



The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

President's Message

Many of us who had our teenage years in the '50s and '60s find it hard to believe that it is already 2015! Somewhat depressing, but little time to be morose as another Spring is coming at us fast and we must begin planning our efforts. How will we handle that corner, privacy hedge, perennial border? What flowers from the color wheel to place next to existing plants, what changes to make in the LCMGA gardens? How do we keep the deer away from our plants? Makes me tired, but LCMGA relationships keep life so interesting as we deal with these and many other questions with our fellow gardeners. So much to learn!

We have begun our Tour 2016 planning--our sixth garden tour. Nancy Golson and Susan Price will be our co-leaders and we are so pleased that they took the baton from Jolly and Sarah and will keep our biennial garden tour going. The tour sprang from an idea that Jolly had about eleven years back and it has become our signature event. Nancy and Susan have already put a lot of energy into the effort and I sense that we all will want to get on board to help them. I am so proud of the job we have done with it and the public seems to greatly enjoy seeing what is possible in a residential yard.

Just as we have said farewell to Chuck Browne and welcomed Tara Barr, we now say farewell to Janet Gilmer who is retiring at the end of February. Janet has been a strong and consistent supporter of the Master Gardener Program and she has done her best to help us in any possible way. She has set the tone in the Front Office and any time we are there we feel welcomed. Please stop by and wish her the best as she moves on. More can be seen about Janet's career and her retirement plans on page 10.

We take a page annually in Leaf Notes to remind all of you how we, the Board, try to manage LCMGA through participative leadership. We have built a special organization that is responsive to the will of the Association and we do our best to

lead where you want us to go and we do it with your input. You decide and we figure out how to do it in the most efficient and visible way. We care deeply about LCMGA and it is important to us to make the organization special to all of us. Please see our article on Good Governance on page 2.

See you in the garden,

Dennis

2015 LCMG Officers

President: Dennis Pinkard, [332-8773](tel:332-8773)

Vice-President: Julia Freeman, 740-4423

Treasurer: Jim Disque, [973-886-8693](tel:973-886-8693)

Membership: Anne Morgan, [205-566-1068](tel:205-566-1068)

Secretary: Kelly Haynes, 728-2280

Training: Nancie: Gallagher, [412-708-0099](tel:412-708-0099)

Advisory Council: Patti Householder, 332-8044

Public Affairs: Raleine Sillman, 663-1948

Inside This Issue

Good Governance	2
Winter Work at the AU	
Davis Arboretum	3
Up Coming Events	4
Tour Planning and Quarterly	
Quote	5
Boxwood Blight	6
Project Reports	7
Starting Seeds Indoors	8
Invasives	9
News from the Lee Co.	
Extension Office	10
99% Pure American Chestnut	10



Lee County Master Gardeners Assn
600 S. 7th St Suite 4
Opelika, AL 36801

Phone: 877-829-5500
LCMGA is a 501(c) (3) Organization

Leaf Notes newsletter of the Lee County Master Gardeners is published by the Lee County Extension System and the Lee County Master Gardeners.

Published four times a year: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

Master Gardeners are encouraged to submit articles, ideas, notices, etc. to:

Tara Barr, County Extension Coordinator

Tel 334-3353, Mobile 334-707-5143

E-mail: barrtar@aces.edu

David Peterson, Editor

Tel: 815-276-9209

E-mail: davypeted@gmail.com

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.

Good Governance

Good governance is an indeterminate term used in development literature to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee the realization of human rights. Governance describes "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented...." ¹

Good governance is necessary for any successful organization, including Lee County Master Gardeners Association (LCMGA). Persons entrusted with the future of an organization must exercise oversight in a fashion that is described in founding and controlling documents. Following rules, guidelines, regulations, and bylaws ensure that the duties of officers remain connected and accountable to the organization. Compliance and oversight go hand-in-hand with leadership and when feedback is provided to the organization, feedback conveys oversight in ways that hold leaders accountable.

Without accountability leaders loose connection to the organization and goals and alignment of leaders is lacking. Failure to meet goals permits personal priorities to begin to emerge as the direction of the organization and pressure to improve fades. The organization follows the whims of the leaders and alignment leads to sense of entitlement. Absent accountability, leaders may work hard and achieve results that they want but they never make any real sacrifice for the organization.

