



JEFFERSON COUNTY
Master Gardeners

Roots and Shoots

February 2012

President's Message. . .

Our February meeting is our opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments from the past year by honoring those members who have reached another milestone in their volunteer hours. Not only did our members volunteer, they reported their hours.

Take a quick look at the 2011 statistics for Alabama Master Gardeners. JCMG ranked:

- Third in number of Master Gardeners reporting hours
- Fourth in the total number of hours reported
- Fourth in the number of hours per volunteer
- Third in number of CEUs per volunteer

I'm sure with the State Conference in March, we will have many more Stars and Badges awarded next year. In addition to the Conference, we have numerous opportunities available to serve on JCMGA committees, speaking engagements, school projects, and as docents.

Look forward to seeing everyone on February 14!

Glenda

Glenda Dicks
gmdicks@bellsouth.net
205-620-0758



Just six weeks remain until the Jefferson County Master Gardeners host the 22nd annual State Master Gardener Conference on March 22-24 at the Birmingham Marriott. As conference hosts each and every JCMGA member has a role in contributing to the success of the conference. There are many ways to help—from stuffing registration packets to assisting our speakers. For information, see page 4 of this issue.

February

Master Gardener Meeting

February 14, 2012

Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Business Meeting – 10:00 a.m.

Presentation—10:30 a.m.

Potluck Luncheon to follow

How appropriate that our February meeting would fall on Valentine's Day, February 14th, when we honor ourselves for our involvement in activities we love! The Reach for the Stars Awards Luncheon is a high point in our Master Gardening year, the one time that WE are the program. Almost as important as the recognition of the many hours of volunteer service, we also get to show off our culinary skills at the highly anticipated potluck lunch. There will be cornbread just in case Alberta honors us with her amazing vegetable soup. Bring your favorite dish to share with your Master Gardener friends. Our meeting will start at 10:00. The awards program will commence at 10:30, followed by the potluck lunch.

Don't forget to wear your name badge. There will be special door prizes as always.

Many thanks to Leaf and Petal at the Gardens for the beautiful anthurium presented at the January meeting. Special thanks to Aldridge Gardens for the gift membership and to the Bouldins for the seed spreader also presented at the January meeting.

—Fletcher Harvey

Bethany's Extension Extra

Wow! The weather has been quite challenging this year. Is it winter or spring? Who knows? We have had a little bit of both. With all of the warm weather, hopefully, the plants won't get as eager for spring as I am. After all, we do live in Alabama, where it can be balmy today and below freezing tomorrow!

We are off to a great start with our 2012 MG intern class. We are bursting at the seams with 33 students of various, exciting backgrounds and interests. Everyone is eager to learn and seems to greatly enjoy the camaraderie and the food. When you see interns at the monthly meetings, be sure to give them a word of welcome.

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, February 14th. This is the date of the annual Reach for the Stars Awards program and Pot Luck Lunch. Many of you will be recognized for achieving various award milestones. Come and join your fellow MG's in celebration of the countless hours given to numerous worthwhile endeavors.

The Master Gardener program is one that "enables participants to serve their communities through education in environmental sciences, plant clinics, demonstration gardens, phone information, community projects, and continued training of Master Gardeners. Each year, about 2,000 Master Gardeners donate several thousand hours of community service in partnership with Extension." You all help to make up that number, and are a large part of what makes this community and surrounding areas better!

With that being said, requests for volunteers are never in short supply. Many opportunities are available at the BBG, Aldridge Gardens, and in many local communities. The ACES office gets at least 1-2 calls per week from community organizations and schools interested in garden projects. Check out the ongoing list of projects included in this month's newsletter.

For all of you veteran MG's who are involved in ongoing projects, please make it a point to reach out to the newer members. I am sure that they are all eager to work, but may need some encouragement to get started. Once again, thanks for all that you do! Happy Gardening!

—Bethany O'Rear

Community Service Update

UCP Hand in Hand Garden

In the vegetable garden this mild winter has been great! Our lettuces were harvested before the first hard frost. They were beautiful – full heads of Buttercrunch, Oakleaf and Romaine. Outside leaves of collards were picked for staff members to enjoy. Nice Broccoli heads were harvested in early December. The cabbages were doing well, nice tight heads. Collards continue to bear.

Watching the performance of the six raised beds in relation to the amount of sun that they get has been a great living lab. In the summer the upper beds get some shade in the afternoon, mitigating the heat. Those beds performed better overall in the summer. The lower beds get full sun in all seasons but in the fall, they have outperformed the more shaded beds. Broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels Sprouts have done very well in those beds.

