



Leaf



Notes



The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

President's Message-Spring 2020

This is our first edition of **Leaf Notes** published without David Peterson, our dear Friend of Lee County Master Gardeners and Honorary Lee County Master Gardener. During the last five years David served as the editor of **Leaf Notes** and won recognition from the Alabama State Master Gardeners Association for his work.

David managed to make us look smarter and more polished than we actually were and brought us joy with his eye for beauty and ability to capture it with his photography.

As I reflect on David's character, I am reminded of the qualities that defined him. Even though he suffered from failing health, David "carried on." He was always positive, always kind, and always looking for the beautiful.

During the last eight weeks we have been challenged with circumstances we never expected. In spite of the challenges, I am confident after speaking with many of you that those qualities of positivity, kindness, and creating beauty bind us together and will get us through this trying time.

Our intern class is bringing energy and talent to our group. Thanks to Betsy Akins for putting together an article to introduce the interns from the 2019 Master Gardeners class. A special thank you goes to Pat Giordano and Charlot Ritenbaugh for editing this Spring 2020 edition of **Leaf Notes**.

Happy Gardening,
Linda Nowlin
LCMGA President

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Quarterly Quote

Adopt the pace of nature, her secret is patience.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



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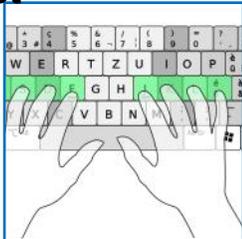
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Vacant, Editor

Master Gardeners are encouraged to submit articles,

If you are interested in sharing your talents to support LEAF NOTES, Please contact

Linda Nowlin
334 750-6205



The **Master Gardeners Program** educates volunteers in science-based gardening and landscape practices and helps them effectively extend research-based information to the public as Master Gardeners. The Master Gardener's role is primarily that of "educator." There are many different ways our volunteers in Lee County help the Alabama Extension System (ACES) expand outreach to the community. We construct and maintain community demonstration gardens and help implement community projects. A variety of garden-related programs and workshops are offered to the public.



Honorary Lee County Master Gardener

Nancy Golson David Peterson Susan Price

For his contribution and support given to the LCMGA and the Alabama Extension System
 November 2018

2019-2020
LCMG Officers

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Editor's Comments

This edition of **Leaf Notes** is dedicated to David Peterson, Friend, Honorary Member of Lee County Master Gardeners Association, photographer of plants, trees, wildlife, and editor of **Leaf Notes** from 2015 thru 2019.

Pat Giordano and Charlot Ritenbaugh have pulled together this special edition during this time of suspended social and civic gatherings. **There is a need for the right person to step forward and take on the position of Leaf Notes editor. This is a quarterly publication. Please contact Linda Nowlin if you are interested,**



Master Gardener Interns

Introductory Profiles

By Betsy Adkins

Meet **Shelley Aistrup**, a 2019 Master Gardener intern. Her interests vary broadly and include gardening, cooking, travel, and reading. Breeding her wiggly little dachshunds and playing Pokémon Go, engage her fun side. In class she especially appreciated learning about soil composition and the topography of Alabama, to deepen her knowledge of this unique state. She enjoyed visiting the demonstration gardens and was inspired by the passion of her fellow Master Gardeners. After learning about plant propagation, she feels more willing to raise plants from seed as well as try grafting and air layering.



Meet **Betsy Akins**, a 2019 Master Gardener intern. In addition to gardening, she likes to spend time walking, sketching, and paper and fabric crafting. While inspired to action by the composting class, she found the topics of botany and plant physiology especially interesting. Learning about the inner workings of plants, trees, and their growth seems miraculous to her. She plans to grow vegetables in container gardens as well as experiment with growing and drying herbs. Being in a community of fellow gardeners feels like quite a gift.

Meet **Faye Andrews**, recently retired from her career but her love has always been flowers, butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds! She bought her last home without going inside because the yard had such wonderful flowers and years and years of mulch! She thought it was time to learn more about what she had been enjoying for the past 30 years. Her favorite class is hard to pinpoint because she learned so much throughout the course. Composting, pollinators, and straw bale gardening were her favorited classes. Faye feels very



fortunate to be in a class with wonderful overachievers that have caused her to “raise” her game!