We have gone to some trouble to become a 501(3) (c) non-profit association, a tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code. First we had to have a framework of governance and management through a set of Bylaws. The IRS requires that the Board be knowledgeable and engaged and intolerant of conduct in secrecy. Now that we have attained a level of organizational control by the members the Board is accountable to LCMGA members and all discussion and decisions are open to all members.

¹ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Winter Work in the AU Davis Arboretum

by Patrick Thompson — Arboretum Specialist, Davis Arboretum at Auburn University

Winter in the AU Davis Arboretum is a fascinating and busy season.

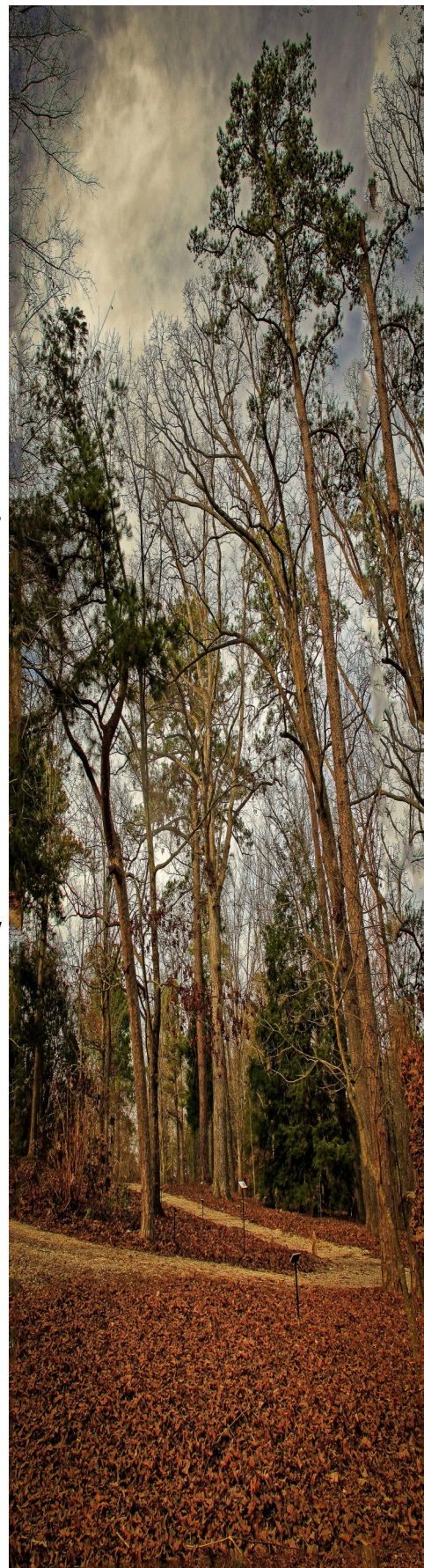
Here in central Alabama our fall weather follows the calendar closely. When the university closes for the Christmas holidays around the winter solstice on December 21st, our fall color just may have passed its peak. There still will be many leaves hanging in the canopy.

Once we return at the beginning of the new year we have to hurry into our winter activities, not knowing if spring will arrive in late February or mid April. That is not where we start though. Once the heat of summer has broken, we take the first step that will lead to the ritual of the winter shrub shuffle. Like many gardeners, we do not always place our plants in the perfect spot on the first try. There are constant reconsiderations in grouping plants for various taxonomic, horticultural or habitat displays within the arboretum. We know that woody plants will have a higher survival rate, whether being transplanted or newly installed, if we plant them while they are dormant. We can further increase that survival rate on transplants by pruning their root system in late

summer and fall.

Most gardeners have gone to dig a plant hoping to find a nice compact root system and instead been surprised by one or more roots that have struck off far from the main stem. The way to avoid this predicament is root pruning. During September approach the plants you intend to transplant with a spade-tipped shovel. Drive the blade straight down into the ground following the drip line in a ring around the plant. You will have cut those runaway roots, but by leaving it in place for a few more months, it will have time to seal its wounds. As long as conditions are good, it should even grow new roots inside your circle. You now have the option to move the plant in the fall or winter.