We worked with two Girl Scouts and their moms to scope out projects they could take on to enrich the garden area. Their first project was planting 325 mixed Daffodils the week after Christmas. We planted in the playground area, in an area along the path to the outdoor vegetable garden and in the butterfly garden area that can be seen from the playground area looking out. They will be doing other things this coming spring.

A pH evaluation of the 'field' area found it now on the acid side (5.5). Have been adding organic matter to the field. Lou Heck has volunteered to till it in (along with some lime) if we can get a dry weekend to do it...

Upcoming Volunteer Needs

-We need to modify the drip irrigation in the beds to be sure we have emitters at each end of the bed; some did not based on how the hose was cut. This will be accomplished by adding spray emitters on the end of ¼ inch tubing that can be moved around to apply extra water to plants. The addition of spray emitters will allow us to plant some seeds in the future.

-Will be planting and trellising two muscadine vines with the Girl Scouts. The posts were set and the holes for the vines dug by adult volunteers in October.

-We need to begin our fruit tree maintenance on the apples and peaches.

-We will need to divide and transplant many large herbs out of the raised beds before the April planting time.

This garden is a great lab and learning opportunity for any Master Gardener with an interest in vegetables and small fruits. If you are interested in any of these activities – please e-mail or call Karen Mitchell (karen35216@bellsouth.net) (903-1987).



Reach for the Stars Awards

We want to thank everyone for turning in their volunteer hours and we are looking forward to the Reach for Stars luncheon on February 14th. We are very proud of the following who are receiving Stars at the luncheon and those who will receive their Badges at the AMGA convention.

Bronze

Mary Ballard
Meg Barnum
Archie Blackmon
Suzanne Clisby
Margaret Fritsma
Kenneth Hall
David Jackson
Natalie Lee
Annette Rodgers
Angela Scott

Silver

Roger Clarke
Thomas Douglass
Maura Horton
Ann Jones
Hope Long
Leonora Roberson
Dolly Walker
Janet Waters

Gold

Dianne Brannon
Linda Grissom
Mike Malone
Karen Mitchell
Nivida Murphy
Jennifer Phillips
Madelon Rushing

Gold Name Badge

Thomas Blair Cox
Glenda Dicks
Patricia Farris
Joseph Rene Germann
Fletcher Harvey
LeAnne Porter
Anne Thomas
Gary Walker

Platinum Name Badge

Linda Systrom

Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this report. Even though the reporting system is automated, we do not have the ability to generate on line reports at this time. Consequently, if you feel your hours have not been correctly tabulated, please let Glenda Dicks know and she will be happy to research.

Thanks to everyone for all of their hard work.

Anne Thomas, Chair,
Reach for Stars Committee

February Gardener's Calendar

FRUITS AND NUTS-Planting season continues for dormant trees. Fertilize fruit trees. Apply half of the fertilizer recommended for grapes now; apply the other half soon after fruit sets. Continue dormant pruning and grafting. Start strawberry plantings.

SHRUBS-Planting season continues. Visit camellia shows to learn of hardy varieties in your area. Graft camellias in Central and South Alabama. Spray all shrubs with a fungicide before new growth starts. Good time to prune all shrubs before new growth starts. Don't prune early-blooming species because flower buds will be removed.

ROSES-Prune hybrid tea roses in South Alabama; delay pruning for a few weeks in North Alabama. Continue planting.

ANNUALS AND PERENNIALS-Replant early plantings of hardy annuals. Prepare beds for summer annuals.

BULBS-Plant cannas, amaryllis, gladiolus, and zephyranthes in South Alabama; delay planting for a few weeks in North Alabama.

VEGETABLE SEED-Plant some vegetables listed for January in Central Alabama plus collards, salsify, and Swiss chard. Add tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts to coldframes.

VEGETABLE PLANTS-Plant cabbage, onions, lettuce, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts.

The JCMGA Speakers Bureau Needs You

As a new growing season is upon us, won't you share your years of education, expertise and experience with groups in our community? You can teach and speak on a wide variety of gardening topics such as: butterfly gardens, vegetable gardening pests, raised bed gardening...the extensive list of our presentation topics is always growing. Master Gardeners delight in teaching about the natural world of gardening and how it affects the greater ecosystem. Please consider sharing your knowledge and being included on the Speakers Bureau list. For more information, contact Yvette Heath at yvette.heath72@gmail.com or phone 988-8050.



