



Leaf Notes

The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners



Summer 2012

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Friends of Master Gardeners Program



By Jolly Roberts, MG Class of 2003

Recently, the Lee County Master Gardeners voted to begin a Friends of Master Gardeners (FMG) program similar to those seen in other states. The program will give garden enthusiasts in our community more direct access to our programs and activities. It will also function as a bridge for anyone interested in joining Master Gardeners, but waiting for a class to become available, or whose work schedule currently prevents them from taking the MG class.

Those who join FMG can become involved right away. They can participate in our programs and projects as their schedules

permit while learning more about the Master Gardening program.

Benefits for our new "Friends":

- FMGs will give members of the community an opportunity to participate in our educational programs and field trips, and also the opportunity to volunteer along-side MGs – as they are able – on projects they want to support.
- Their hours will be entirely voluntary with no minimum requirements.
- Active FMGs will have the opportunity to receive recognition for their participation.
- They will receive our newsletter and emails about upcoming events, programs and classes.

- They can attend LCMGA monthly membership meetings as non-voting participants.
- FMGs who become MGs will have a smoother transition. They will know about our projects and activities and what roles they can play.

Benefits for LCMGA:

- The FMG program will be supported by FMG annual dues.
- It will strengthen our ties to the people in our community.
- FMGs can provide additional support for our projects, events and fundraisers.
- FMGs working alongside MGs will better understand the range of activities and responsibilities involved in being an MG should they advance to MG training.
- Those who continue on to MG training will benefit their classmates with their practical experience and will have a better understanding of their future roll, making them more likely to become and remain active members.

A brochure has been prepared to introduce the program, explain the role of Friends of Master Gardeners and let people know how to join. It explains what Master Gardeners are and how Friends are different. The brochure also offers a "Supporting Friends" category for those who would like to make a financial donation instead of or in addition to joining as a FMG. The brochures will be available at our programs and events and for our members to pass along to interested friends. If you would like a copy or have friends that may be interested, just come to the next monthly meeting or talk to one of the MG officers and we will provide you with brochures. A printable PDF of the brochure will also be available on our website at www.LeeMG.org.

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Master Gardeners are encouraged to submit articles, ideas, notices. Please send materials to:

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Notes from the President

by MG President Dennis Pinkard, MG Class of 2007

Our discussion this month is about housekeeping. Necessary, but boring you may think. Although, as we have grown over the past couple of years, we must change and evolve to meet the needs of our customers, the Extension System and the public, while providing better support to our members.

For the first time we are implementing our version of project management. We spent time talking about this at our last monthly meeting, and we have asked our three project managers to prepare briefs on the status of Kiesel Park, Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail and Grandma's Garden and to include a budget request for fiscal year 2013 (FY13). We think that project leaders will be better prepared for the future, and the association will be informed about plans and how association resources will be committed. Our bylaws are being revised to reflect our changing ways of doing business. Please be patient while our processes are catching up.

Next, we have determined that we must have an annual budget, approved by the association, to best govern how to use our resources the following year. The Budget Committee – Judy, Patti, Jolly, Ron and Dennis, led by our treasurer, Sarah – has been working on a draft to present to the board before asking the association to approve it in October. This document will assist us in many ways to prioritize our plans for the following FY and will turn into our blueprint for the future. We encourage all of you to provide ideas to Sarah and to be present at our October meeting, where we will review the draft and lay in place our plans for FY13 (Oct.1, 2012–Sept. 30, 2013).

And, if all that isn't enough to think about, more changes are coming as we rotate our leadership in a few key positions: public affairs officer from Jolly to Ron, Grandma's Garden lead from Debbie to Linda and Kiesel Park's lead from Carol to Charlot. Please view "change" as "growth" from the new ideas we receive from others. We need to be grooming our next set of leaders and helping them learn how to take the baton and accelerate. And, at the same time, we are grateful for the jobs that Jolly, Debbie and Carol have done and the commitment they have made to the association. Please thank them while supporting their replacements.

We have much to be grateful for, and our plate remains full with blessings and wonderful opportunities to support the public.