A November or early December move will give it some time to establish roots before dormancy, giving you a more stable flush of growth in spring, but will require supplemental watering if the weather is dry. The other option is to wait until the plants have gone dormant for the winter. Either way the plants will be easier to dig, and experience less transplant shock.





Up Coming Events

The following events are being held at
Petals from the Past

Saturday, February 14, 2015,

Tree Fruit in the Home Garden – Dr. Arlie Powell

Saturday, February 28, 2015,

Antique Roses in the Garden – Jason Powell

Saturday, March 7, 2015,

10:30am, Native Plants in the Landscape: Making our Gardens Beautiful and Beneficial - Sue Webb PhD Microbiologist, Alabama Master Gardener, Native Plant Certification Program at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens

There is a lot of talk these days about all the benefits of having more native plants in our landscapes. These plants are well adapted to our soil, our climate, and even our insects. They are beautiful, natural and make our jobs as gardeners easier as they don't need as much attention. Even more importantly, these plants play a key role in attracting and supporting our wildlife communities including the birds and bees, beneficial bugs, and butterflies. Join Sue as she talks about some of the best of our southern native shrubs and small trees that can easily be added to our existing gardens to add both beauty and biodiversity. She will talk about the unique characteristics of these varied plants and the best places for them in your garden.

Saturday, March 21, 2015 Citrus in the Home Garden – Dr. Arlie Powell

Saturday, March 28, 2015, All about Native Medicinals for Sun and Shade – Cameron Stross- Clinical Herbalist 10:30 – 12:30

Fee: \$20 – Advanced registration and payment required. Please call the retail shop at 205-646-0069 to make

your reservation for this program. Who doesn't love their native garden or even those beautiful native volunteers? Come learn all you can about the medicinal natives in and around your yard. It never hurts to know how to stop a bee sting from stinging or that cut from bleeding.

Saturday, April 4, 2015,

10:30am, Perennials for Every Spot in the Garden – Jason Powell

Saturday, April 11, 2015,

10:30am Container Gardening – Lacey Neely

Friday and Saturday, April 24 and 25, 2015 9:00am -5:00pm, Antiques in the Garden

Petals From the Past, 16034 County Road 29

Jemison, Alabama, 35085, 205-646-0069 FAX-205-646-2626

March 14, 2015, 9am-2pm, East Alabama Home and Garden Show, Event Center, Opelika

Workshops in March at Callaway Gardens

Azalea Workshop

Saturday, March 28th
9:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.

Learn all about azaleas: varieties best suited for the Southeast, natives to enhance your landscape and extend the season, culture and when and what to prune!

Invite Birds into your Yard and Garden

Saturday, March 14th
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Encourage your favorite feathered friends to your backyard! Learn how to attract year-round and migratory birds to your landscape by using "homemade" bird feed, planting native plants species that **provide cover and food.**

More information on all these workshop and more can be found at

education@callawaygardens.com
or www.callawaygardens.com

Veggie Seed Starting Workshop

Planting vegetables by seed can be very rewarding and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System is offering a workshop to get you started!

The workshop will be held:

Thursday, February 26th from 9-12:00

Lee County Extension Office

Lee County Agricultural Center
600 S 7th Street, Suite 4
Opelika, AL 3680

To sign-up or for more information, contact:

Lee County Extension office at (334) 749- 3353.

Cost is \$10 per person; fee includes all materials. Pre-Registration and payment is required.

February 21, 8:30—Noon

Invasive plant Monster removal

AU Davis Arboretum

(See page 9)

Saturday, April 4, 2015

LCMGA Native Plant Sale

Friday June 26, 2015

LCMGA Summer Fling at Greystone Mansion



2016 Garden Tour Planning

Presidents Notes

We are beginning to spin up our Tour 2016 planning. This will be our 6th Tour and given all our experience it will be our best ever! Many of us have realized that this is what LCMGA is all about – educating the public – and the Tour is a lot of fun for us and the community. The Tour sprang from the imagination of Jolly Roberts about 11 years back and it has become the premier event of LCMGA. Both Jolly and Sarah, past Tour Co-Leader, will be working for the success of this Tour.

