



Barbara Whatley's Garden of Delights



Photo by Jolly Roberts

Down a dirt drive out from Tuskegee, Master Gardener Barbara Whatley (2003) and her husband, Barney, built a log cabin 35 years ago in what was a barren pasture surrounded by woods. Today the land is ringed with flowers and plants of all colors and stripes. In her first efforts to transform the four acres, Barbara began by planting pines and some hardwoods to bring more shade to the area.

Her current focus is a border she started about eight years ago across the yard from her cabin. Paths of brick, gravel and stone weave through the border with

handmade creations fashioned from recycled glass, metal and wood adding bits of color and height throughout the flower beds. Her garden has a rhythm and flow from its organic roots as she adds a tree here or a birdbath there and then moves the bed forward to enclose the new addition. The garden is one for all seasons — as some flowers fade, others burst forth. With her innate sense of color and use of texture it all blends seamlessly.

Matching her green thumb and creativity is her generosity of spirit as she shares her

knowledge, time and plants freely. Barbara delights in seeing seeds grow into plants and nurturing their growth to a cheerful bounty. As a good gardener does, she moves her shrubs and flowers around till she finds just the right happy spot.

Taking it all in, her garden looks like a masterwork to me, but what Barbara will tell you is “I just piddle around out here. This is just what I do.”

— Tomie Dugas, MG Class of 2004

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Up & Coming Events

- June 5, 5pm, The Preserve Club House, 2174 Red Tail Ln, Auburn, Monthly meeting. Bring finger foods with serving utensils. Spouses, provisional members and Friends invited. No program.
- June 8, 10am-2pm Lee Co Fairgrounds, Lee Co Agricultural Fair. Free Admission. Free barbecue, farmers market, inflatables, kids tractor pull, exhibits & prizes.
- June 15, 10am-12pm; June 16, 2-4pm, Kiesel Park Pavilion, Hypertufa Workshop. \$20 fee. Contact Becky Large at 334-745-5312 to register.
- June 22, 1pm, Kiesel Park Service Room in the Winston-Nunn House, Arlie Powell of Petals From the Past will speak on Citrus Trees.
- June 29, 7am-2pm, Petals from the Past, Jemison, Annual Plant Sale.
- July 10, 11:30am, Extension office, Monthly Meeting. Brown bag lunch. Speaker: Steve Crannell on Drip Irrigation System Installation.
- July 19, 12-1:30pm, Field Trip to Young's Plant Farm's Trial Garden Open House. For info contact Becky Large at 334-745-5312.
- Aug 7, 11:30am, Extension office, Monthly Meeting. Brown bag lunch. Speaker: Dennis Pinkard on Our Culture.
- Apr 28-30, 2014, Daphne, "Alabama...A Gardeners Jubilee," 2014 AMGA annual conference.

Notes from the President

by MG President Dennis Pinkard, Class of 2007

Several topics are included in my thoughts for this edition of Leaf Notes. The first is to thank Tomie Dugas and Latha Bhavnani for our wonderful newsletter. It is a difficult job and our co-editors ask for little except ideas and articles from us. And, I confess that I am frequently the cause of the tardiness of the newsletter. But I am so appreciative and grateful for the wonderful job that Tomie and Latha do to keep us informed in such a colorful, expressive and informative way. Like many of our Master Gardeners and Friends, they work quietly and tirelessly behind the scenes and rarely receive the recognition and praise they deserve for their work. Thank you! And please accept my apology for not being more forthcoming with my column.

We also want to recognize and discuss our very successful Friends of Lee County Master Gardeners. As of this writing we have 36 members in our Friends membership category. The board created this category less than a year ago for those folks who have expressed an interest in the Master Gardener program but who do not have the time to complete the course and the volunteer hours and CEUs. There are those in our community who are interested in gardening and want to belong to a public service organization such as ours that is deeply invested in our community. They want to make a contribution also, and LCMGA is a place for them to make friends while participating in a hobby they enjoy. We Master Gardeners need to reach out to our Friends by introducing ourselves, getting to know them and inviting them to participate in all our events. We want to find ways to involve our Friends and to show our appreciation. If you have ideas, let Beth and me know.