Meet **Sheila Bassett**, a 2019 Master Gardener intern.



Sheila enjoys most anything she is doing if it is outside, but cooking and sewing sometimes bring her indoors. She thinks of herself as a beginner and wishes she had taken the training sooner. She learned so much from the variety of learning experiences, our knowledgeable

leader, terrific speakers, and great interactions among our classmates. She found the topics of flowers and vegetables most helpful and is always thinking, “is this the right plant for the right spot?” She hopes that learning more about diseases and pests will help her better respond to these issues as they arise

Meet **Marcia Boosinger**, a 2019 Master Gardener

intern. Her interests include landscape design in shady environments as well as ornamentals, perennials, native plants, and attracting pollinators. In class, she really enjoyed the field trip to the Columbus Botanical Gardens as it was an unexpected discovery. The people of the class and Dani are real standouts for her and the LCMGA embodies more wonderful, interesting, devoted people than she has ever experienced in an organization. The classes helped her address overall management of her yard in the areas of design, plant care, and pruning. Composting and straw bale gardening are areas she might pursue. With an eye for environmental sustainability, Marcia wants to incorporate practices that attract insects, birds, and other wildlife.





Meet **Jennifer Cater**, a 2019 Master Gardener intern. Jennifer enjoys working in her yard, learning about native trees and shrubs, hiking/visiting national parks, and spending time with her adult children. The class on trees and tree identification was her favorite as she learned new trees that enhance her enjoyment of walking in the woods. She appreciated learning about the declining pollinator population and wants to add plants to her yard that will attract more pollinators. She has enjoyed social gatherings with our



class more recently, as it has been fun to get to know everyone better. She adds that her favorite part of gardening is enjoying the plants after they are planted and established i.e., after the work is over!

Meet **Carol Clemmons**, who enjoys gardening, baking, and running, but also devotes significant time to participating in disaster relief efforts. “Fantastic” is how she describes the classes, Dani, and all the guest speakers. The tree identification class at Gene Galloway’s property was a highlight, “as we walked with him through his woods, pointing out many native trees and teaching us about the landscape.” In class the subject of grafting really got her attention and she wants to try maple as well as camellia grafting in the near future. Gardening is very near to her heart as her mother taught her the joy of plants and flowers. She loves the way it brings people together and creates special memories, like all good arts.



Meet **Cathey King** who enjoyed learning both in class and on field trips, but especially appreciated the way field trips reinforced class material. The Kiesel Park trip revealed examples of an herb garden, a muscadine arbor, a sprinkler installation, several types of cater-

pillars, and examples of plants that thrive in our hot, southern climate. Her favorite class was on plant propagation because she had no idea that plants could

be reproduced in such simple and interesting ways. She thinks of a gardener as a scientific technician, realizing that it is daunting. The most captivating part of gardening for her though, is watching a plant change from a seed to a healthy, strong plant—it seems like magic!

Meet **Kim Lothrop** who has many interests and especially enjoys gardening, interacting with wildlife and animals, being outdoors, and reading. The landscape design class was a favorite. She appreciated learning the concepts and practices involved—goal-focused design, selecting the right plants for the right spot, and the importance of proper installation and maintenance. She really



likes everything about gardening, from getting her hands in the soil to the beautiful and/or tasty results. One of the best parts of the program is meeting so many really wonderful people.

Meet **Garnett McCollum**, who learned from all the classes, though the native garden tour in Opelika was his favorite. Greater understanding of native plants enhances his other interests of traveling, walking, and hiking. Garnett also appreciated collecting a lot of new information on growing fruits and flowers. He is now planning better ways to fertilize and prune his blueberries.





