



Leaf



Notes



The Newsletter of Lee County Master Gardeners

Lee County Master Gardeners Announce Book Purchase Plan with Auburn Public Library

Chris Warren, Auburn Public Library, and the LCMGA announce a book buy program that recognizes the speakers at our monthly meetings. The books purchased will relate to the topic presented by each speaker and a bookplate will be inserted in each book purchased as well as a card presented to each speaker. Books will then be donated to the library. The project will rotate yearly between the Auburn and Opelika Public Libraries.

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Pictured: LCMG President - Nancy Golson, Chris Warren - Auburn Public Library, and Jim Disque - LCMG Treasurer

Quarterly Quote

We're all only fragile threads but what a tapestry we make. – Jerry Ellis

Winter 2017

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Leaf Notes



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.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

December 7—Meeting and program: Overview and Update of Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens

January 11—Meeting and Program: Dr. Louis Adams discusses Heirloom Plants

January 26—Holiday Social: Covered Dish Dinner and induction of interns

Locations to be determined—stay tuned

Quarterly Quiz

Have you seen any of these in your backyard?

Answer on page 14



Photo Credit: Wendy VanDyk Evans, www.forestryimages.org



President's Message

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to All!!!

Frequently gardeners do things for others and that certainly has been true this year for Lee County Master Gardeners. This year our association has accomplished the following:

Increased horticulture outreach in the community by

Having Booths at three Community Garden Shows

Having approximately 600 attend Garden Tour and over 50 sponsors or supporters

Presenting Earth Day program to Auburn City Schools 2nd graders

Having twenty-five interns trained in Master Gardeners Course

Maintaining the MG Help-Line from April through August

Planting trees at three Lee County Schools

Providing Horticultural Grants to Opelika High School, Kreher Ecology Preserve, and Opelika Grows to stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of things horticultural

Increased membership participation in meetings and projects by having

Over 100 volunteers for Garden Shows, Garden Tour and Native Azalea Sale

Significant increase in MG volunteers in our Demonstration Gardens

Participating in Harvest for Health as volunteers

Increased community awareness of the work of Master Gardeners through

Articles in newspaper on Garden Tour

Partner participation in Park & Rec long range planning process

Donation of books to Auburn Public Library in honor of our guest speakers

Providing scholarship funding to Auburn University Horticultural student and to Lee County 4-H History Seekers

Emphasis on Educational Importance of Native Plants and Smart Planting

Each Demonstration Garden showcased native plants

Garden Shows gave out material on native plants

Program to MG and to Interns on Native Plants

Informational brochures printed and distributed to local retail gardening shops on "Attracting Birds with Native Plants", "Creating Butterfly Gardens with Native Plants", and "Attracting Hummingbirds with Native Plants"

Monthly programs on various horticultural topics

I am very proud of Lee County Master Gardeners and your willingness to serve others. Thank you for a wonderful year. You have certainly been very busy supporting our mission of to stimulate the love for and increase the knowledge of things horticultural.

Major reminder: please take time to record your many MG volunteer hours at <http://www.leemg.org/mg-hours.html> It is important to capture this information for ACES. Deadline for recording hours is December 31, so be sure you complete this before the year-end.

2017 will be another exciting year for Lee County Master Gardeners. I look forward to our many projects, programs, meetings, field trips, and time together.

I wish for each of you a wonderful holiday, happy gardening, and hopefully soon enjoying some rain.

Nancy Golson, President



Designing Ecological Landscapes

Wednesday, February 15, 2017 9:30 am to 4:00 pm
Wetumpka Civic Center, 410 S Main St., Wetumpka, AL
36092
\$25 per person

CHECK IN IS FROM 9:00-9:30

Lunch will be catered. You may choose from the following by checking the preferred box on this registration form. Please check *only one* of the 3 lunch selections.

YOU MUST *PRE-REGISTER* IN ORDER TO ATTEND. **NO MONEY WILL BE TAKEN AT THE DOOR.** Registration must be sent *by check or money order* made out to CAMGA to the address below. Use the attached registration form at the bottom and mail with your check or money order by January 31, 2017. You will receive email confirmation of your registration!

Door prizes will be given!
We would love to see you there!