Hope to see you in the garden,
Dennis

Up & Coming Events

- Sept 5, 11:30am, Extension office, Monthly Meeting. Brown bag lunch. Speaker: Jim Armstrong of AU on raptors.
- Sept 25, 9am-12noon, Northbrook Baptist Church, Cullman, AMGA CEU Fall Workshop. 9am-2pm, \$20. Register by Sept 17. For info contact Cheryl Jones at 205-429-2931 or email cjjones@otelco.net.
- Oct 2-6, Lee Co Fair, Lee Co Fairgrounds. MGs needed on Oct 1, 9am-4pm to assist in checking in exhibits. Also on Oct 2, 10am -12noon to judge items submitted. Sign up with Janet Gilmer by Sept 17: FRANDJIM@auburn.edu or 749-3353.
- Oct 6, 13, 20, 27, 8am-12noon, Lawrence Farm, 3327 Moores Mill Rd, Auburn. Mulch Sale. Contact Toby Hoover for info or to volunteer: 334-275-0102.
- Sept 9, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Lecture by Felder Rushing. For info call 205-414-3950.
- Oct 3, 11am, Plant Swap at the back door of the Extension office. 11:30am, Extension office, Monthly Meeting. Brown bag lunch.
- Apr 15-17, Florence, "JAZZ Up Your Garden," 2013 AMGA State Conference. For info: www.amgaconference.org.

Lee County MG Successfully Propagating Rare Plant

by Chuck Browne *Chuck Browne*

After 23 years of looking at grass, shrubs, trees, insects, diseases and how all this effects people's lawns and gardens, it is hard for me to sometimes stay motivated and maintain a high level of enthusiasm. However, from time to time, something comes along that will spark my interest and re-energize me. Such was the case about five years ago when I first saw the "Cahaba lily" in full bloom over in Bibb County on the Cahaba River.

The "Cahaba lily," also known as the shoal lily, can only be found in certain parts of three states – Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. This rare plant grows along the fall line between the Piedmont Plateau and Coastal Plain regions. They grow in the flat rock shoals in clear running creeks and rivers. The largest stands of this plant can be found in Alabama, but we've got one very close to us over in Georgia. Flat Shoals Creek, which is a tributary to the Chattahoochee River in Harris County, Georgia, has quite a large stand.

Not only is it unwise to remove these plants from their native environment and "relocate" them, I think it is illegal too. What is not illegal is to collect the seed and propagate them for redistribution back into their native habitat. Anecdotal information was that the seeds were hard to germinate, difficult to collect and were very site specific as to where they would grow.



Photo by Chuck Browne

One of our newest Lee County Master Gardeners from the 2012 class, Spencer Roy, shares my enthusiasm for this rare, endangered plant. Spencer not only collected some seed, he was able to have a near perfect germination percentage and is currently growing several in 4-inch pots in a pond he built in his yard.

We talked the other day about how these plants are thriving and will soon need a place to live. We discussed "planting" some in the shoals of creeks and rivers around to see if we can re-establish them where they once grew native. The Tallapoosa River, parts of the Coosa (which is now underwater covered by lakes), Hatchett Creek, Halawaka Creek, Saugahatchee Creek, Hillaby Creek, and I'm sure many more are suitable environments where we hope to re-establish this plant.

Of course, it will involve canoeing into many of these sites and wading around these shoals. Conditions must be right, temperature, water flow and the hardest requirement of all – finding the time to do it.

Ask Spencer about his project. Perhaps we can find a time to pursue this worthwhile endeavor. Plus, one of our own may have found out that these plants are not so hard to grow after all.

Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail

by Billie Oliver, MG Class of 2012

Our beautiful native Alabama azalea, *R. alabamense* (see photo below), was added to the Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail in May. Caroline Dean's son Bobby brought her to the park to enjoy the nice morning and watch the planting of azaleas, oakleaf hydrangea, trillium, bloodroot, spiderwort and ground orchids. In June and July we made significant progress with the removal of more invasive plants and thinned more weak or defective trees to improve light and growing space for the better trees on site.

The Opelika Parks & Recreation Department is installing a second faucet on the woodland edge to make water more accessible to the middle section. The plants the Alabama Wildflower Society group brings on September 29 will be placed in this middle sector. Next spring should be a lovely time for all to enjoy.



Photo by Patrick Thompson

Potpourri # 22

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

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread" was a lyric of a song that I heard at least 50 years ago. Well, I am about to rush into a subject that I know very little about and hope I can educate myself enough on the subject that you might want to learn a bit more about it. The subject is photography, and here goes. . . .