Your Board has approved establishing a Tour Committee to officially kick-off preparations. And we have appointed Nancy Golson and Susan Price as Co-Leaders. They have our backing to establish a Tour Team and begin the long task to ready us for a Tour date in the Spring of 2016. We know all of you are anxious to be a part of it and get behind them as they establish numerous tertiary teams to tackle different phases of preparation.

They will preview and select gardens this Spring, assign duties to volunteers, and propose a budget.. Let's make this our best Tour yet!

Dennis

Kick Off Meeting Notes

We are counting on your help!!! Susan Price and I are very excited to be coordinating the 2016 Lee County Master Garden Tour. Our kick-off meeting January 27 was well attended and we are beginning to identify the many task for a successful tour. The Garden Tour is a great time for us to work as a team to raise funds and educate the community about gardening. We are asking every Master Gardener and Friend to be actively involved. Over the next sixteen months there are roles many jobs, please let us know how you would like to support the tour. If you have an idea of a great garden to be on the tour, please let us know. We will contact the homeowners and visit the garden. We will keep you informed at our monthly meeting and through the newsletter. Thank you in advance for your support.

Nancy Golson
(nancy@redcrayon.biz) and Susan Price (prcsmp@aol.com)

Quarterly Quote

Love all Creation,
The whole and every grain of sand in it.

Love every leaf,
And every ray of light,

Love the plants,
Love the animals,
Love everything,

If you love everything

You will perceive the Devine Mystery

In all things.

Once you perceive it

You will comprehend it better every day

And you will come, at last,

To love the whole world

With an all embracing love.

- Dostoyevsky, Brothers Karamazov





Boxwood Blight: A New Disease Impacting the South



Photos by Mary Ann Hansen

Boxwoods are a key element in many Southern gardens, but now a new disease, boxwood blight, is striking this garden favorite. The first find in Alabama was in a newly planted landscape in Birmingham where a number of boxwoods were showing the characteristic symptoms of boxwood blight: brown leaf spots, black stem lesions and defoliation.

According to Dr. Kassie Conner, a plant pathologist with Alabama Extension, the problem was identified and the remaining boxwoods in the landscape were removed and destroyed.

“We expect the problem was identified in time and eradicated,” said Dr. Conner. “Our Extension plant pathologists have put forth every effort to educate Extension

Agents, Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries inspectors, growers, landscapers and homeowners about boxwood blight.”



Photo by Mary Ann Hansen

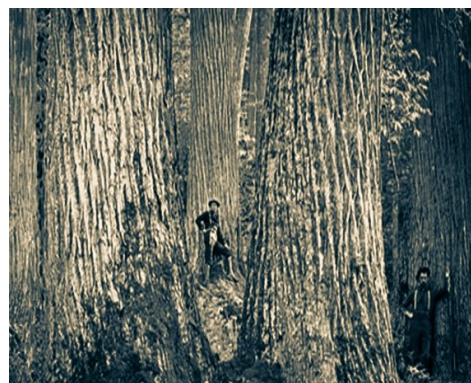
The second find occurred in the Atlanta area where two landscapes in the Buckhead area showed signs of the disease. One site was newly installed while the other was not. Dr. Jean Williams-Woodard, an associate professor for the Plant Pathology Department at the University of Georgia, was responsible for the identification of the Atlanta infection. According to her, this incident very well could be just one of many infections in the South.

““The landscape was likely infected by workers pruning boxwoods or installing annual flowers within the landscape bed,” said Dr. Williams-Woodard. “This means that there are likely other landscapes that are infected that we don’t know about yet.”

In order to prevent any further spread of the disease, Conner said there are practices that should be put into place. Alabama nursery producers and landscape professionals should scout current stock as well as incoming plant material to assure that the disease is not introduced into any other environments. Nursery and landscape professionals should contact immediately the [Auburn University Plant Diagnostic Laboratory](#) should they observe plants with suspicious symptoms appear (leaf spots, black stem lesions or defoliation). They should also isolate the diseased plants. If boxwood blight is found, burning of the infected plants is recommended.



Chestnut Trees—early 20th Century
In NC





Project Reports

Grandma's Garden

Grandma's Garden Gang is patiently awaiting the arrival of spring.

