



Carol Cook Hagood, Editor

President's Message

Sunshine, flowering shrubs and little green furls “showing out” all over the garden! Spring is here! This is one of my favorite times of year. This year, I’m adding the **state AMGA meeting** to my “favorites” list, as well. Cullman and Blount County MGs did a wonderful job of coordinating informative speakers, good food and fellowship for a great time for all. Check the final page of this newsletter for a photograph of Jefferson County Master Gardeners who attended this exciting event.

And special thanks to Sharon Leader and Harold Deason who share their time with us in Jefferson Co. for their leadership with the counties north of us, as well!

Spring is also time for the **BBG Plant Sale**, another “favorite!” I usually get a terrible case of plant lust just watching the trucks unload! Add color, texture and scent, and my bank account just automatically starts depleting!! One for you and two for me...as I place plants in the carts! Please consider joining the crowd of MGs at the sale if you have time the week of April 10-12. Our JCMGA Booth needs volunteers—see Bethany O’Rear. The BBG can always use good volunteers for every aspect of the sale—please contact Taylor Steele. If you don’t have time to volunteer, please support the sale, AND tell your friends!

Thank you to Bethany O’Rear for leading our first **JCMGA evening meeting** on March 17. She shared many online resources available to gardeners (see Alicia’s minutes) and other important apps and opportunities for us. Our next evening meeting will be the third Tuesday in June, so mark your calendars!

The JCMGA has an exciting upcoming opportunity. The 2018 **Southeastern MG Conference** is probably coming to Birmingham. Alabama is being asked to host the event and the JCMGA will be responsible for much of the organization and leadership for this event.

If you are interested in helping, please see Fletcher Harvey, Bethany O’Rear, or me. Many good leaders will be needed! We are starting to look at possible spaces and at organizational structure for the effort in the next month or two. Please join us!

(continued on page 2)

JCMGA April Program Notes

April 14, 10 a.m.
Birmingham Botanical Gardens Auditorium
Eleanor Craig of Fern Ridge Farms:
Ferns

[Important Note: JCMGA will gather for its regular morning meetings in the BBG Auditorium through September.]

Spring at last...How wonderful! To celebrate the season, we have such a nice program speaker for April: Eleanor Craig will be with us from Fern Ridge Farms in Cedar Bluff, Alabama. If you have any questions regarding ferns, this is the time to make a note for the meeting. Eleanor knows her business, and you will enjoy the presentation because she shares her love for the plant as well as her knowledge.

We also celebrate the season this month with the BBG Spring Plant Sale on April 9, 10, 11, and 12, this year at Brookwood Village (parking lot on the Macy’s side). 100,000 plants will be available for purchase. The signature plant will be “Snow Princess” alyssum.

Looking ahead to May 12 and our popular Plant Swap program, be sure to get all of your potting for the plant swap done **now**. Leonora Roberson, our speaker for the program, reminds us that you can’t wait until the day before the meeting, “stick it in a pot, and expect the plant to be over plant shock!”... Everyone enjoys this annual program as it is a win/win for all of us. Just remember: **no invasive plants** and please label all plants.

If you missed the apps program at our evening meeting on March 17, we want you to know that there are several free apps approved by Auburn. Check the March Evening Meeting Minutes in this newsletter for a list of some very useful apps. One that many people may need most helps put your soil test results to use in small gardens: the soil test application advice you get from Auburn is for acreage [43,560 square feet], not for home gardeners, but this app can “translate” for smaller gardens. And *thanks* to all the folks who furnished refreshments for the night meeting: Ann Gray Harvey, the Halls, and Hope Cooper.

See you soon, at the April meeting!

Pat

Pat Cosgrove, First Vice President

Bethany's Extension Extra

BBG Plant Sale MG Booth Volunteers Needed

The BBG plant sale is just around the corner, and we still need some help for the MG booth. Please check your calendars to see if you can squeeze one of the following slots in between your time at the assorted plant booths, and contact me to let me know if one or more of the following will work for you:

Friday, 4/10

11-1 – one slot available
 3-5 – one slot available
 5-7 – one slot available

Saturday, 4/11

9-11 – one slot available
 1-3 – one slot available

Sunday, 4/12

1-3 – two slots available

The Birmingham Fern Society Lecture Series - May 20, 2015:

4:30 p.m.: Naud Burnett, CEO of Casa Flora, Dallas, a well-known landscape architect, will speak on "Propagation of Ferns."