Registration form (please complete a separate form for each attendee; however, check @ \$25 per person can be made out for more than one person)

Name _____ Address _____

Email address _____ Phone _____

Preferred Lunch (CHECK ONLY ONE)

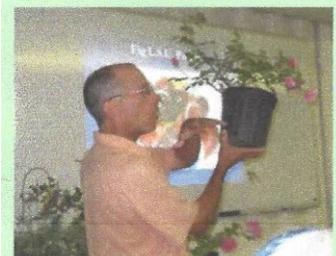
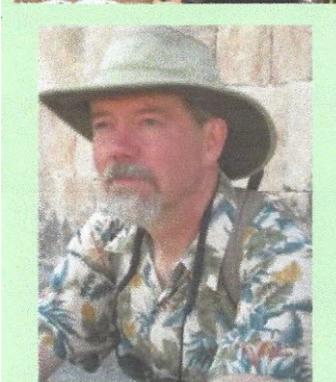
- beef sandwich
- turkey sandwich
- vegetarian sandwich

Make checks (\$25 per person check or money order) out to CAMGA and send to

CAMGA
C/O Janet Lewis, Registrar
403 Covered Bridge Rd
Wetumpka, AL 36093

Introducing: **Toby Hemenway**, author of the acclaimed *Gaia's Garden* and *The Permaculture City*, has been an adjunct professor at Portland State University, Scholar-in-Residence at Pacific University, and has taught over sixty 72-hour permaculture design courses.

Also featured, **Jason Powell**, owner of Petals From the Past in Jemison, AL, and expert in local/landscape plants, will share his advice on choosing plants from our area, suitable to putting Toby's knowledge to work in our landscapes.





LCMG Meeting Sept 7, 2016

The Preserve

Birds



The Birds Don't Know They Have Names

Thomas Merton

The warblers are coming through now. Very hard to identify them all even with field glasses and a bird book. (Have seen at least one that is definitely not in the bird book.) Watching one which I took to be a Tennessee warbler. A beautiful, neat, prim little thing—seeing this beautiful thing which people do not usually see, looking into this world of birds, which is not concerned with our problems, I felt very close to God or felt religious anyway. Watching those birds was as food for meditation, or as mystical reading. Perhaps better.

Also the beautiful, unidentified red flower or fruit I found on a bud yesterday. These things say so much more than words.

Mark Van Doren, when he was here, said, “The birds don't know they have names.”

Watching them I thought: who cares what they are called? But do I have the courage not to care? Why not be like Adam, in a new world of my own, and call them by my own names?

That would still mean that I thought the names were important.

No name and no word to identify the beauty and reality of those birds today is the gift of God to me in letting me see them.

(And that name—God—is not a name! It is like the letter X or Y. Yahweh is a better name—it finally means Nameless One.)

October 5, 1957, III.123-24

Interested in bird identification?

A free app is available for your phone, from The Cornell Lab. It's called **Merlin** and it is FREE. Get it at your app store.



Brown Headed Nuthatch



Carolina Chickadee



Creating Bouquets the Scavenger-Hunt Way: A Guide

From the WSJ—November 5, 2016

Floral designers are foraging plants and flowers in the most unlikely locations—from vacant lots to back alleys—and creating beauty with the seemingly motley booty



ONE MAN'S WEEDS For this arrangement, Brooklyn floral designer Amy Merrick collected shrub-rose hips from a road median, fennel flower from a friend's garden and goldenrod from an abandoned parking lot. *PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, FLORAL STYLING BY AMY MERRICK*

By **COURTNEY BARNES**

PEERING INTO A POSH storefront window along Old Bond Street in the late 1920s, Londoners surely didn't expect to see urns spilling over with wild clematis gone to seed, hops and simple berry-covered autumn branches. But that is what then-budding florist Constance Spry had daringly arranged for Atkinsons perfumery. Mixing humble flora scavenged in the countryside with a modicum of shop-bought green orchids, she charmed passersby and changed the fashionable set's perceptions of what a bouquet could be. Later, Spry would use masses of delicate cow parsley, aka Queen Anne's lace, at the wedding of Lady Violet Bonham Carter's daughter, Laura.

Today, Spry's influence is newly relevant. As uniform, commercial bouquets yield to looser, more organic arrangements, a fresh crop of intrepid designers are finding scavenging alluring again.