Our trees and plants may look barren, yet we are certain there is life working in the branches that we won't see again until the warmer days of March.

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for our 1st 2015 workday scheduled for Tuesday, March 10th from 9:00-11:00.

—BethDorman



POC Beth Dorman 334-224-2507.

Cottage Gardens at Kiesel Park

Many Lee County Master Gardeners attended the **'Fall Gardening Extravaganza'** on Friday, October 10, 2014 in Alexander City. Tallapoosa County Master Gardeners hosted this standing room only event. Everyone present left at the end of the day with exciting new information about plants and ideas for growing our gardens.

The celebrity filled agenda included Jason Powell, owner of Petals from the Past in Jemison, Alabama. His topic was "Tough and Reliable Plants for the Fall Garden."

In reviewing my notes I noticed that two of our garden plots at the Demonstration Gardens in Kiesel Park are filled with what Jason called "survivor" plants. He used this term in describing what fills a traditional "cottage garden." Jason stated that plantings in a cottage garden allow for something of interest 12 months a year.

If you were to head out to Kiesel Park this week, you'd see the native honeysuckle vine laughing at the cold weather in the Heritage plot. Soon you will see growth on the fall planted old-fashioned roses in the Cutting garden. Please consider helping us in these "cottage gardens" when the weather begins to warm. We'd love to have your ideas and your green thumbs.

Blueberry pruning is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10th. We'll start about 9 am. Bring your best pruning tools and join us now so there will be a great harvest of blueberries this summer.

Charlot Ritenbaugh MG 2010



Starting Seeds Indoors

By Mallory Kelley
Regional Extension Agent
Home Grounds, Gardens, Home
Pests

Many home gardeners become discouraged starting their seeds indoors because the plants become weak, spindly, leggy or even die of diseases. It's not that difficult to grow good quality seedlings at home, but there are some important things you need to know before you begin to ensure success.

When asking yourself, "Is it time to sow seeds?" It is always better to lean on the side of being too late rather than too early.

Keep in mind that you can continue to grow seeds throughout the summer to have a succession of vegetables in your garden rather than planting them all at once. When picking a start date to start seeds, calculate based on the average date of the last frost for your area.

Then according to the seeds you are growing count back the number of weeks to when you should sow. Plants like beans, okra, carrots and corn should be seeded directly into the soil, but other plants like tomatoes, eggplant and peppers respond well to a head start indoors.

One advantage to starting seeds indoors is that you can order from a reputable source and select varieties that you would most likely not be able to find in the garden centers.

From the "heirloom" varieties to the latest hybrids, starting seeds indoors opens a whole new world of plant varieties and types of vegetables to try. Now that you have the seeds and know when to sow them,

what should you sow them in? Select containers that provide good drainage. If you use containers you have previously grown plants in, it is best to wash them in a 10% bleach solution to remove any fungi or bacteria. Then select a growing media that is sterile and free of weed seed. It is best to start seeds in a media that is labeled "Seed Starter Media." Always make sure to moisten the soil well before you sow any seeds and prepare all of your labels to identify your plants ahead of time.

Very few seeds need light to germinate so it is not necessary to provide light to the media and seeds until after they germinate. If the seeds are very tiny you may want to cover them lightly with vermiculite. As a rule of thumb, plant seeds a depth of two and a half times the diameter of the seed.

For good germination, the seeds will need warm soil and humidity. To create the humidity place a clear plastic bag over the container or a clear lid to hold in the humidity. If you see water dripping inside it is too hot and wet and could cause disease problems so make sure to vent the lid or cover if it is too warm.

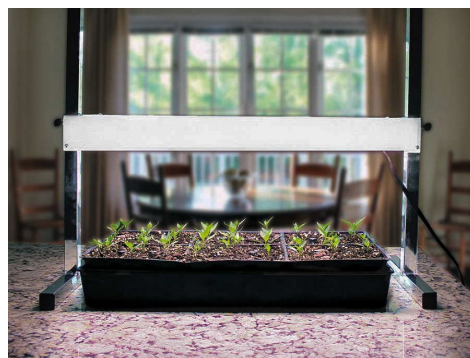
The best place in the home to put your container with seeds is on a warming pad to warm the soil or if you do not have a warming pad place the planted container on top of your refrigerator. Your seeds will need to remain moist and humid and should begin to germination in 10-12 days.