6:00 p.m.: Dr. Eddie Watkins, associate professor of biology at Colgate University, and a native of Alabama, will speak on "Searching the World for Ferns." Dr. Watkins is currently president of the American Fern Society.

Refreshments will be served between the lectures.

Also, on May 21, The Birmingham Fern Society welcomes everyone to **tour the Fern Glades at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens**. Meet on the Blount Plaza at 10 a.m. on the 21st. Please bring a picnic lunch.

No registration is required for either day and this series is free to attendees. For more information, **please contact Bruce Steele** at bstee0324@att.net.

Cumulative CEU Hours from 2015 Meetings

January 13 (Brooke McMinn)	1.0 CEU
February Reach for the Stars program	(no CEU)
March 10 (Sallie Lee and Sloss Group)	1.25 CEU
March 17 (Bethany O'Rear)	1.0 CEU

(President's Message continued)

As I close this note, I'd like to ask all who are getting this note to think back to your MG Intern class. If you have not seen one of your favorite colleagues recently, call them and meet them again at one of our meetings. We need those folks! Sometimes life happens and hours are not met, or dues don't get paid. We are not punitive. As with a spring garden, if you show up when you haven't been active or visible for a while, we are always pleased to have you reappear, or to show for the first time! Glenda Dicks and Linda Systrom will be at the welcome table at the April meeting. Make sure you let them know that you're back and we'll do our best to make you feel "well planted" in the JCMGA – wherever you feel best suited. If you are willing to make phone calls just to say "hi" to former classmates, please see Glenda and Linda. We look forward to seeing all!

Happy Spring!

Ann Gray

Ann Gray Harvey, President

Tomato Pick-Up Day at Petals from the Past

On Saturday, April 11, Petals from the Past will hold their annual Tomato Pick-Up Day. They would like to have two MG's on-site to help answer any tomato-related questions that their customers may have.

You can find a list of the tomato varieties grown on the Petals website. A few of you have participated in this event in the past. Please contact Pat Conlee at 205-646-0069 or pat@petalsfromthepast.com to let her know you are interested ASAP.

Treasurer's Report

March 2015

Beginning balance March 1, 2015	\$8,886.74
Deposits	\$96.50
Disbursements	\$67.57
Ending balance March 31, 2015	<u><u>\$8,915.67</u></u>

---Submitted by Tom Douglass, Treasurer

March 2015 Minutes

Jefferson County Master Gardeners' Meeting – March 10, 2015

The regular monthly meeting of the JCMGA was held on March 10, 2015 at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens (BBG). There were 55-60 members present. President Ann Gray Harvey called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. and noted that a quorum was present. She welcomed all in attendance and recognized five new members from the 2014 Master Gardener class and one visitor from a Toronto MG group.

President's Report and Routine Business

Reach for the Stars: Ann Gray acknowledged and thanked members of the Reach for the Stars Committee including Anne Thomas, Ken Hall, Madelon Rushing, and Bruce Steele for a job well done.

Membership Cards and Sign in Sheets: Ann Gray again reminded members that they should sign in at each Master Gardener meeting and note any changes in their contact information. Members who have not yet picked up their membership cards were asked to do so.

The State Conference is scheduled for March 23-25 in Cullman, with registration information on the MG website.

Scheduled Meetings: Ann Gray announced the first night meeting of the year on March 17 at 6 p.m. at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Bethany O'Rear, Jefferson County ACES agent, will present a program on apps for your phone and other on-line resources. Our next regular monthly meeting is scheduled for April 14 at 9:30 a.m. at BBG.

Harvest for Health: Ann Gray asked that Harvest for Health volunteers not present at the February meeting pick up their awards at the sign-in desk.

2018 Southeastern Master Gardener Conference: JCMGA has been approached about the possibility of hosting the 2018 Conference. Ann Gray asked members interested in working on this project to see her or Fletcher Harvey.

Board Report Bylaws: Ann Gray told the membership that copies of the proposed bylaws changes were again available at the sign-in-desk. She asked if everyone had reviewed the proposed changes and if anyone had any questions or concerns. No questions or concerns were raised by the members present. Bruce Steele made a motion to accept the proposed changes as recommended by the JCMGA Board, seconded by Anne Thomas. The membership voted unanimously to accept the proposed changes to the JCMGA bylaws.

Secretary's Report Ann Gray asked for a motion to accept the secretary's report for January and February as printed in the March newsletter. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously carried by the membership.

Treasurer's Report Ann Gray asked for a motion to accept the treasurer's report as published in the March newsletter. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved by the membership.