Creating Bouquets the Scavenger-Hunt Way: A Guide

Continued

Louesa Roebuck and Sarah Lonsdale, co-authors of “Foraged Flora” (*Ten Speed Press*), believe the current impulse to gather roadside vegetation is a natural offshoot of the trend toward eating seasonal, local produce that you might have even foraged yourself. Plants such as wispy wild fennel, stretching up to 12 feet in length and not typically sold in a florist’s shop, have a rarefied, wayward beauty that sets them apart from mass-grown blooms, said the authors.

“I’ve been bringing home strays—flora and animals—since I was four,” said Ms. Roebuck, a California-based artist who took a circuitous path to working with flowers professionally. In the early 2000s, she was hauling unusual grasses and bundles of fennel into her own boutique-cum-gallery space, hanging them beside clothes by avant-garde Belgian designer Martin Margiela. She refused to use out-of-season, imported flowers, partly because of her environmental ethos but also because flower-market offerings bored her.

Her scavenged installations did not go unnoticed, and after the 2008 economic crisis closed her shop, Ms. Roebuck found herself arranging flowers for Vivienne Westwood, Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse and the wedding of photographer Todd Selby and Danielle Sherman, co-founder of fashion house the Row. Eschewing a conventional bouquet, Ms. Sherman carried a spare trailing passion vine—forged from a chain-link fence on a construction site in L.A.’s Koreatown—interlaced with orchids purchased from Sonoma County grower California Carnivores.

“People are told too many rules when it comes to arranging,” said Ms. Roebuck. “If an uber-long vine makes you happy, bring it on in and let it meander over the edge of a table or across a bookshelf. Personally I like very large arrangements kept loose and uncontrived, or minute clippings.” In journalist Kevin West’s Los Angeles apartment, she draped a 19th-century portrait with a louche cache of passionflower vines she’d found in a Marin County park rangers’ equipment lot and removed with the blessing of a friendly ranger.

“Choosing to see natural beauty everywhere is much of the art. It’s right in front of our eyes.”

Ms. Roebuck also mixes in magnolia branches, which show all stages of the blossom’s life cycle, from bud to aged leathery petals. Frequently the limbs are headed for the city wood chipper when she finds them.

“You don’t have to own a truck and drive around for hours to bring non-floral-shop elements into your home,” she said, “Keep your eyes open. Talk to the landscaper clipping foliage down the street. Or search your backyard for a nearly microscopic wild violet waiting to be placed in the tiniest glass.”

Have a pair of hand pruners on hand, too. [Amy Merrick](#), a Brooklyn floral designer, educator and Spry devotee, walked into a law office asking for permission to cut, and pay for, a discrete clipping of wild jasmine she spied climbing up the side of the building.

“Choosing to see natural beauty everywhere is so much of the art, and I find it empowering that all of these things are right in front of our eyes if we just start to look,” said Ms. Merrick.

Ultimately, foraged items in arrangements get people talking, said Ms. O’Shea. “They see this pod that maybe they have never seen before or plants they’ve always considered weeds brought to light in a new and flattering way. When we find a familiar object in a completely different context, it forces us to re-evaluate the world ever so slightly, and I love that.”



Creating Bouquets the Scavenger-Hunt Way: A Guide

Continued



GREEN SWEEP In a Napa Valley home, flora designer Louesa Roebuck, co-author of 'Foraged Flora' (Ten Speed Press) combined roses cut from the homeowner's garden with a foraged 7-foot wild rose cane. *PHOTO: LAURIE FRANKEL/TEN SPEED PRESS*

Recently she combed through alleyways and friends' yards for untended rain-tree pods and evergreen branches, some of which ended up in a creation for Vogue, and she encourages her workshop students to hunt for their own plant material, even weeds growing in sidewalk cracks. "I've learned that arrangements look truly natural, rather than 'faux natural,' when you do this."

On her solar-powered farm, Mandy O'Shea, a horticulturist, farmer and floral designer based near Athens, Ga., grows uncommon varieties of dahlia, garden roses, ranunculus, anemone and more for her design business. But she also likes to use foraged elements—native persimmon, Jackson vine, sweet autumn clematis and even naturally shed feathers—in her arrangements.

"When working on a party or wedding, I prefer to forage at least some of my foliage from the site, if allowed. It makes the décor more relevant and unforced," she said. But be aware of some guidelines, advised Ms. O'Shea. Besides getting permission to snip, use a guidebook to avoid plants that are poisonous, protected, an important food source for wildlife or hyper-allergenic; and stay clear of invasive plants with viable seeds so you don't inadvertently spread them.

