a variety of seed types through hands-on activities.

We are also excited to share that CCMGA is currently designing nine bee-friendly garden beds for Enterprise State Community College. We're honored to partner with the college on this meaningful project that supports pollinators and the environment.

On December 13, we participated in Whoville in Enterprise and hosted a kid friendly activity at our booth. Children—and adults, too! — filled clear cups featuring a Grinch face with soil and sprinkled sprout seeds to grow their own "Grinch Hair." It was a fun activity and a very successful day for everyone involved.

As the year comes to a close, we look forward to welcoming a new class of interns in 2026 and continuing our work in the community.



CCMGA MGs L-R: Kowanda McBride, Leslie Olson, Maggie Sickler
Photographer: Kowanda McBride

## CULLMAN COUNTY MGA

Ellen Hall

Cullman County Master Gardeners Association (CCMGA) kicked off October with six of our members attending the Blount County Fall Conference, which we really enjoyed. We left with a greater awareness of the impact our gardening practices have on the natural world. (Thank you, Blount County MGA. Your new facility is great!)

The following week, we were registering field crops and honey at the Cullman County Fair. During the fair we set up an Ask a Master Gardener booth inside the exhibit building and staffed it with CCMGA volunteers to answer any questions about the crop displays.

Our fall plant sale was limited to one day this year. Due to the effects of the drought, we felt we had much less to sell this fall. On December 3, MG Brad Mitchell invited the plant sale committee to his farm to host a propagation event. Everyone was invited to bring cuttings to pot and share, learn about propagating, and take home some potted cuttings to grow out. Brad reported that a variety of plants were propagated, and everyone was instructed on the process, with a discussion of dos and don'ts.

Our monthly meeting and Christmas party was held on December 7; we enjoyed great food and fellowship and played bingo for the gifts everyone brought. The Cullman County Master Gardener of the Year award was announced with Stefanie Light, our outgoing treasurer, being the recipient. Stephanie has been active in our association since completing the class in 2017. Congratulations, Stefanie!

## EAST CENTRAL ALABAMA MGA

Susan Turner

East Central Alabama Master Gardeners Association (ECAMGA) had two outstanding speakers this fall. In September our own Del Simmons gave an educational and entertaining presentation "From Seeds to Hot Sauce" detailing his experience growing hot pepper plants from seeds a friend gave him. He grew different varieties, then made pepper sauce to share with his family and friends. In October David Doggett, Jefferson County Master Gardener, presented information on planting, transplanting, and re-potting trees with some especially useful tree care tips. The information covered where and how to stake a tree, when to fertilize, how to mulch around the base and when/how to prune. In November, our members and spouses/significant others enjoyed a festive holiday meal. December found us exchanging cookies/candies in the home of members Jack and Sheila Bolen. Several ECAMGA members attended the 2025 AMGA Fall Seminar in Columbiana on September 16. ECAMGA member Cheryl Smith won the free registration for the state conference next year in Huntsville.

Wedowee Elementary School second and third graders were busy in the school garden this fall. The garden had an abundance of flowers which allowed a discussion about pollinators. Students started the activities by selecting their favorite flower and using magnifying glasses to see how plants are pollinated. In another session students sampled purple hull peas and sweet potatoes which they had planted and harvested. Students also constructed a leaf book to take home with leaves from our outdoor classroom. They enjoyed identifying leaves from photos we provided.



East Central MGs sporting their holiday glasses
Photographer: Michelle Faletti

## JACKSON COUNTY MGA
Bill Caudill

The weather has certainly changed over the last few days of December, so I guess winter is really here!

Jackson County Master Gardeners Association (JCMGA) checked in all the exhibits for the Jackson County Fair September 23-27. This was in addition to decorating the Flower House and entrance. Tuesday through Saturday we had 242 visitors checking out the exhibits, even though Wednesday night was canceled due to the bad weather. Good job to all who volunteered.

Our fall plant swap on October 2 provided many varieties to trade and some extras to just add to your pile. The potluck lunch was also a big success.

At our November meeting we had a very informative presentation on the history of, and plans for, the Land Trust program in North Alabama.

December 15 will be JCMGAs annual Christmas party with "Dirty Santa" and swearing in of our 2026 officers and Board members. We wish them all a good year.

Our Garden Tour committee will soon begin planning trips for the coming spring.