Committee Reports

Hospitality: Martha Picardy reported that there was still a need for greeters at each of the meetings and that help was also needed on the hospitality committee. She said that a sign-up sheet was available at the sign-in desk.

Education and Speakers Committee: Hope Long said that there is a need for JCMGA speakers. Fletcher Harvey added that at present there are only four members listed on the speakers' bureau. He said that some members on the list of available speakers had been removed but he believes that they are still willing to serve as speakers. Hope asked that anyone wishing to be added to the speakers' list to please give contact information to Fletcher or to Hope. There was discussion about whether contact information on the website should include a telephone number or just an e-mail address. Hope also asked members wishing to support the Junior Master Gardener program to take posters to local businesses.

Membership: Linda Systrom said that they are looking for one or two people from previous Master Gardener classes to serve as representatives, willing to call classmates to let them know they are missed and inviting them to attend a meeting. The hope is that they will rejoin our membership. Interested members should see Linda or Glenda Dicks. (Tom Douglass interjected that JCMGA loses about the same number of members that we graduate each year. At present, we have 152 members and we average about 160.) Glenda Dicks asked that if anyone brought silent auction items for the March State Conference, to please give them to her. The question was asked if you are not planning to attend the conference the first day, can you still bring items with you. Glenda said she thought that it would be ok.

Communications Committee: Diane Remick asked members involved in projects to send her information to be added to the calendar on the website. Pictures are welcome and a nice addition. Carol asked that members forward to her any items for the newsletter.

(Minutes continued on following page)

(March 2015 Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes, continued)

Extension Report Ann Gray for Bethany announced that there would be a MG Booth at the Spring Plant Sale. Volunteers are needed. Please let Bethany know if you can staff the booth for a few hours during the sale.

Volunteer Opportunities Taylor Steele announced that the Spring Plant Sale is just one month away. The Plant Sale will be held in the Brookwood Village parking lot on the Macy's side, in a very large tent. Posters and business card announcements are available at the sign-in desk, along with volunteer applications—many are needed. The plant sale is staffed primarily by MGs. A group of seven workers planted 7000 tomato plants this past weekend.

Community Service Project Spotlight Members of the 2014 Master Gardener Class have received a State Award for Excellence in the Demonstration Garden Group. They faced stiff competition from Master Gardener groups around the state. Their project was located at the Sloss Furnace here in Birmingham. They received support from the Alabama Cooperative Extension and the Birmingham Historical Society. The Sloss Furnace is the only blast furnace in existence to be preserved for public use. The garden is entitled "Grandmother's Garden" and is designed to replicate a garden of the period. The garden includes ornamentals, medicinal plants and vegetables typically grown in the home garden. The garden is placed outside of an old homestead. The plantings included heirloom varieties of beans, corn, passion flower, eggplant, okra, peas, mint, rosemary, watermelon and mulberry trees, to name a few. Members continue to maintain the garden and meet each Wednesday, weather permitting, from 9-11 a.m. Volunteers are needed. Members of the group include Mary McLaughlin, Linda Goode, Kitty Lineberry, Antonia Viteri and Jane Fike. Group members unable to attend today's meeting include Lisa Markham, Sue Webb and Therese Bradford.

Speaker: Sallie Lee "So you want to go organic or grow organic"

Pat Cosgrove, 1st VP, introduced our speaker, Sallie Lee of the Alabama Cooperative Extension. Sallie presented an educational and informative talk on organic gardening.

Sallie talked about the similarities between natural, sustainable and organic. Some of the benefits of organic gardening are: better for your health, more environmentally friendly and positive effects on animal reproduction. Some drawbacks for organic gardening are: it can be more expensive, no preservatives are used so produce may not last as long and you may have a limited selection. Sallie presented information on soil practices including crop rotation and using cover crops. She discussed integrated pest management (IPM) and the benefits to our beneficial insects and pollinators. She emphasized that if utilizing diatomaceous earth, it is important to only use food grade products. She also talked about our native snake population many of which are effective in controlling pests including mice, rats and voles. The Eastern Milk Snake is our friend in controlling pests.

Sallie concluded with the following quote from Thomas Jefferson: "No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden."

Door Prizes were awarded.

President Ann Gray adjourned the meeting at 11:20am.

This meeting is accredited for 1.25 CEUs.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia Hall, Secretary

March 2015 Minutes, Part 2

Jefferson County Master Gardeners' Evening Meeting – March 17, 2015

President's Report and Routine Business

President Ann Gray Harvey called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. at BBG. There were 24 attendees present. Ann Gray welcomed attendees and visitors and asked that all sign in. She also thanked members who participated in arranging hospitality for this program. She reminded members to pick up their stars and award certificates.