I began taking pictures with a 35 mm camera when I was a teenager. The camera used 35 mm film and was point and shoot with no flash. That meant you would see a subject you wanted to shoot, point the camera at it and snap away. Then you would rewind to the next frame and shoot again until you shot up your roll of film.

Next, you would rewind the film while it was still in the camera, unlatch the camera, extract the film cartridge, take it to the drugstore where they would send it off to be developed, and in about a week you would receive your prints with the negatives enclosed. For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, here we were with our 24 shots. Maybe some were good, and maybe we missed the shot of a lifetime.

Today, we have digital cameras that contain a light sensor instead of film, and we have instant access to our shots. Most times we are not limited by a certain number of exposures, but can shoot hundreds or even thousands before we have to download. And then we can plug the shots into our computers and use specific programs to manipulate the image in most any manner we see fit.

Southern Living magazine switched over to digital about five years ago. Their photographers bring their memory cards back in and turn them in to the digital processors and are done with them. Then their shots are processed if and when they are



published. I am told they save hundreds of thousands of dollars a year just in film developing costs. I think they went with Canon.

I bought my first digital camera in the late 1990s — a Sony. You inserted a small floppy disk that allowed you to shoot about 25 exposures of maybe .3 megabytes each. If you were out in the field, you would extract the disk and replace it with a blank disk and shoot 25 more.

My first big picture-taking trip was to Nova Scotia. I used up more than 100 disks. Of course, when you got home, you would insert the disks into your computer and download the images, reformat the disks and use them again. After going through a series of digital cameras over the years, I am now using a Nikon 300 in which I have a 32 gigabyte memory card. The camera can shoot about 12 megapixels per exposure, or about 36 times the resolution of my original Sony. The Nikon 300 has interchangeable lenses giving you much versatility. You have lenses that allow you to shoot wide-angle landscapes or portraits or distant objects or animals that might be many hundreds of yards away. Oh, don't forget, you can also shoot tiny bugs and make them monster size.

You might remember back in the film days you could purchase slow film, say 100, or faster film like maybe 400. Slow was less grainy, but with less light. When shooting sports you went to a more sensitive "faster" film that would take a picture in less light or in motion, but you would sacrifice

quality. In digital you adjust light sensitivity using ISO, whatever that means.

So here's what I would like to happen. I would like for us Master Gardeners to set up an introductory photography class with a good instructor, like William White or Jolly or Sarah, and start taking better photos. I was surprised that there is not a photography club in Auburn, so I suggest let's start one and learn from each other. The internet too is another great resource. I frequent a forum titled Ugly Hedgehog composed of beginner photographers, as well as pros. Every topic under the sun is discussed. I don't participate, just listen. I have learned a lot in the last six months.

So, let's say you learn all about your camera and all about lenses, and you can manipulate all the buttons. Then comes the nitty-gritty. Can you compose a photo? That's where we really start learning and growing in the magical world of photography. I invite you all to come out to my place this fall when the Japanese maples are in full color and shoot away, and let's grow together.

2012 Mulch Sales

The LCMGs will be selling mulch donated from West Frazer Wood Yard on Saturday mornings again this fall in October on the 6th, 13th, 20th and the 27th. The hours will be the same, 8:00am - 12:00noon, and the price continues to be \$25 per cubic yard. We will be selling from the property of Johnny and Maggie Lawrence, 3327 Moore's Mill Rd., Auburn. Toby Hoover is in charge and will be needing volunteers to help each Saturday. Contact him at 334-275-0102 or toby.hoover@charter.net.

Controlling Mosquitoes



by *Mallory Kelley*

Regional Extension Agent
Home Grounds, Gardens,
Home Pests

With the increasing occurrence of West Nile being found in Alabama and its threat to our health, we all need to take the necessary steps to best manage and eliminate mosquitoes from around our home. As we are all so thankful for the many afternoon showers popping up in central Alabama, this will often increase the population and activity of mosquitoes. These insects can be a major nuisance and problem, especially if you have late afternoon activities planned outdoors.