We are told to expect that the Extension office will be moving in the near future. We hope the storage building moves without issues!

See us on our FB page: https://www.facebook.com/AlabamaJCMGA




## JEFFERSON COUNTY MGA
Mary Handley

In November, the Jefferson County Master Gardeners Association (JCMGA) held a graduation celebration and luncheon for our 2025 intern class. As part of the celebration, the interns gave a presentation on their class project. Arlington Antebellum Home & Gardens requested a garden that would be in keeping with the house as an antebellum home. The class of 26 interns created a series of raised beds and planted them with a variety of vegetables and flowers in the antebellum theme. JCMGA is committed to helping maintain the gardens.

JCMGA is closing the book on a great year of fellowship, learning and gardening together. In 2026 we look forward to ramping up our plans for the 2027 AMGA Conference and are excited to welcome everyone to Birmingham!

Happy New Year!



The 2025 Jefferson County Intern Class at their graduation ceremony and luncheon
Photographer: Patricia Putnam

## LAWRENCE COUNTY MGA

Phyllis LeMay

Lawrence County Master Gardeners Association (LCMGA) continues to prepare for our spring 2026 iris rhizome sale. We were recently gifted a 16' x 35' hoop house, which will be situated on the same property as our greenhouse. This will enable us to propagate and start seedlings this winter in preparation for our upcoming plant sales.

The Lawrence County Signature School's Reflective Garden work continues. During our November workday, we completed a bed for native plants, built the Native American and dinosaur archeological dig sites, built an archway for our thornless roses, and completed our thornless blackberry arbor. Our next project is securing sand for the dig sites.

The Bernice Miller Iris Preservation Garden is still in the planning stage, but it will shift into gear after the holidays. To jumpstart this project, the Morgan County MGA has awarded a $1000 grant for LCMGA to build this garden at the Signature School. Mrs. Miller hybridized 63 different irises during her lifetime. Her granddaughter, Gerie Boffel, who lives in Lawrence County, has collaborated with the Historic Iris Society to create a beautiful tribute to Mrs. Miller and her work. If you would like to know more about the garden and Mrs. Miller's story, follow this link. https://historiciris.org/product/roots-vol-38-issue-2-fall-2025/

## MARSHALL COUNTY MGA

Jo Drueen

After four years and three State Park Naturalists, Marshall County Master Gardeners Association (MCMGA) was able to plant a native garden at the Guntersville State Park. Many thanks for all the dedicated hours Marshall County MGs gave to this project.

Listed below are the projects, plantings and additional notes on the involvement/detail of the project:

- Tall Shrubs: 41 total plants at 4-5 feet spacing, used as structural/canopy layer.
- Medium Perennials/Grasses: 55 total plants at 3 feet spacing, used for color and pollinator layer.
- Low/Edge Layer: 83 total plants at 2 feet spacing, used for ground and seasonal bloom layer.
- Herbs: 3 total plants at 2 feet spacing, used as an educational cluster.

Quick Notes:

- Soil prep: 2-3" compost in top 6" before planting.
- Mulch: 2-3" organic mulch; keep clear of stems.
- Water: Weekly deep watering for first year.
- Fertilizer: Light organic 5-5-5 in spring.
- Pruning: After bloom; cut perennials to 6" in winter.
- Wildlife: Leave seed heads and berries for birds and pollinators.

All in all, it was a fun and educational project, and one we feel well worth every effort put forth.



L-R: Erick Cline (Regional State Naturalist), MCMGs: Gina Decker, Mary McClendon, Elaine Benzio Hild, Harry Williams; Tasha Simon (State Naturalist)
Picture by cell phone propped on car

## MASTER GARDENERS of NORTH ALABAMA

Carlita Edwards

Master Gardeners of North Alabama (MGNA) participated in the second annual Ag Expo, in partnership with Alabama A&M University's Agribition Center on November 1. The AG Center allows MGNA to use their facility for our yearly two-day spring plant sale.

MGNA was chosen to receive the "Community Partnership of the Year" award and was presented with a beautiful plaque, which was received by our President, Acacia Moore. MGNA hosted three tables at the Expo: Ask a Master Gardener, a children's activity table germinating lima beans in a plastic bag, and a "Guess the Plant" table.