The State Master Gardener Conference is scheduled for March 23-25. Registration information is located just outside of the GPIC office for those still needing to register.

The April 14 program will feature Eleanor Craig from Fern Ridge Farms. Her topic will be ferns.

There will be a Master Gardener booth at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens Spring Plant Sale. Volunteers are still needed to staff the booth and should contact Bethany O'Rear.

Program

Vice President Pat Cosgrove introduced speaker Bethany O'Rear. Bethany did her undergraduate and graduate work at Auburn University. She currently serves as a regional extension agent with the Alabama Extension Service and is headquartered here at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

Bethany presented an interesting and informative program entitled "APPS: A Gardeners Guide." Bethany emphasized that the apps that you use and recommend to others should be research-based. The first app that she introduced is the Alabama Extension's "Smart Yards" available for iOS and Androids. This is a free app. It is appropriate for use statewide.

Apps pertaining to landscape include "Hort Plants" from the University of Arkansas, which is comprehensive, a free download, and available for iOS devices. In this category, she also recommended Michael Dirr's app based on the *Dirr Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. This app is available for a fee of \$14.99 and is available for iOS devices. Lastly, she said that the "Invasive Plants in Southern Forests: Identification and Management" is now available as a free app for iOS devices.

ACES has also released an app for vegetables called "SOW." It will give you optimum planting times, how to plant, and includes days to harvest. This app is free and available for iOS and Android devices.

A general-use app entitled "NPK" has been released by the Extension Service. It is a mobile version of the fertilizer calculator. This app is free and available for iOS and Android devices. Bethany said that adjustments have been made to the soil testing reports that are more appropriate for the home garden.

There is also a "plant problem" app developed in cooperation with the Cooperative Extension and a number of universities including Connecticut, Michigan State, University of Kentucky, Ohio State and Purdue. It is a mobile version of the Plant Pathology Lab. The process requires that you complete a form and attach a photo of the leaf, bug, etc. This is a free app that is available for iOS only.

While not a gardening app, many of our plant groups are using Dropbox for file storage and sharing. You are able to share photos, videos and documents. The basic version allows 2 GB of free storage. It is available for iOS and Android devices.

Other apps presented included "Gardening in the South: Landscaping," based on the premise of "the right plant in the right place." There is a rain garden app available from the University of Connecticut. Lastly, Scotts has a free app entitled "My Lawn," which helps calculate square footage of your garden.

Bethany also introduced us to 3 ibooks that have been released by ACES. They include "Gardening in the South," "Gardening in the South: Pest Management," and "Gardening in the South: Landscaping." The ibooks are available for \$9.99 each.

Bethany entertained questions and some recommended apps from the audience included "Like that Garden" and "Leaf Snap".

Door Prizes: 2 door prizes were awarded.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

This meeting is accredited for 1 CEU.

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia Hall, Secretary

Upcoming Classes at Aldridge Gardens

To find information about other events or to register for classes, visit <http://aldridgegardens.com>.

Fairy Furniture and Gnome Knickknacks, with Jennifer Wallace, Saturday, April 25, 9-11 a.m.
\$20 Members/ \$27 Non-Members/

\$35 Member Adult with One Child 7 or older/ \$47 Non-Member with One Child 7 or older

Using materials from nature, you will learn to make charming miniature furniture, unlike any you have ever seen before. Jennifer will teach participants to construct a tiny chair perfect for a favorite fairy or gnome. Once the basic principles are learned, attendees will be able to build an entire furniture collection or anything else you can imagine!

Bring twigs - straight, curved, and crooked - with a diameter smaller than a pencil. Bring buttons, lace, pearls, ultra-fine glitter, etc. and clippers to cut twigs. Attendees are also encouraged to bring a glue gun if possible, or borrow one from us.

Prepare for fairies and gnomes to inhabit your garden!

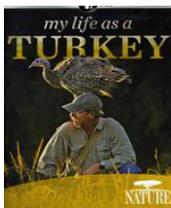
Volunteer Opportunities at Aldridge Gardens

If you are interested in volunteering at Aldridge Gardens and would like more information, contact Phyllis Giles at 205-682-8019, or send an email to volunteer@aldridgegardens.com. For more information, visit the Aldridge Gardens website.

News from the Library at Birmingham Botanical Gardens

For more information, visit www.bbgardens.org/library.