The best way to avoid mosquitoes all together is stay indoors, but when this is not possible, other measures must be taken. Start by scheduling outdoor activities before or after peak mosquito activity and by using repellents. Peak activity is usually in the late afternoon and at dusk and use repellents containing diethyl toluamide (DEET). Drenching oneself in repellent is not necessary. You need only enough repellent to “confuse” the mosquito so it cannot detect a suitable spot to feed. There are repellents that boast 95 percent DEET content. However, a repellent of this concentration is unnecessary to provide adequate protection, may result in skin irritation and is costly. Concentrations of 10 to 15 percent DEET are recommended for adults; products containing less than 8 percent are recommended for children. Repellents that are DEET-free, contain citronella and are also effective.

Mosquitoes use odor and chemical cues to locate their food source. As the

mosquito comes near a potential host, moist air from the host and visual cues become important. Carbon dioxide exhaled by animals, including humans, is an example of a chemical cue that mosquitoes use to find their hosts. Repellents work by “confusing” the mosquito, keeping it from landing on or biting the intended host.

If you have an influx in mosquitoes suddenly or are trying to prepare for an outdoor party or activity, it is important to search out areas that are being used as mosquito habitat and breeding grounds. Mosquito eggs are always laid in association with water and where it is quiet and protected. Females may lay up to 100 or 200 eggs per batch and deposit an egg batch every 7 or 10 days. Eggs can take from days to months to hatch. In general, during warm periods and under favorable conditions, eggs will hatch in a few days. However, in areas that experience seasonal “flood-water” these eggs can remain dormant and are capable of surviving for months out of water until they are flooded again. Other sites where eggs may be deposited include tree holes, temporary puddles, freshwater and salt marshes and containers in which water stands, such as discarded tires, cans, pet water dishes and bird baths.

You may not have containers with standing water, but your neighbor may, or water may be collecting in a ditch somewhere in the neighborhood. There are things homeowners can do to help prevent mosquito infestations with sanitation and control materials being two of the best methods.

The first step in sanitizing is to eliminate the breeding sites. It is important to manage vegetation because adult mosquitoes rest on dense vegetation during the day. Cut tall weeds, and keep shrubs

and trees trimmed away from the house to increase air circulation. Other steps you can take include: clean debris from rain gutters; eliminate standing water on and around structures such as flat roofs and air conditioner units; fix leaky pipes and faucets; change the water in birdbaths and wading pools weekly; and change the water in pet bowls daily.

There are a number of products and materials that can be used alone or in combinations to control mosquitoes. These control methods can be directed toward either larvae or adults and therefore are categorized as larvicides or adulticides.

Larvicides – Products to control larvae, which will prevent mosquitoes from hatching, include: *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis* (B.t.i) commercially available as Bactomos, Teknar and Vectobac. B.t.i. also can be purchased as “mosquito dunks,” which can be used in water that cannot be drained, such as unused swimming pools and retention ponds. B.t.i. is considered a “biological” method and poses a minimal threat to nontarget organisms.

Adulticides – Products to control adult mosquitoes include yard foggers, which typically contain pyrethrins and can be set off shortly before outside activity and will provide temporary relief from mosquitoes. Also spray shrubs and the lower branches of trees where mosquitoes rest. Use insecticides registered for flying insects but that will not harm plants – for example, certain formulations of malathion, permethrin or pyrethrins.

Pet owners should be concerned with mosquito control because mosquitoes transmit heartworm to dogs. Your veterinarian can prescribe a drug treatment that prevents the worms from reaching the adult stage in your dog.

You Know You're Addicted to Gardening When...

Your neighbors recognize you in your pajamas, rubber clogs and a cup of coffee.

You grab other people's banana peels, coffee grinds, apple cores, etc., for your compost pile.

You have to wash your hair to get your fingernails clean.

All your neighbors come and ask you questions.

You know the temperature of your compost every day.

You buy a bigger truck so that you can haul more mulch.

You enjoy crushing Japanese beetles because you like the sound that it makes.

Your boss makes "taking care of the office plants" an official part of your job description.

Everything you touch turns to "fertilizer."

Your non-gardening spouse becomes conversant in botanical names.

You find yourself feeling leaves, flowers and trunks of trees wherever you go, even at funerals.

You dumpster-dive for discarded bulbs after commercial landscapers remove them to plant annuals.

You plan vacation trips around the locations of botanical gardens, arboreta, historic gardens, etc.

You sneak home a 7-foot Japanese maple and wonder if your spouse will notice.

When considering your budget, plants are more important than groceries.

You always carry a shovel, bottled water and a plastic bag in your trunk as emergency tools.

You appreciate your Master Gardener badge more than your jewelry.