And, congratulations to graduates of the Master Gardener course! Graduates are now Provisional Members. About a dozen of us began the course with our then Interns and served them lunch at their first meeting. At that meeting we told them that the real fun and enjoyment comes after graduation and full integration into LCMGA. We also said that this will become a life changing pursuit through their contributions to our community and the friends and education they will receive through affiliation with us. I will be speaking to all of LCMGA in the next couple of months to get us all aligned with our bylaws and operations of the organization. It is a good time for a reminder and never better than when we have had so many new folks join us as Friends and Provisional members. And, we all need a refresher on how we do business and how we can best support the community.

Lastly, we are so fortunate to have such a supportive staff at the Lee County Extension Office (LCEO). Beginning with Chuck Browne, a great mentor and

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My “Master Gardener” Plants

By *Chuck Browne* 

I think most all of you know Chip East. He and I spent a most enjoyable day working together recently. While I can graft things somewhat successfully, Chip can graft things very successfully. I had some trees in various locations in Lee County that needed grafting, and Chip was kind enough to lend me his skills that day.

We met at my place on Lake Martin in the morning and put a few scions of Japanese persimmons on some native persimmons I am growing. We then traveled to Auburn and Opelika for the day and ended up back at the lake that afternoon. Of course, I had to show him around my place and my “collection” of plants.

As we walked around I would comment Trudy Baker gave me this columbine. Betty Jordan gave me this rhododendron that she rooted from Dr. Dennis Rouse’s yard. Hugh McLendon gave me this serviceberry

tree. When we got to the figs I said, “The big one is a brown turkey that Leary Whatley gave me 20 years ago. That one is a giant Texas fig Raymond Newman gave me. And this one is an LSU purple that you gave me when you interned in the Lee County office 15 years ago.”

He confessed that he didn’t remember doing that, but I certainly did. After some thought, I realized that I am the same way. I give people plants all the time, and I don’t remember doing that either. But a lot of times, I will run into someone saying “you know... that such and such you gave me is really getting big.” I usually smile because usually I don’t remember giving plants. What I do remember, though, is who shared plants with me. For some reason, I remember every one!

As Master Gardeners I’m sure you all give plants too. The next time that you do, think back to this article in Leaf Notes. That person probably will never forget who gave them that plant.

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spokesman for us, who will go to any length to help us and provide all the things we need. All members of the LCEO treat us like family, and we are welcomed any time we are there. Although they are understaffed and very busy, they take time to help us when we need it. Please remember to thank them and always try not to overwhelm them with demands on their time. And remember, you can do any volunteer time you desire while helping them with any Extension program.

We are always seeking ideas and ways of doing things better. If you have ideas please let me or a board member hear from you. We have not yet reached our full potential. There is much more we can do for the citizens of Lee County.

See y’all in the garden,
Dennis



Photos by Linda Nowlin

Volunteers at Grandma’s Garden recently installed drip irrigation around viburnums that were planted to screen rainwater holding tanks. Steve Crannell and Rick Himmer shared their expertise in drip irrigation while additional volunteers assisted, photographed and documented each step in the installation. These volunteers hope to organize their materials and share them with other gardeners interested in drip irrigation projects.

Potpourri # 25

by Dr. William B. Shell, MG Class of 1998

This past February, I held my fourth annual Japanese maple grafting party at my place. The first three parties were held at Pat Dye's beautiful Quail Hollow Gardens. The party consisted of about 15 personally selected individuals who have a passion for Japanese maple and want to improve on their grafting prowess. We had no agenda over the two or three days but our interest in grafting, tall tales, good food and drink. It seems like everything came together exactly right, and we had the most successful graft take we've ever had!

Now most of you know that to graft a Japanese maple you need good rootstock and good scions. Well, this year we had healthy rootstock that was just beginning

to break dormancy and good, fat scions primarily from a Murasaki kiyohime (MK). This particular cultivar usually produces small twigggy scions (new growth) that are pretty small and a bit difficult to graft. Not the case this year! This year, they were twice as large as usual and easily grafted. We had at least 10 people to graft the MK, and out of about 60 grafted, I think we lost only two, and some of these were grafted by people who had never grafted before.