Meet **Susan McCollum**, who in addition to being a gardener, is also an artist and painter. She stays very active and especially enjoys crafts, cooking, and hiking. The Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail in Opelika was a favorite experience as it fed her interest in native plants and wildlife. From the entomology class, she will be better able to manage pests without environmental harm and support beneficial insects. She and husband Garnett place high value on learning how to be good stewards of the environment and are engaged in composting and recycling at home. On their rural property, they carefully plan tree thinning and transplanting to make room for native plants, minimize invasive species, and arrange for shelter and food for native animals, birds,, and insects.



Meet **Mary Simon**, she loved the classes so much that she wants to repeat them. Class highlights were propagation, pests, and the field trip to the Columbus Botanical Gardens. She appreciated the variety of learning experiences and felt that Dani really helps to make it fun. There was so much that fed her strong interest in residential landscaping, but the propagation topic inspired her to focus on starting her own plants this spring. After listening to the presentation in Columbus, she wants to plant a ginkgo tree in her back yard.



Study nature,
love nature,
stay close to nature.
It will never fail you.

Frank Lloyd Wright



Meet **Carolyn Plott**, a 2019 Master Gardener intern. This is her second training, having first taken it in Blount County several years ago.

After moving here last year, she decided to refresh herself with the classes and training. She loves to be outdoors especially when camping, hiking, walking, fishing, and of course, gardening. Her favorite class experiences were visits to the Columbus Botanical Gardens and the Opelika wildflower garden as they suited her preference for a more active style of learning. She particularly enjoyed the composting class and learning about worms. On the overall subject of gardening, she has always loved vegetable and fruit gardening, likely due to her delight in the edible rewards that result!



Pipevine Swallowtail caterpillar,
Kiesel Park Demo Garden
May 2020



Hummingbird Banding Demonstration

Fall 2019

by Diann Weeks

Fred Bassett, retired Air Force pilot, knows his hummingbirds...he's been to over 1,300 sites around the country banding hummingbirds and educating the public. Last year he traveled over 40,000 miles, everywhere from Miami to Alaska! He records all data and has published seven papers.

On September 21, at the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center, my husband and I were fortunate to attend his program on hummingbirds. A crowd of about 40 people eagerly listened to his comments and watched as he banded one hummingbird.

Fred provided much interesting information, and so far we're doing the right things for the hummingbirds. We seemed to have attracted quite a continuous swarm with our one feeder hanging down from fishing line on our back porch.

We find the hummers are so entertaining throughout the day and do not cease feeding when we go out on the porch very close to their feeder. They zoom in and out, chasing one another as they jockey for position to feed. Some can be more aggressive and try to keep other hummers away. They appear to approach from the woods adjacent to our yard, and we can also detect a few when they perch in a nearby tree branch with our binoculars.

Fred did say that a praying mantis would kill hummingbirds by slitting their throats! I saw one on my window near our feeder last week, I won't be kind if I see it again.

Fred said that on or about October 10 they will disappear because they have begun their long, non-stop journey to Mexico for their winter homes. We will miss them until they return in March. Maybe we have additional feeders by then.



photos by Diann Weeks



The Busiest Person We Could Find

By Pat Giordano

We all know the axiom that if you want something done, ask a busy person. When Raleine Sillman resigned her long-held position of Media Coordinator for LCMGA, Shelley Aistrup volunteered and the Board eagerly and unanimously accepted her offer. We welcomed Shelley as Interim Media Coordinator at our January Board meeting. There is much that you should know about Shelley.

BEFORE she joined the Board, she jumped in with great energy to update our ACES Directory. She used her technical skills, her people skills and her organizational skills to make our Directory the envy of Alabama MG organization. Our Directory is now useful and welcoming.

BEFORE she updated the Directory, she was in the Intern Class of 2019 and will very soon complete the requirements to be certified. She established a "GroupMe" for all the Interns which they use to communicate and which the Board has tapped into to ask the interns for help on our projects.

BEFORE she was an Intern, Shelley and her husband Joe were homeowners on the 2018 "Gardens On Tour" and shared their lovely Kimberly Drive yard and garden with Master Gardeners and the Community.