Once the seedlings germinate you can remove the cover that you have over them creating the humidity and place them directly under lights as close as you can

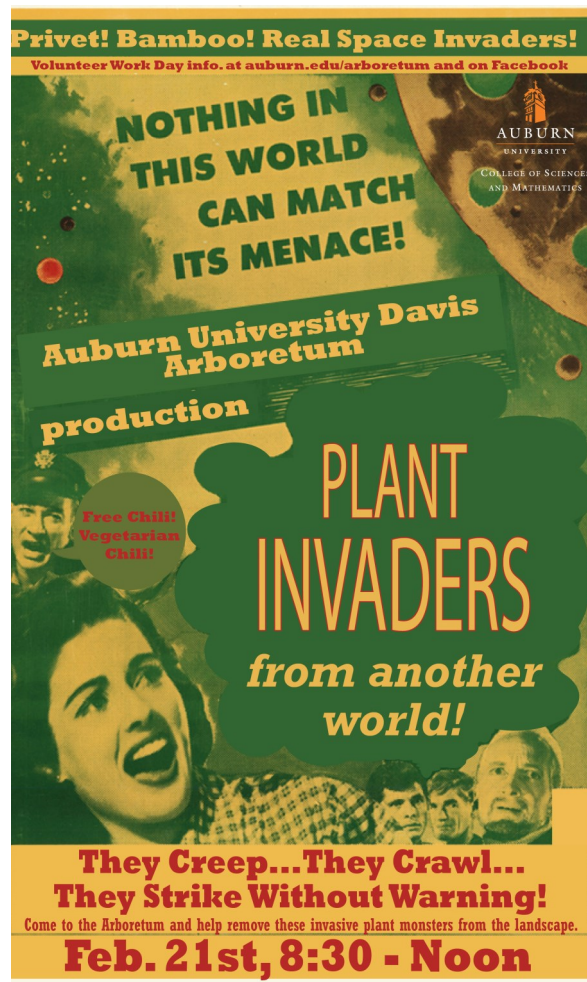
without touching for 14-16 constant hours to prevent them from becoming long and leggy. No fertilizer is needed until after the first set of true leaves appear. Then use a water soluble fertilizer at half strength every 2-3 weeks.

If you sow the seeds in very small cell packs or sow all of the seeds together in one container you would then need to transplant them into bigger containers as they grow. This transplanting should be done early and carefully to avoid damaging the plants delicate roots and stems. Then once your plants get larger and stronger and it is close to planting time outdoors you should begin to harden off your plants by taking them outside for a few hours a day and bringing them back indoors.

This is done to prepare young plants for the harsher environments outdoors such as the full sun, wind, and varying moisture. When the day finally arrives to plant outdoors, a cloudy day with little wind is the most ideal.



Park Seed Co. setup



Another Invader

Vine on the Run

In its own destructive way, kudzu is impressive. A relative of the pea, the vine was introduced to the United States from Japan in 1876 to create quick shade and stabilize soil. But its growth is so fast—up to a foot a day—and undiscerning that it carpets trees, light posts, and even buildings. Across at least 20 states, thousands of square miles of field and forest have disappeared under it.

New research suggests kudzu may be doing still more damage. Scientists at Clemson University report it may accelerate climate change by decreasing carbon stored in the soil of the native-plant ecosystems it overruns (such as the Mississippi woodland seen here). The carbon loss happens mostly in top-soil and occurs over decades, says weed ecologist Nishanth Tharayil. Previous studies have shown that kudzu may also release other greenhouse gases.

The question that matters most: Can the vine be stopped? While herbicide makers try to catch up to the speedy pest, gardeners can always kill it the old-fashioned way, by digging up the plant's roots. —Daniel Stone



News From the Lee County Extension Office

99% Pure American Chestnut

Charlot Ritenbaugh MG class of 2010

Janet Gilmer

Janet Gilmer, the lead administrative associate at the Lee County Extension Office, is retiring this February after 29 years with the Extension Service.