Conference Countdown

It will happen soon! The Alabama Master Gardener Association 22nd Annual Conference will be March 22-24, 2012. Many of us have been working on the plans for the conference for nearly two years and thanks to the many hours and much attention to detail we have what should be a great conference planned. You should have received a copy of *Garden Pathways* in the mail with the conference insert and registration information. If you did not receive the document please go to www.alabamamg.org select newsletters and select January 2012 and you will be able to print a copy of the program and registration form.

Many of you have signed up to volunteer during the conference and we thank you for doing that. but we really need more from each member. I would like to challenge you to get your registration in ASAP to ensure that you get the breakout session that you want and to bring a Master Gardener friend with you. The program has something for just about everyone in attendance and should be both educational and entertaining.

We will open the Conference with registration at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens starting around noon on Thursday. There will be two round table discussion before the garden tours start at both the Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Aldridge Botanical Gardens, followed by a dinner at the BBG. There will not be a speaker on Thursday night so you can discuss gardening over a great dinner provided by Full Moon Barbecue, while the Sonny Harris Trio plays blues music. Get you registration in early since we are limited to 260 people at the BBG.

Friday morning we will continue registration at the Marriott on US280 and serve a continental breakfast before the sessions start. Check the program guide for details of the Friday and Saturday activities. Friday night's banquet will be recognition of the top Master Gardeners for the year and the dinner speaker will be Dolores Hydock who will be spinning an interesting story related to her life and experience as a gardener. The meal will be handled by the Marriott with Chicken, Salmon or vegetarian options. Come and join with us for this fun-packed evening.

We will have a silent auction during the day on Friday and we continue to look for good quality items for the auction. If you have items please contact me and I will arrange to have the item picked up or you can bring them to the March Master Gardener meeting.

Thanks for your support during the process of getting the conference planned and please complete it by sending in your registration form and volunteering to help during the conference. Volunteering is not an all-day thing so you still get to see and attend those classes you want to attend. The conference is also open to the general public at the prices listed on the registration form, so tell a friend. If you have any questions please contact me chair2012@aol.com.

Harold Deason
Conference Chairman

Conference Volunteers Are Needed

Conference committees have been hard at work for over a year but volunteers are still needed to ensure that the conference goes smoothly and our guests enjoy their visit to the Magic City. If you would like to volunteer as a host, help with registration, assist with food functions, serve as a room monitor, or distribute door prizes please contact conference volunteer coordinator Karen Larsen at AMG2012CVols@att.net for an application. Volunteers working Friday or Saturday at the Marriott need to register for the conference.

Silent Auction Items Needed

It's not too late to secure items for the State Conference silent auction. We will accept items up to the beginning of the conference. However, the deadline for receiving acknowledgement in the conference booklet is February 13. If you have any donated items, please contact Pat Palmer (967-6197) or Glenda Dicks (620-0758).

Creative Basket Contest

A limited number of baskets will be available at the February meeting. Master Gardeners are asked to use their creativity to fill the basket and return at the March meeting. Baskets will be given as door prizes at the State Conference. An independent judging will result in one creative person receiving a free 2013 Master Gardener membership. All creators will receive volunteer hours and recognition at the conference. For information, contact Door Prize Chairman Lacey Poore at 991-3639 or lacypoore@bellsouth.net.

JCMGA Minutes—January 2012

The Jefferson County Master Gardener Association met at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens at 10 a.m. on January 10, 2012 for our monthly meeting.

President Glenda Dicks called the meeting to order. She welcomed first time visitors to our meeting; Nina Miranda, Bonnie McDonald and Sue Peterson.

There was no new or old business to discuss.

Glenda reminded everyone to pay their 2012 Master Gardener dues - \$12.00 local and \$5.00 for State – today or they will be unable to receive the monthly newsletter, Alabama Master Gardener membership cards and are ineligible for Reach for Stars awards.

The following opportunities for volunteer hours were presented:

Taylor Steele, the Volunteer Coordinator for the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, asked for volunteers for the BBG Spring Plant Sale to be held April 13th, 14th and 15th. He also stated there is an opening for the Chair positions at the sale for Irises, Hostas and Tropicals. If there is anyone interested in working in this area, please contact Taylor.

Bethany O'Rear, our Extension agent stated there are several volunteer opportunities in our area:

- The Camellia Society Show will be held in February at BBG and need volunteers to assist in that show.
- Also the Fruit and Vegetable Conference will be held in Auburn on Feb. 10th and 11th. Please let Bethany know if you are interested in attending the conference.
- The Highlands School is beginning a "Gardening After-School" project which involves both students and parents from K-6th Grade and they are requesting volunteers.
- The new Master Gardener 2012 Intern Program begins Thursday, January 12th, and Bethany stated she would appreciate volunteers to help with the programs and class for the next several weeks.