BEFORE she readied her garden to be on the tour, she joined as a Lifetime Friend of LCMGA. Shelley was still employed full-time but knew she wanted to be an active part of our group as soon as the time was right .



Shelley gardens at her home on Kimberly Drive .

Shelley does not shy away from daunting tasks. She is setting up the GroupMe for all of us to share our gardens during this period when we cannot have in person pop-ups, she has set up our first ever Zoom Board Meeting and will be dragging us (hopefully not kicking and screaming) into the technology world.

Professionally, Shelley comes from an educational background. Raised in small towns in Kansas and Missouri, Shelley has taught in Kansas, Indiana and Virginia. Before she and Joe moved to Auburn in 2014, she was a principal in Manhattan KS where she managed 2 buildings with students from pre-school through 6th grade. Her last position prior to retiring was a principal of Auburn Early Education Center.



Joe and Shelley have 2 children. Sarah is a manager of a restaurant in Lawrence KS and Sam is working to become an electrician in Fort Collins, CO. Shelley learned much about gardening from her

grandparents and her mother. Not only is Shelley proficient of growing in the garden, she is growing and learning new skills and now she is sharing the talents with us as Media Coordinator.

We are all very excited to have Shelley join the Board and help us organize our communications within our organization and also our messages to the community.



A BIG Thank You Raleine

By Pat Giordano

Raleine Sillman, longtime Master Gardener and Board Member, reluctantly stepped down as Media Coordinator due to personal health issues. We are happy to report that she is feeling much better and we look forward to seeing her once we begin meeting in person again.



Raleine took the MG class in 2012 and was on the Board from 2013 to 2019. Her position of Public Affairs Officer was retitled Media Coordinator in 2017. Raleine has also coordinated the LCMGA table at the East Alabama Home and Garden Show since 2015. This event is one of the earliest events of the year and draws big crowds. Raleine always set up an amazing display for our organization.

We look forward to seeing Raleine, her husband Glenn and her Mom, Libby Davis, at our next gathering. Until then, we wish them all good health and happy growing!



Raleine in front of her fantastic displays for the East Alabama Home and Garden Show and (lower left) advertising for an upcoming LCMGA fundraiser.



Master Gardeners, Friends and AU Arboretum staff celebrate the ribbon cutting for newly installed "Oak Alley" signage supported by a grant from LCMGA.

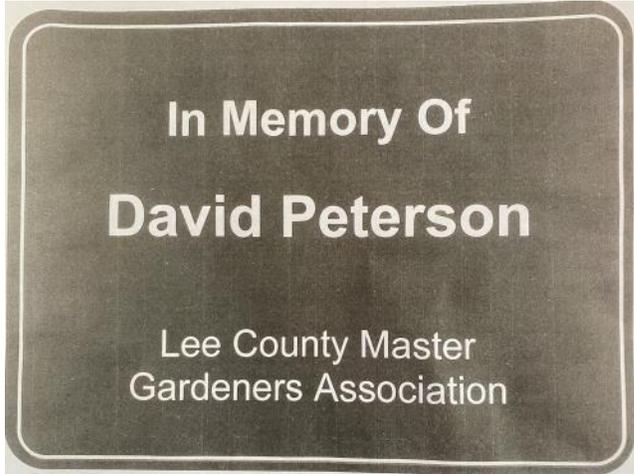
A Camellia Planting



(A special selection for a special guy)

By Dennis Pinkard

On January 22, 2020, the LCMGA Board voted to explore the feasibility of planting a camellia in the Camellia Garden at the Lee County Historical Society in Lochapoka in memory of David Peterson. Dennis Pinkard and Charles Mitchell supported the idea and validated the plan with the leadership of the Auburn Opelika Men's Camellia Club. The Club also donated a special Auburn Series Camellia 'Sweet Auburn' for planting. The LCMGA will acquire a plaque to be placed in the Camellia Garden to identify this planting. In addition to the 'Sweet Auburn' Camellia, the Club also donated two sets of postcards highlighting the Auburn Series Camellias to our Association.