MGNA is moving closer to the construction and opening of our second greenhouse. Our first greenhouse is on Huntsville city property. Our second greenhouse will be in the city of Madison, adjacent to the new community center.

A special shout-out goes to Stephen Walls, Master Gardeners class of 2025, and his family for growing plants and holding a native plant sale which raised $1,000 for the Madison greenhouse build.

Several MGNA members are participating on 2026 AMGA State Conference committees, working in conjunction with Limestone and Morgan County Master Gardener Associations. The State Conference will be held at The Westin Huntsville May 6-8, 2026.

MGNA members attended a variety of field trips during 2026, including Bonnie Farms, Weeden House, Amish Country, Scott's Orchard, and the Cullman Gourd Festival. Ameree Young and Cathy Hales also opened up their personal gardens to members.

The MGNA annual potluck Christmas social and award ceremony was held December 11.

## MASTER GARDENERS of WALKER COUNTY

London Perry

Master Gardeners of Walker County (MGWC) had an outstanding first annual fall plant sale on October 4, made possible by generous contributions and donations from local garden nurseries, businesses, and community members. Their support, along with the hard work of MGWC members, gave the community a great selection of quality plants and helpful guidance on plant care.

Community interest in Master Gardeners of Walker County continues to grow, with four new friends attending the latest monthly meeting and several expressing excitement about the upcoming spring intern class.

During our October meeting, Kris Blankenship, MGWC member, provided an informative educational session on onions, including how to plant, grow, and harvest them successfully in Alabama's climate. Attendees enjoyed learning practical tips they could take home to their own gardens.

Members enjoyed MGWC's Christmas party, featuring a delicious meal, a holiday keepsake craft using leaves and dried flowers, and a garden-themed ornament swap. It was a fun and festive way to wrap up a successful 2025 and set the stage for even more growth in the year ahead.



MWGC Christmas party Photographer: London Perry

## MOBILE COUNTY MGA

Cindy Findlay

What a cold start to winter we have had! Even way down here in Mobile County! The cold did not stop our Annual Greenery Sale that we work so hard on each year. Once again, an amazing success because of all the time and talent of our Mobile County Master Gardeners Association (MCMGA) members. Our community gardens are being cared for and planning for spring!

MCMGs are proud to be hosting another fundraiser in 2026. "2026 Tour of Gardens!" May 15, 16 & 17. Tickets will be available online March 1. We saw a void of this event for the past few years, so who better to show off gardens than Master Gardeners? For more information, please go to our website at https://www.mobilecountymastergardeners.org/events. This and our Spring Festival will keep us very busy during the beginning of the new year and we've begun planning our 2026 Greenery Sale!

To help with all our hard work in 2026 is our Class of 2025 MCMGs! We are proud to announce that out of our intern class, 15 have certified and four have earned their Bronze Star! December 14 ACES held our annual Awards Banquet to present them with their permanent badge. MCMGs call it "going from paper to plastic"! They are all so motivated, kind, and very hardworking! All traits of a Master Gardener.



Mobile County MGA Intern Class of 2025.
Photographer: Alice Marty

## PIKE COUNTY MGA

Buriece Gracey

As we step into 2026, we reflect on a great close to the past year, filled with activities and community spirit.

Pike County Master Gardeners Association (PCMGA) is excited to announce that for the second consecutive year, our booth at the Pike County Fair earned a blue ribbon! A big "'thank you" to everyone who helped with our educational display on seeds.

In October, PCMGA members guided school groups during Pioneer Days at the Pioneer Museum of Alabama. In November, we partnered with our local extension office to volunteer at Classroom in the Forest and Farm Day—both offering valuable learning experiences about Alabama's natural resources.

In December, we led high school students through the "Your Life, Your Money" program, sponsored by the Extension office. This initiative aimed to equip students with skills for navigating everyday financial situations. We wrapped up the quarter by decorating a cabin at the Pioneer Museum of Alabama with natural Christmas decor and serving as bell ringers for the Salvation Army.

Amid all the activities, we cherished our time together, learned new things, and built relationships. Here's to a rewarding year ahead in 2026!