• LeAnne Porter said Aldridge Gardens needs docents to be with children on field trips to Aldridge Gardens.

President Glenda Dicks handed out sign up sheets to volunteer for the various Jefferson County Master Gardener committees for 2012.

Bethany stated that the purpose of Master Gardeners is reaching out to the community; for example, working with out door classrooms and horticulture therapy. Glenda reiterated that there are opportunities for Master Gardener volunteers all over the county.

Robert Eskew announced that the pruning of the roses at BBG will be March 3rd from 8:00 AM until 11:00 AM in the Rose Garden. Please bring your own tools. If you do not know the correct way to prune, you will be guided in how to do this.

Anne Thomas reminded everyone that today, January 10th, is the last day to report volunteer hours for 2011 to be counted toward the Reach for Stars awards.

Glenda Dicks stated that our meeting the Feb. 14th meeting is the Reach for Stars program and is a pot luck luncheon. She also reminded us that reporting our volunteer hours supports our extension agents and the Jefferson County Master Gardener program.

Vice President Fletcher Harvey reminded everyone to check out a copy of the new *Birmingham Magazine*. Fletcher then introduced our speaker, our own Bethany O'Rear. Bethany presented a very interesting program introducing "What's New for 2012," the new Proven Winners, Southern Living Plant Collection and Monrovia Introductions. She discussed the plants, grasses and shrubs that will be available during 2012.

Fletcher announced that the door prizes today are from Leaf and Petal, a membership to Aldridge Gardens and garden seed dispenser from Wayne and Sue Boldin. We have also received a thank you note from our former extension agent, Tony Glover, for the gift of a seedling from the Toomer's Corner Trees.

Harold Deason stated that the AMGA Newsletter, *Garden Pathways*, January issue has been sent to all AMGA members and the registration form for the AMGA 2012 Conference is included. Harold also has extra copies for anyone who would like to register now. He encouraged everyone to register early as possible. Harold also requested any corrections be made to our annual directory today because it will be distributed next month.

There being no further business, Glenda Dicks adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Thomas, Secretary

Notes from the AMGA Advisory Council

In 2013 the Master Gardener state dues will increase to \$10.00 per year. This is the first increase since Master Gardeners was organized. The increase in dues will underwrite the Fall Symposium, scholarships and grants to local organizations.

Newsletters will be sent electronically to each local association president. The president will be responsible for sending the newsletter to members. Local associations are responsible for mailing the newsletter to members who need a hard copy. If you need a hard copy please give your name and address to Nora O'Connor. Members will continue to receive a hard copy of the January newsletter as required in the bylaws.

The Master Gardener license plate did not get enough support and will not be manufactured. Anyone who sent in money will get a refund minus a small fee from the state for handling.

Check out TECHSOUP.ORG if you need Microsoft or Adobe products or any computer equipment to use in doing a job or project for Master Gardeners. Discount prices are available for non-profit associations. Please get in touch with the state webmaster Diana Kleffner at Kleffner@mac.com. She will research and see if she can put your order and any other MG group together for a discount.

The 2013 Master Gardener conference will be in Florence on April 15 - 16 - 17.

- Camille Becker

January Treasurer's Report

Submitted by *Roger Clarke*, Treasurer

Beginning balance	\$14,011.50
Receipts	\$ 228.00
Disbursements	\$ 243.47

Ending balance January 26, 2012 \$13,996.03

2012 Paid membership: 123

2011 members not renewed: 80



Gardener's Bookshelf

Check out these new arrivals from the Library at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

-Decoding Gardening Advice: the science behind the 100 most common

recommendations by Jeff Gillman and Meleah Maynard

-How carrots won the Trojan War: curious (but true) stories of Common Vegetables by Rebecca Rupp

-Sustainable sites handbook: a complete guide to the principles ... for sustainable landscapes by Meg Calkins

-Taunton's Container Garden Idea Book by the editors of *Fine Gardening*

-Weeds of the South edited by Charles T. Bryson and Michael S. DeFelice

-The Year-round vegetable gardener by Niki Jabbour

Join in February's Great Backyard Bird Count

Warmer temperatures and lack of snow in parts of North America are setting the stage for what could be a most intriguing 15th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, coming up February 17-20.

Bird watchers across the U.S. and Canada are getting ready to tally millions of birds in the annual count coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada.