Quite a show, and to what do I attribute this success? One reason is I had the rootstock dry. It had not been watered in a month. This would tend to keep the sap from rising and thus drown the scion. Another reason was that the scions were good and dormant and were full of nutrients, and also I kept the greenhouse warm. These three things made for an excellent start. Additionally, three or four of us who had a lot of experience in grafting served as tutors to the ones who had little or no experience. And finally, James Barnes who excels in knife sharpening outdid himself in grilling the steaks Saturday night. Really good group!!

At one of our last MG meetings we had William White do a program on photography. Really excellent job! Well, I meant to suggest that we have a photographing party at my place with William there to take us through a hands-on session in photographing the outdoors from rocks and creeks to flowers and trees. Think about it, and maybe one of you can set it up. I'm pretty much at your pleasure. If any of you want to come out and view the beautiful Japanese maples, be my guest!



Photos by William Shell

Left top: Lee Borden tries his hand at grafting a Murasaki kiyohime on to root stock.

Left bottom: Amanda Borden and Kathy Haynie practice grafting on seedling Japanese maples.

Middle top: Peggy DeArmon picks out the perfect size seedlings for her grafts.

Middle bottom: A successful graft sends out its delicate first leaves.

Right top: Attention to detail is necessary for grafting success.

April Picnic Meeting at Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail

by Billie Oliver, MG Class of 2012

Lee County MGs met for their April monthly meeting at Opelika Municipal Park for a picnic and short business meeting. Following the meeting, the group walked along the Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail to observe the new plantings. Crossvines have been planted along the front fence, while Piedmont azaleas, *R. canescens* and itea line the right side of the trail. Ernest Koones from Garden Delights in Pine Mountain donated plumleaf azaleas which were planted with Atamasco lilies donated by the Deans. Bottle-brush buckeyes were added to the bench area.

In addition to the split-cedar fencing for the mid-section, Opelika Parks and Rec moved a message board on site, refurbished by Steve Crannell. It currently displays photos of native azaleas that bloom March through August and lists other native shrubs. An American wisteria grows beside the board.

Cooler weather delayed the blooming of some wildflowers this spring, but starts of more than 100 plant species now line the trail. Dennis Pinkard demonstrated how to plant native azaleas for the group.

In April and May a cluster of parsley hawthorns and an American smoketree were planted in newly cleared areas. Azaleas, agarista, itea, trillium and Georgia asters were sprinkled in with others and more are awaiting their turn. Who wants to spend the summer in a black bucket?

Great progress on the CDWT is the result of a wonderful cooperative effort from lots of Lee County Master Gardeners. Thanks again for your support!



Master Gardeners visit Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail as part of the April MG meeting.

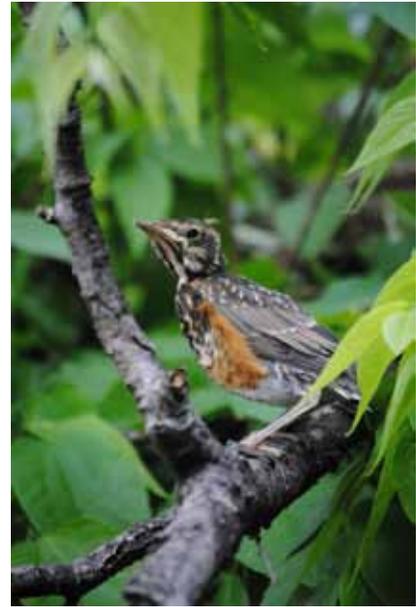


Photo by Mike Handley

With this photo sent in by Gita Smith, a LCMG class of 2002, now living in Montgomery, she notes: In early summer, one of our backyard delights is a robin family that returns to the same hackberry tree every year. Here's a 2013 fledgling on its first walk down the branch.



Photo by Beth Dorman

Steve Crannell loads mulch into a truck bed during the spring mulch sale fundraiser. The efforts of Steve and Wayne Smith on the tractor, coordinator Toby Hoover and all the volunteers who spent Saturday mornings helping things run smoothly contributed to the \$2,704 we brought in this season with a net of \$1,667. Thanks also to Wayne for loan of the tractor and Johnny and Maggie Lawrence for allowing us the use of their land.

Barbara's Garden Album



Top left: Barbara fashioned a garden entrance from old daybed ends and plastic pipe. The entrance frames a side view of the cabin she and Barney built from a kit.