"Nine years ago Chuck Browne, Lee County Extension Coordinator, hired me as the Lead Administrative Associate II," says Gilmer. "I transferred to Lee County Extension office after working 20 years at Auburn University."

As the Administrative Associate with Lee County Extension, Gilmer's job involved working on finances, payroll, assisting customers, assisting extension agents with their needs, and helping with the Lee County 4-H Livestock teams.

In addition to assisting with planning and preparing for public educational workshops which included among others, different types of gardening workshops, chainsaw safety, seed starting, and the Master Gardener course, she has been the secretary for the Lee County Farm City Committee for the past nine years.

"I have learned so much working for Lee County Extension and met the most pleasant people in Lee and surrounding counties," says Gilmer. "I would like to **thank you** all for the pleasure it has been working with the Lee County Master Gardeners, several of whom I have known for many years, and the ones I have met since moving to Lee County Extension. Gardening has become one of my favorite hobbies, thanks to all of you."

Nonnative, invasive species of the plant and animal kingdoms can cause grave results to the earth's Ecosystem.

During the first half of the 20th century **four billion** American chestnut trees

succumbed to an invading fungus. One-fourth of the trees in the old-growth Eastern forests covering the Appalachian Mountains were dead by the late 1940's. Before the chestnut blight landed in North America, mature *Castanea dentata* could measure 14 feet wide. The first 50 to 100 feet of their trunk grew branch free with a mature height of 200 feet. As the King of the Forest they dominated the North American lumber industry for 300 years. Chestnut wood was light as pine, water and rot resistant like redwood, tough as oak but easier to grow.

In four decades almost all of the mature American chestnut trees from Maine to Florida and west to Mississippi were dead. The death of these dominate "king" trees during the Great Depression, further pushed American businesses into bankruptcy when a prime lumber for building barns, houses, furniture and railroad ties vanished in a few decades. People living in the Appalachian Mountains depended on the American chestnut as a major source of food. Related losses included starvation among moose, elk, bears, and mountain lions and the extinction of six specialized insect species.

Arriving via ships docked at NYC from Asia on imported lumber or exotic live tree imports, the bark fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica* was identified in 1904. Tenacious even under siege, new growth would sprout from the roots of dead American chestnuts but the young saplings could only survive a few years.

In 2005, a healthy *Castanea dentata* was found in the Talladega National Forest. It measured 14 inches in diameter and 85 feet tall. At the time of discovery ten years ago, foresters theorized this tree was more than 40 years old and had survived by some natural resistance or by lack of expo-

sure to the fungus. Other surviving trees have been found in the F.D.R. State Park near Warm Springs, GA., as well as in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Nova Scotia, Canada.

Through many years of disease resistant cross and back breeding efforts by numerous individual researchers and organizations, including The American Chestnut Foundation, American chestnut trees resistant to the chestnut blight have been developed. A hybrid chestnut resistant to the blight, the Dunstan chestnut, *Castanea dentata X mollissima*, has been available commercially for about 20 years and produces a sweet flavorful nut, characteristic of the original American chestnut.

Nationally, regionally, statewide and locally restoration activities continue. As recent as this past December several three-foot bare root disease resistant American chestnut saplings were planted at the Louise Kreher Forest Ecology Preserve & Nature Center and the Donald E. Davis Arboretum on the campus at Auburn University. The total allocated for these two locations is 15-20 trees. These priceless saplings are 99% American chestnut and 1% Chinese chestnut. The Green Industry Web Portal and Partners will continue to plant additional saplings in Cullman, Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, and Montevallo as part of the much larger Forestry Worker Certification Program Grant with Auburn University at Montgomery, the Alabama Forestry Association and the Appalachian Regional Commission in Alabama. Later this spring a Dedication ceremony for these trees is planned for the Louise Kreher Forest Ecology Preserve and Nature Center. A long time volunteer at the Preserve will be honored with the dedication of these trees.

Joe Murphy, of Pike County has a love of history and forests. He has planted several 94% American chestnut trees on his property. He was quoted in the ALFA "Neighbors" magazine in the November 2013 issue, "I know we can't change history, but we can change things moving forward." Inspiring words to end this article.