"This count is so much fun because anyone can take part—we all learn and watch birds together—whether you are an expert, novice or feeder watcher," said Gary Langham, Audubon's Chief Scientist. "I'd like to invite new birders to join me and share the experience. Get involved, invite your friends, and see how your favorite spot stacks up."

Participants count birds at any location they wish for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, then enter their tallies at www.birdcount.org. Anyone can participate in the free event and no registration is required.

To learn more about how to join the count, get bird ID tips, downloadable instructions, a how-to video, past results, and more, visit www.birdcount.org. The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter at least one bird checklist online.

Volunteer Opportunities

Alabama Master Gardener Association 2012 Conference volunteers needed. Jefferson County Master Gardener Association will host the 2012 Alabama Master Gardener Association Conference. To be held March 22-24 at the Birmingham Marriott and other area venues. Committee chairpersons have been selected and are looking for volunteers. If you would like to help please e-mail amg2012cvols@att.net and request a volunteer application.

Aldridge Gardens will hold docent training during February. On Tuesday, Feb. 21, and Thursday, Feb. 23, from 9 a.m. – noon there will be training to lead tours for elementary age students. Volunteers are asked to lead tours two mornings per month. Training for adult tours will be on Wednesday, Feb. 29 from 9- 11 a.m. If you are interested in one of these training sessions, contact LeAnne Porter at lporter@aldridgegardens.com or call 682-8019, ext. 2

Birmingham Botanical Gardens' Annual Spring Plant Sale will take place April 12 - 15, 2012. Volunteers are needed to assist with checkout, load plants, and help with hospitality. Master Gardeners are encouraged to volunteer to share their knowledge in one of the plant booths. These include: Annuals, Biennials, Climbers; Camellias; Bedding Plants; Bonsai; Dahlias; Daylilies; Ferns; Herbs; Native Plants; Perennials; Roses; Trees/Shrubs/Rhododendrons; Tropicals; Vegetables; Hostas, Iris, Peonies. If you are interested in volunteering in any of these areas, please contact Taylor Steele, tsteele@bbgardens.org or 414-3962.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens/ Birmingham Rose Society will hold the annual pruning of the Dunn Formal Rose Garden on Saturday, March 3, 2012. Time will be 8 - 11 a.m. Volunteers are asked to bring pruning tools. Instruction will be given if needed. For more information contact Robert Eschew at 823-6621 or daddybobsq@aol.com

Mark Your Calendar

Feb. 11 Plant Rescue! Dig and Sustain Natives, 9 - 11:30 a.m., Aldridge Gardens. At the 20th Annual Plant Dig at the New Georgia Landfill (Feb. 18) native plants need to be rescued because space is needed and you are invited to dig. In this "two-in-one" seminar, learn about the plants of this area and how to prep the plants for digging and planting. Presenters include: Kaye Oden, Deputy Director City of B'ham Horticulture; Rip Weaver, CLARB, ASLA, Aldridge Gardens, and Gary Webb, President, Gary A. Webb Horticulture, Inc. The class is free to members/\$12 for non-members. Pre-registration is required. For more information, call 682-8019 or www.aldridgegardens.com

Feb. 17 –20 Great Backyard Bird Count. See page 6 of newsletter for additional information.

Feb. 18 20th Annual Plant Dig at the New Georgia Landfill

Feb. 24 Native Plants that Enhance Our Landscapes: Blount County Master Gardener Association Student and Parent Mini Conference. 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Palisades Park, Oneonta, Ala. Topics include an overview of Blount County native plants, attracting butterflies with native plants, and native trees. \$10 registration includes program, snacks, and drinks. For more information, contact Sherilyn Osborne, 205-681-9896 or sherilynosborne@bellsouth.net.

Feb. 25 Antique Roses in the Garden, Petals from the Past, 10:30 a.m – 12:30 p.m. Join Jason Powell for a discussion of selection, care, and maintenance of antique and old garden roses, and learn the proper pruning techniques for all roses. For more information call 646-0069 or www.petalsfromthepast.com.

March 2 The 5th Annual Shades Valley Rotary Botanical Bash will take place at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, 6 – 9 p.m. Guests will enjoy the music of the Hall of Fame Jazz Band, food from Mr. Whiskers and a silent auction. \$40 per person with proceeds supporting the Gardens' Summer Intern Program. For further information, Call Fletcher Harvey, 879-4228, or Karen Larsen, 423-0095.

March 22-24 22nd Annual State Master Gardener Convention, Birmingham Marriot, hosted by the Jefferson County Master Gardeners Association.

April 12 –15 Birmingham Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale, Old Mazer's location on Greensprings Hwy.