Ms. O'Shea often knocks on strangers' doors when she spies a beauty in someone's yard: "I've never been turned away and have actually met some really nice people this way." Even in the wilderness, though, be sure to leave at least 75% of a plant (and much more for trees), allowing future propagation. Wherever you are, Ms. Merrick added, "It should look as if you were never there."

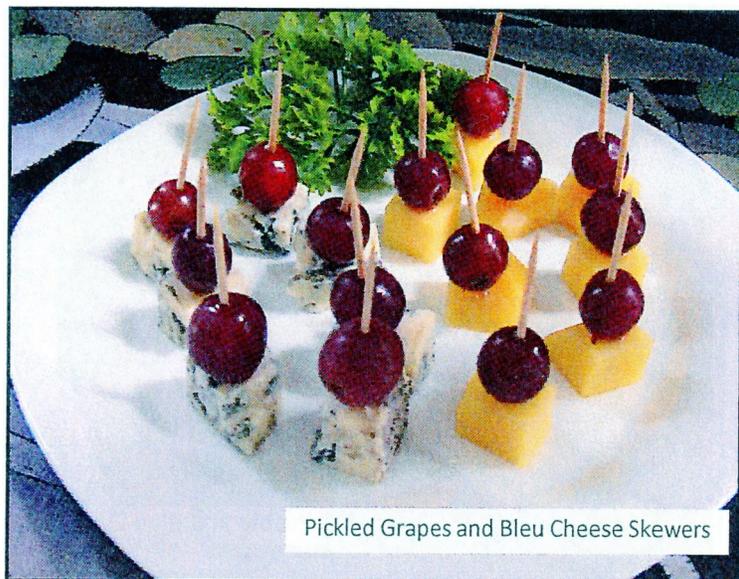


Tasty New Treats

Here are four interesting recipes presented at the 2016 AMGA Fall Seminar by Angela Treadway, ACES.. The seminar also included presentations including “ Japanese Maples: Aristocrat of Trees” by David Doggett, JCMG, and “Beauty in Her Own Backyard” by Sally Price, JCMG..

Appetizer

Pickled Grapes and Bleu Cheese Skewers



Pickled Grapes and Bleu Cheese Skewers

Combine:

1 cup water

¾ cup red wine vinegar

1 tsp. each: coriander seeds, mustard seeds, all-spice berries

5 whole cloves

2 bay leaves, torn in half

Bring to a boil and simmer two minutes. Pour hot liquid over about 60 red seedless grapes. Cool, and then refrigerate at least 2 hours. To serve, dry grapes on paper towel. Skewer grapes on decorative toothpicks placing one grape on top of cheese cubes. Suggested cheeses include Bleu cheese, cheddar, Havarti, or your favorite.

Salad

Purple and Bleu Slaw



Purple and Bleu Slaw

- Purple cabbage, thinly sliced
- Onion, finely diced
- Bleu cheese dressing (chunky)
- Fresh lemon juice

Prepare cabbage and onion. Toss together with bleu cheese dressing. Squeeze lemon juice over salad and toss again before serving.



Tasty New Treats

Continued

Main Dish

Italian Egg Bake



Italian Egg Bake

- 4 slices sandwich bread, cubed
- ¼ cup fresh basil, finely chopped
- ¼ cup sundried tomatoes (not in oil), chopped
- 6 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- 2 cups raw spinach
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 6 large eggs
- 2/3 cups milk
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- ½ tsp. each, salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon minced chives

Preheat oven to 350. In a greased 8-inch square baking dish, layer ½ of the following: bread, spinach, basil, tomatoes, bacon, and cheese. Repeat layers. Whisk together eggs, milk, garlic, oregano, salt, and pepper. Refrigerate covered several hours or overnight. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 minutes more until puffed,

Dessert

Gingersnap Crumb Pear Pie



Gingersnap Crumb Pear Pie

- 1 deep-dish piecrust
- Prick pie shell on bottom and sides and bake at 400 for 15 minutes. Reduce oven to 350.
- Filling:
 - ½ cup sugar
 - 1/3-cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp. each ground ginger and grated fresh ginger
 - ¼ tsp. salt
 - 2 ½ pounds ripe pears (about 4 medium), peeled and thinly sliced
 - 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 - 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- In a large bowl, mix sugar, flour ginger and salt. Add pears, lemon juice and vanilla. Toss gently to combine. Transfer to crust and cover with topping.
- Topping:
 - 1 cup crushed gingersnap cookies (about 16 cookies)
 - ¼ cup all-purpose flour
 - ¼ cup packed brown sugar
 - pinch of salt
 - ½ cup cold butter, cubed