Top right: A small rock path stretches from the pergola to the pavilion and circles around a stacked angled planting bed with colorful plants of varied textures.

Middle left: A cracked birdbath still serves as a quiet spot for an angel sculpture surrounded by stonecrop.

Middle right: The pergola originally built by a friend from recycled porch columns was the centerpiece of her garden early on. It is also the site of a bird of paradise from an LCMG friend, a large plumeria and citrus trees in pots.

Bottom right: Barney usually plows the vegetable garden while Barbara helps with planting, upkeep and picking.





Top left: Barbara's handwork is shown in the stone and paver floor of the pavilion and in the "coffin-sized" hypertufa trough she created herself as a water feature with a recycled red pump to be powered by solar energy.

Top right: Paths of different materials flanked by flowers connect her pergola, pavilion and work table (the latter two shown here). Note the different textures and colors in her landscape. She injects the hard-to-find blues into the mix with her bottle "bush," table, chairs and containers. Barbara also has a bottle tree fashioned from a small cedar tree whose limbs were shortened but is still in the ground with roots intact.

Bottom left: The multipurpose table where she can pot her many container plants, do her craft work or snack in the garden was recycled and repaired for use outside.

This is the first of a series featuring Master Gardeners' Gardens. Nominations for future gardens and writers are encouraged.

Photos by Jolly Roberts

Demonstration Gardens at Kiesel Park

By Charlot Ritenbaugh, MG Class of 2011

Numerous interesting plants are currently blooming in the LCMGA demonstration garden at Kiesel Park. Here are six of my favorites.

Found in the "heritage garden" is a fall planted Muscari comosum "Plumbosum." This muscari is the latest blooming of the genus. The image shown was captured on May 14th. Its feathery violet plume was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson and other colonial gardeners. It arrived in North America from England circa 1612.

Ruta graveolens, common rue, is a butterfly larval plant in the "butterfly garden." Bright yellow flowers and blue green foliage make this an attractive shrubby herb. Be cautious because rue is known to irritate the skin of some gardeners.

Rose, hybridized by Baldwin County MG Kazuko Russell, this peachy rose-colored shrub-sized old-fashioned garden rose continues to bloom from mid-March to December in the "cutting



Muscari comosum "Plumbosum"



Ruta graveolens, common rue



Sangisorba minor, salad burnet



Lychinis, rose campion



Sisyrinchium, sweet blue-eyed grass

garden." It is named Kazuko, which means harmony and peace in Japanese. Several rooted cuttings have been shared among our membership.

Sangisorba minor, salad or garden burnet, has a strong cucumber taste. It is a perennial herb native to Europe and Asia. Chopped young leaves can be added to salads or oil and vinegar dressings or even in summer beverages. Locate this tasty underused gem in our "herb garden."

In the "meditation garden" the velvety flowers of Lychinis, or rose campion, sit on widely branched silver stems. Catch this gorgeous floral display before it disappears in the humidity of an Alabama summer.

And don't leave the gardens before you admire the sweet blue-eyed grass, Sisyrinchium, in the "native garden." Forming evergreen, grassy clumps, these yellow-centered pale blue blooms open for one day only in the morning sun and close at dusk, just like Kiesel Park.

What a wonderful time of year to come out to the garden. Thanks to our work team for such a gift to us all.



Kazuko rose

Controlling Weeds in Flower Beds and Vegetable Gardens



by *Mallory Kelley*
Regional Extension Agent
Home Grounds, Gardens,
Home Pests

A weed can have many definitions, but its true definition is “a plant out of place.” Some weeds are more than just irritating eyesores – some can be aggressive and very difficult to control. It is very important that you stay on top of weed control especially in perennial flower beds. If weeds get out of hand, your only method of control is hand weeding. In the case of an annual bed, since you will be pulling out plants seasonally, it does allow more options in controlling weeds in between plantings and with a pre-emergent.

Overall, the best way to prevent or control weeds in your gardens is to mulch. Mulch truly is one of the best things a gardener can do far beyond just the benefits of weed control. Adding mulch helps add organic material and nutrients as it breaks down, creates a barrier between soil fungi and diseases and also helps retain moisture to the plants.

All gardeners know weeds love vegetable gardens. There’s plenty of sun, the soil is great, water is plentiful and no competition between rows. So what exactly should you do to control them?