PCMGA award winning booth at Pike County Fair
Photographer: Buriece Gracey

## SHELBY COUNTY MGA

Kate Vogel

Shelby County Master Gardeners Association (SCMGA) members and interns have been involved in several projects this fall. Dennis Stanek, Shelby County MG Projects Chair, met with University of Montevallo Environmental Studies head Dr. Lee May and Dr. Anthony Melton, Professor of Botany, at the UM Organic Garden to discuss turning it into a wildflower and pollinator garden. It's a mark of excellence when a university project seeks out a consult from Master Gardeners!

Our 2025 Intern Project is an upgrade to the front of the Extension building in Columbiana to improve its curb appeal.

SCMGA member Karen Mims led our November Lunch and Learn program on propagation. It was open to the public and was well attended.

The 2025 AMGA Fall Seminar in Columbiana had 141 attendees and was profitable for both AMGA and SCMGA.

Our monthly meetings have given us a variety of educational topics: Member Pam Dyer presented "Walking Through My Pollinator Garden" in October; SCMGA member and beekeeper Marisa Masters talked on beekeeping husbandry at our November meeting and, saving the best for last, our December meeting was our annual "Dirty Gardener" gift swap and potluck.



SCMGA members working on front of Extension building Photographer: Karen Jensen.

## SHOALS MGA

Dwight James

Ho, ho, ho! Don't look but Santa is making his 2026 list for all those deserving boys and girls!

Shoals Master Gardeners Association has been busy winding down 2025 and getting our new officers in place for 2026. Leading the charge will be Sally McGuire, President, along with Judy Williams, Vice-President, John Thornton, Treasurer and Penny Townsend, Secretary. Congratulations to this strong field of leaders who will be taking our organization forward in 2026 and 2027.

In November we celebrated the installation of a gas heater in our greenhouse. Prior to that the greenhouse was heated exclusively by solar, so this is a huge step in our journey of managing plants in our greenhouse.

Penny Townsend headed up our first pot washing event where we washed, disinfected and sized over 1000 pots for all our plant digs this winter. The greenhouse has added a larger-than-life dimension to our Shoals Master Gardeners Association, and there is always a project on our plate!

Our first plant dig of the winter, headed up by Viva Vaden, occurred December 10th. A lady who was relocating to North Carolina offered to donate a large portion of her plants, so a plant dig was planned and executed. The dig yielded liriope, Egyptian walking onions, autumn sedum, three varieties of ajuga, creeping thyme, cat mint, dianthus, Shasta daisies, creeping phlox and sedum ground cover. She also donated approximately 1000 plastic pots. What a blessing these plants and pots were right here before Christmas!



First plant dig results L-R: Joe Wrona, Sally McGuire, Sue West, Mike Wilson, Viva Vaden, Donnie Vaden Photographer: Dwight James

## St. CLAIR COUNTY MGA

Pam Garrison

We are so excited to welcome two new team members to the St. Clair Extension office and look forward to working with them.

Ashlee Thompson has been selected as the new County Executive Director for St. Clair County. She joins the St. Clair team from the Talladega Extension office. Ashlee was raised on her family's row crop and cattle farm; today she and her husband are raising their two daughters on that same farm. Ashlee is an Auburn graduate and is currently pursuing her master's degree through Auburn University.

Aprille Thompson is joining the St. Clair Extension office as the new Administrative Support Associate. She has 25+ years of accounting experience. Aprille was born in Pell City and currently lives in Ragland, has an unwavering dedication to her community and is actively involved in numerous local organizations. Her Auburn pride is strong and and she looks forward to taking the Master Gardener course offered this fall through the St. Clair County Extension office.

We had a great time at our Christmas meeting on December 4, with food, fellowship and installation of our officers for 2026. Our January meeting will be spent signing up for committees and planning events for the year.

On Friday, December 5, several of our members assisted with the St. Clair Extension program, "Your Money Your Life." It introduces eighth graders to real-life budgeting situations such as housing, transportation, insurance, and groceries using a budget




St. Clair MGs L-R: Pam Garrison, Tom Terry, Carolyn Pennington, Neva Webb, William Good
Photographer: Marianne Landman

## TALLAPOOSA COUNTY MGA

Calvin Johnson

Tallapoosa County Master Gardeners Association (TCMGA) has been busy with lots of fun and educational things, including a bow-making class, a mailbox decorating workshop for the public, and a parade just to get us started! We concluded our year with a potluck luncheon which captured three members on their special day, November 20, so a birthday cake and a huge cake to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Calvin and Sue Anne Johnson provided the ideal desserts to accompany the delicious array of tasty potluck items that were provided.