Camellias are beloved shrubs in Alabama and the southeastern US. A large part of the allure of these shrubs is the existence of more than 20,000 named camellia cultivars. The Club has begun an Auburn Series of chosen cultivars grown from

hybridized crosses fertilized by carefully selected pollen. The Auburn Series currently consists of ten named cultivars. Names are chosen from words familiar to Auburn fans, community member names, or community locations.

In the future, the Camellia Garden at Lochapoka will be listed on the American Camellia Society Trail Map. The Club is close to having at least 50 camellias planted at this site. Expect to see this official listing as early as 2021.



'Sweet Auburn'



March 9, 2020 planting at Lee County Historical Society.

Left: Susan Peterson

Right:

Dennis Pinkard, Linda Nowlin, Lane Sauser, Susan, Margaret Holler, Beth Dorman, Susan Parker, Becky Large, Carol and Ralph Womer, Bob and Charlot Ritenbaugh



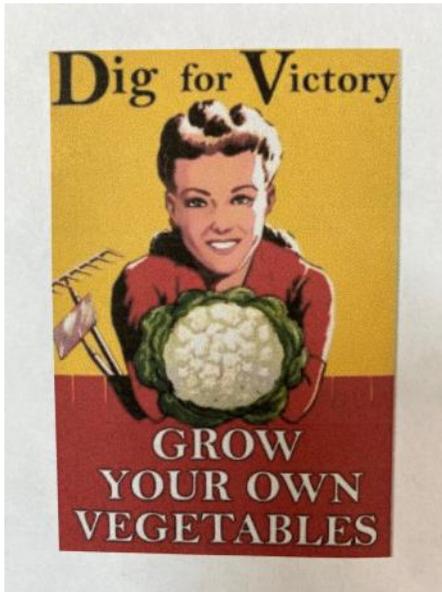
Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of the earth.

Henry David Thoreau



Food Supply Anxiety Brings Back Victory Gardens

Submitted by Pat Giordano



During WWI, the National War Garden Commission promoted home gardening and food preservation. They inspired students—calling them “soldiers of the soil”—to help plant Liberty Gardens. When it started to look like the US and its allies would win the war, the name of the gardens was changed to Victory Gardens.

“Small things count,” read a headline in the tiny, insistent pamphlet published by the National War Garden Commission in 1919. The pitch made gardening a civic duty, calling on Americans to grow food in whatever spaces they could — rooftops, fire escapes, empty lots, backyards. It maintained that there was nothing more valuable than self-sufficiency,

And though the illustrations were cute, the text was urgent: “Prevention of widespread starvation is the peacetime obligation of the United States. ... The War Garden of 1918 must become the Victory Garden of 1919.”

This push started in the context of another pandemic, the influenza outbreak of 1918. Gardens flourished on the home front because people were eager to build their own community-based food security, and to cultivate something beautiful and useful in times of great stress and uncertainty.

Eleanor Roosevelt began a new Victory Garden campaign after Pearl Harbor was bombed and Americans dug in once again. When victory gardens came back to prominence during World War II, so many people took the movement to heart that, at one point, it’s estimated that home, school and community gardeners produced close to 40 percent of the country’s fresh vegetables, from about 20 million gardens. As the war ended, and lawns took over American backyards, those earnest posters of cheery home gardeners and fierce-looking vegetables became a relic of wartime scarcity — until a few weeks ago.

Reviving the idea of Victory Gardens resonates as trips to the grocery store become fraught with fears of coronavirus exposure, and shoppers worry that industrial agriculture could fail them during a pandemic. With panicked shoppers cleaning out stores, even those with no gardening experience are searching for do-it-yourself YouTube videos on how to build a raised bed. Technology has made 2020 Victory Gardening very different from 1918 and 1943. Seeds and plants can be ordered online. Garden stores provide curbside loading of soil amendments, tomato cages and hand tools.

But now as before, gardening is positive and good for morale; it is a bipartisan act—not red or blue—just green. Planting is a hopeful act and will provide a break from the news of the day.



20 million victory gardens were planted in the United States during WW II.