If weeds are in your vegetable garden, beyond mulching, the old proven method of hand pulling, hoeing and tilling are best as many

weeds are close to the vegetable plants, and you have to be careful about using herbicides.

In selecting a herbicide, Roundup is best. Roundup kills all vegetation and starts working immediately. The great thing about this herbicide is that it only affects the green plant tissue it comes in contact with. Once Roundup touches the soil, it becomes inactive so no need to worry about it getting into the water and affecting other plants. For best results apply Roundup when weeds are actively growing. For very hard to kill weeds it will more than likely take multiple sprays before you kill the weed, but generally weeds begin to wilt within hours and are dead within one to two weeks.

Spray Roundup when air is calm to prevent drift to desirable plants. One gallon covers approximately 300 square feet. Even on a calm day, be sure to use a piece of cardboard or plastic to shield your vegetable plants or shrubs, and reserve one sprayer specifically for herbicides so you do not chance residues remaining in the tank. Roundup also can be used in the landscape around trees and shrubs, but again, make sure to shield all desirable plants from any drift. If you begin to see leaves on plants in your garden or landscape that have a puckering in between the veins and a distorted look, it is more than likely the result of herbicide drift.

Trifluralin is an active ingredient that can be used as a preventative

for weeds in both the vegetable garden and also in shrub beds. If applying in a vegetable bed, the application needs to be made at least six weeks before planting any seeds and then can be applied once all plants are up and actively growing for continued control. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions.

In the shrub bed, I am often asked about using landscape fabric. This will work well for the first year or two, but will more than likely cause you much more work than just pulling weeds years down the road. Eventually, the mulch breaks down and forms soil build up on the fabric, and weeds will begin to grow on top of the fabric. As years pass, the fabric will become weak, rip and tear, and then when you finally decide to remove the fabric, it is almost impossible. So my best suggestion is to stay away from weed fabric in the landscape.

The best method I have found in either the vegetable garden or in the landscape bed is to use thick sheets of newspaper around your plants and then cover with a layer of 2 to 4 inches of mulch (pine straw or pine bark). The newspaper and mulch will keep weeds out from spring to fall (depending on how thick), and it will add nutrients to your soil while inhibiting weed growth. The more you control weeds this year, the less of a problem they’ll be next year.

Lee MG Workshops

By Becky Large, MG Class of 2010

Since the first of the year, Lee County MGs have conducted three workshops for the public: Different Soils for Different Plants, Terrariums and Photography in the Garden. Still to come are two workshops this summer: Hypertufas and Citrus Trees.

The hypertufa workshop is scheduled for June 15th at 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 16th at 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. at Kiesel Park's pavil-

ion. Participants in the class will make a plant container out of cement, peat moss and vermiculite that resembles a stone trough. The class also involves learning about plants that work well in this type container. The hypertufas will be made on Saturday from molds supplied by the instructor or ones participants wish to bring. On Sunday the containers will be unmolded and refined and can be taken home to cure. Spaces are still available for the class, which costs \$20 for supplies. Contact Becky Large at large_becky@yahoo.com or call 334-740-2643 to sign up for the workshop.

On June 22nd at 11 a.m. we are honored to have Arlie Powell of Petals from the Past come to talk about growing citrus trees in our area. He is a retired Auburn University Extension System horticulturist and had mature citrus trees growing in his yard when he lived in Auburn. The workshop is free and open to the public. It will be held in the service room at the back of the Nunn-Winston House in Kiesel Park. For more information on this workshop, contact Becky Large at large_becky@yahoo.com or call 334-740-2643.



Photo by Jolly Roberts

Rie Somlai practices her photography in the demonstration garden after the Photography in the Garden Workshop in May.



Photo by Beth Dorman

Participants enthusiastically fill their glass containers at the Terrarium Workshop in April.

LEE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL FAIR

June 8, 2013 • Lee County Fairgrounds • 10am-2pm

Free Admission • Free Barbecue • Locally Grown Farmers Market • Kids Tractor Pull • Inflatables • Livestock Exhibits • Exhibit of Old Cars & Tractors • Over 50 Exhibitors • Prize Drawings • Grand Prize: a Grill & Supply of Steaks

Sponsored by the Lee County Farmers Federation



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