We culminated the year on December 7 with a fitting tribute to the holiday season at the Dadeville Christmas Parade. Three dozen TCMGs plus spouses turned out to spend two hours decorating a large flatbed trailer aptly named Enchanted Greenhouse. Our float wound its way along a 1.5-mile route much to the delight of hundreds of residents who lined the streets as our MG elves walked along the float shouting greetings to all who ventured out on a sunny but cool day. Folks loved our poinsettia-adorned float with its simulated greenhouse, two decorated trees, several reindeer and a log version of Rudolph. Our float, first in a long procession of floats and fire trucks with lights flashing and sirens blaring, likely stole first place! Our MG talents in decorating and "elf walking" far exceeded our gardening this season. Yes, Santa showed up on a motorcycle! It was a festive conclusion to 2025! Thank you TCMG's and our Leadership Team!



MG's Sue Anne and Cal Johnson ride TCMGA float, during Christmas Parade
Photographer: Devon Johnson

## TUSCALOOSA COUNTY MGA

Dan Sutton

On October 10 & 11, Tuscaloosa County Master Gardeners Association (TCMGA) members Andrea Harrison and Wanda Smith, along with volunteer Dena Morris, Lawrence County MGA, staffed the Ask a Master Gardener table at the Moundville Native American Festival. Fritz, Wanda's terrier, helped to entertain visitors and was the special mascot. Special thanks to Dena Morris for creating a festive table display for the event. Extension Agents Bronson Lubresky and Dylan Taylor, Tuscaloosa County, had tables at the festival featuring composting and native wildlife, respectively.

Our October 14 monthly meeting featured Extension Agent Bronson Lubresky speaking on permaculture and hugelkulture gardening. The use of berms and hillside contouring was demonstrated to reduce erosion and make more efficient use of hillsides. Also, burying cut or otherwise obtained wood products was demonstrated to help stabilize soil and improve its capacity to retain water.

Our November 11 meeting featured speaker Karen Wallace, past TCMGA member, who discussed the care and nurture of succulent plants. She brought several varieties as specimens and allowed a lucky few to carry some home!

On November 13, Andrea Harrison and Wanda Smith hosted a Holiday Evergreen Centerpieces workshop in the Tuscaloosa County Courthouse Annex Auditorium. Nine guests participated and used mostly natural materials in designs that could be transitioned from Thanksgiving to Christmas season displays.



Holiday Evergreen Workshop attendees
Photographer: Wanda Smith

## WIREGRASS MGA

Kelly Bexley

Wiregrass Master Gardeners Association (WMGA) welcomes winter! Cooler temps mean more time outside working in our gardens.

We had a successful fall plant sale which enabled us to continue our philanthropic goal of contributing to several local horticultural organizations. We are now focused on growing plants for our March plant sale!

In November our MG educators did an amazing job teaching and helping certify seven Junior Master Gardeners. Plans are underway for a spring Junior MG class. The Fall Intern Class graduated 13 Master Gardeners, many of whom will be active in local associations!

The Living History program at Landmark Park found over 200 young students in the Kitchen Garden learning from Wiregrass MGs about gardening in the early 1900s. They used old push plows to prepare beds and plant a fall garden. WMGA helped decorate Landmark for its Victorian Christmas celebration by holding a free public workshop to create wreaths and swags for the Farmstead.

If you attended the National Peanut Festival you found Wiregrass MGs manning a booth for ten days; they talked with 2100 visitors, answering their questions and promoting the Master Gardener program. We also helped decorate the Dothan Area Botanical Gardens for its annual Gardens Aglow, as well as volunteered during the Friday and Saturday nights of this December event.

The biggest news is that the AMGA Board of Directors approved WMGA's bid to host the 2028 State Conference in Dothan. We are very excited to welcome you all here!! We wish you a safe and loving holiday season.



2025 Dale/Pike County Fall Intern Graduating Class
Photographer: Jan Shirley

*Happenings*
Winter
2025-2026



**ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION**

**alabamamga.org**

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**Got Questions?**

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**We've Got Answers**

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## NEXT ARTICLE FOR HAPPENINGS DUE MARCH 15, 2026

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