Thyme to Read book club:



The **Thyme to Read** book club will meet Tuesday, April 7, 6 p.m. in the Library at BBG to discuss the DVD *My Life as a Turkey*.

On May 12, 6 p.m., the club discusses the book *To See Every Bird on Earth: A Father, A Son, and a Lifelong Obsession* by Dan Koeppel.

For a full listing of book club selections for the coming year, visit the Library web site (see above).

Come join the group!

The Junior Master Gardener program engages children in novel, hands-on group and individual learning experiences that promote a love of gardening, develop an appreciation for the environment, and cultivate the mind. JMG also inspires youths to be of service to others. For more information, see www.bbgardens.org/classes.

Art Gallery in April: *East Asian Inspired Art: 7 Artists*

Seven artists have created an exhibit of painting, sumi-e, and photography in celebration of the art, subject matter, and tradition of East Asia. Represented are the traditional subjects of cherry blossom, koi, bamboo, teahouse, crane, ginger jar, persimmon and many more.

Artists are Sandra Babb, Carol Hobbs, Sherry Hullender, Janice Kennedy, Leslie O'Rear, Linda Rugina and Evelyn Maria Williams.

Library Volunteers Needed

Jason Kirby notes that the Library at the Gardens has an immediate need for additional volunteers on 3rd Saturdays (1 - 4 p.m.), 5th Saturdays (1 - 4 p.m.), and 4th Sundays (2 - 5 p.m.). Please contact Taylor Steele at 205-414-3962 or tsteele@bbgardens.org for more information and a volunteer application.

Educational Opportunities at Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Register online at www.bbgardens.org or, for more information, call Dawn Coleman at 205-414-3958.

Among upcoming classes at BBG - look online for more opportunities:

Small Space Solutions for Vegetables

Instructor: Brooke McMinn

Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Wednesday, April 8 | 10-11:30 a.m.

Free Members-Only Class

Gardening in small spaces can be surprisingly simple and rewarding. With a little planning and the proper tools, even the smallest spaces can be used to grow delicious and nutritious vegetables at home. Learn space-saving strategies to turn your windowsill, balcony or small backyard into a flourishing vegetable garden. We will discuss sunlight assessment, variety selection, container use and making the most of vertical space.

Certificate in Native Plant Studies Program

Find more information or register for classes online at <http://www.bbgardens.org/native-plant-studies.php>.

Among upcoming CNPS classes---look online for additional opportunities:

(You don't need to be enrolled in the entire series to attend this, or any other CNPS events.)

Spring-flowering Native Plants (elective)

Instructor: John Manion

Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Tuesday, April 14 | 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

\$40 Members | \$45 Non-Members

One of the most exciting annual events in the southeast is the flowering of our native spring wildflowers, many of them ephemeral. This class will examine what makes a plant an ephemeral and some of the special characteristics they possess. The classroom portion will address numerous aspects of these special plants, as well as other spring blooming native plants, which will be followed by ample time in The Gardens to view and discuss them. This is collaboration with participants in the Certificate in Native Plants program at the State Botanic Garden of Georgia.

**Check online for other upcoming CNPS classes and field trips;
they often fill fast, so plan ahead!**

Volunteer Opportunities in Native Plant Studies

Volunteer Workdays: Volunteer Workdays: Kaul Wildflower Garden Curator John Manion will lead volunteer sessions in the Kaul Wildflower Garden on April 2, 7, 10, 14, 21, 23, 28 and 30. The propagation group will gather on Friday, April 3. For more information, write John Manion at jmanion@bbgardens.org.

Getting Together!—State and Regional MG Meetings

Alabama Master Gardeners Association

The state meeting (AMGA) took place recently in Cullman, and JCMGA was well represented by the members pictured below.



2018 Southeastern Master Gardeners Conference

In exciting news, the **2018 Southeastern Master Gardeners Conference** may be coming to Birmingham.

Alabama is being asked to host the event, and the JCMGA will be responsible for much of the organization and leadership for this event.

If you are interested in helping, please see Fletcher Harvey, Bethany O'Rear, or Ann-Gray Harvey. Many good leaders will be needed!



JEFFERSON COUNTY
Master Gardeners

Bethany A. O'Rear
Regional Extension Agent
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
C. Beaty Hanna Horticulture and
Environmental Center
2612 Lane Park Road
Birmingham, AL 35223-1082

We're on the Web! Visit us at www.jeffcomg.org.

Also see Facebook pages for *Jefferson County Cooperative Extension System* and *Jefferson County Master Gardeners Association*