You talk "dirt" at baseball practice.

You spend more time chopping your kitchen greens for the compost pile than for cooking.

You like the smell of horse manure better than Estee Lauder.

You rejoice in rain...even after 10 straight days of it.

You have pride in how bad your hands look.

You have a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.

You can give away plants easily, but compost is another thing.

Soil test results actually mean something.

You understand what IPM means and are happy about it.

You'd rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothes store.

You know that Sevin is not a number.

You take every single person who enters your house on a "garden tour."

You look at your child's sandbox and see a raised bed.

You ask for tools for Christmas, Mother/Father's Day, your birthday and any other occasion you can think of.

You can't bear to thin seedlings and throw them away.

You scold total strangers who don't take care of their potted plants.

You know how many bags of fertilizer/potting soil/mulch your car will hold.

You drive around the neighborhood hoping to score extra bags of leaves for your compost pile.

Your preferred reading matter is seed catalogs.

And last but not least:

You know that the four seasons are:

Planning the Garden

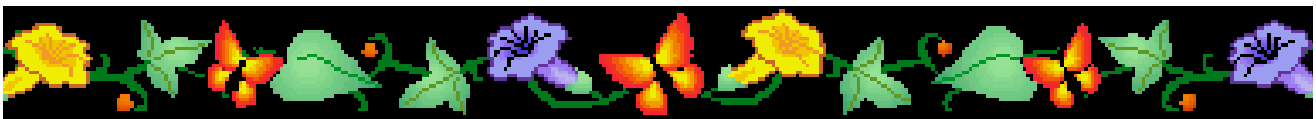
Preparing the Garden

Gardening

~and~

Preparing and Planning for the next Garden.

-Author Unknown



Brown Patch in Your Lawn



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

Brown patch is a serious disease on home lawns across Alabama, and it seems to be very common right now, especially in urban landscapes. If you're lucky enough to be getting rain, you are probably getting a lot of it or vice versa. Rain this summer seems to be feast or famine. If you are in an area receiving the feast of afternoon showers, you could be seeing brown patch starting in your lawn. The phone calls have been pouring in, so I thought this information would be timely.

Brown patch outbreaks occur on St. Augustine grass, zoysia, centipede and tall fescue but can also be found on Bermuda. This fungal disease is almost always tied to excessive or late use of nitrogen along with several days of cloudy wet weather (especially afternoon showers) and high humidity.

Any lawn can be subject to brown patch damage when hot, wet summer weather is occurring. In the Gulf Coast counties, brown patch often appears during warm spells

anytime from late fall to early spring. Further north, this disease is usually seen just before the first frosts in the fall and shortly after green-up in the spring.

Brown patch first appears as small brown areas a few inches in diameter. These patches quickly increase in size and merge together, forming large patches of damaged turf. On St. Augustine, these patches may reach 20 feet in diameter. Damage is often worse on shaded lawns.

Good management often helps prevent outbreaks of brown patch. Never water your lawn in the late afternoon. This water remains on the blades of grass throughout the night giving the fungi lots of time to multiply and grow into a problem.

Watering first thing in the morning is best so that the sun is able to dry up the water on the blades very quickly. Also apply low rates of nitrogen fertilizers monthly through the growing season. Avoid fertilizing St. Augustine grass, zoysia grass and centipede grass with high rates of ni-

trogen shortly after spring green-up and do not apply high rates of nitrogen to tall fescue in the summer.

To speed evaporation of dew, prune trees and shrubs to increase sunlight penetration and increase air circulation. In addition, verticut or dethatch your lawn to prevent the buildup of thatch if needed, but if you are mowing your lawn on a regular basis, there should never be a thatch problem.

Preventative fungicide of home lawns is usually unnecessary. Routine applications should be considered only on lawns damaged by brown patch year after year. Otherwise, spot-treat damaged areas after symptoms are first seen. Make several fungicide applications with Immunox or Banner Maxx to those areas every 7 to 10 days to prevent further spread of the disease.

For more information on brown patch and its control, ask your county Extension agent for circular ANR-492, "Controlling Brown Patch on Warm-Season Turfgrasses."

Source: Dr. Austin Hagan, Extension Plant Pathologist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System



The new AMG license tag for the front of your car is available for \$20. To purchase, contact Kathy Bass at amga-fundraisingchair@gmail.com or call 256-457-6530.



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