Using a food processor, combine crushed cookies, flour, brown sugar, and salt. Add butter and pulse until crumbly. Cover the filling with this mixture. Place pie on a baking sheet and bake for 60-70 minutes or until the topping is lightly browned and pears are tender. If needed, cover loosely with foil during the last 15 minutes to prevent overbrowning. Cool on a wire rack at least 1 hour before serving.



4H History Seekers at November Meeting



MG Treasurer, Jim Disque presents the Chuck Browne award to 4H history Seekers, Dr. Charles Mitchell and Betsy Jordan

Fall Greetings Lee County Master Gardeners!

The 4H History Seekers are going to be bringing the "fruits of their labor" to the meeting this coming Wednesday. There will be sweet potatoes, corn swags and poppy seeds. The hopes are that the Master Gardeners might consider purchasing some of our fall "crops" knowing that all of the monies collected for them will be donated to The Community Market in November as our Thanks Giving offering.

The 2016 sweet potato project started this past May when 4H club members planted slips from 9 different varieties (White Triumph, Norton, Vardaman, Bunch Porto Rico, Red Japanese, Purple Passion, Diana, Beauregard and O'Henry) in The Crops Garden at Pioneer Park. The plants were tended through the summer, and then, the sweet potatoes harvested this past week. The timing was such so that we could offer our harvest for sale at Pioneer Day at Loachapoka.

In addition to our home-grown, fresh-dug, interesting and unique varieties of sweet potatoes, we also ordered some new crop, expertly cured, cleaned and uniformly graded sweet potatoes from Vadaman, MS. These are "Mississippi Reds".

We also made historical corn swags using decorative ribbons and three different varieties of corn. The "Bloody Butcher" (red) and "Hickory King" (white) are from The Native American and Crops Gardens, respectively, at Pioneer Park. The "Pioneer Hybrid" variety (yellow) is from The Old Rotation at AU.

Dr. Charles also planted some poppies at Pioneer Park this past summer. They were BEAUTIFUL and due to harvest while he and Ms. Peggy were touring the English gardens that they are going to talk to us about on Wednesday. The 4Hers harvested the poppy seed pods. The seeds collected from them were offered for sale this past Saturday too ... either to plant or to eat.

Our History Seeker 4Hers enjoy many different topics of interest ... bees and chickens and cooking and black-smithing and livestock and campfires and storytelling and music and photography and on and on and on ... enjoying each as current concepts as well as exploring their historical past.

But, somehow, we always seem to end up back in the garden!

The garden continues to teach us so many valuable lessons.

Thank you for continuing to support our 4H club with The Chuck Browne Award. And, if you are able or willing to consider purchasing one of our fall garden goodies, we will have them available this Wednesday at the meeting. Please know that we will joyfully pass along your donation to support those in our community that struggle to have enough to eat by donating it to The Community Market. You will be partnering with us, helping us to help others in our community ... a fundamental, foundational concept of 4H.

In 4H friendship ,
Betsy Jordan





Potpourri

By Charlot Ritenbaugh

“Only when the well is dry do we know the worth of water.”

– Benjamin Franklin

Dec 6, 2016 Preface

AccuWeather.com claims Lee County has received .9 inches of rain since December 1, 2016 through 4pm December 5, 2016. The normal rainfall for December is .92 inches. This rainfall has been very welcome but it has not ended the ongoing drought in the area. Our rainfall for the calendar year remains around 16 inches below normal. Total rainfall from January 1, 2016 – December 5, 2015 was 6 inches below normal. The following article holds some interesting information.

Researching drought and its occurrence in Alabama, I found the most appropriate description for the leaves of my suffering evergreen azaleas, “colorful necrotic brown.” When you see that color in mass under your oak trees it is ugly and there are no Drought Busters to call.

A recent AP article in the OA News, reported the South has historically enjoyed plentiful rainfall. That abundance of water is vital for Alabama’s agriculture and forests because much of our state’s soil is poor at holding on to it. In the AP article, Alabama’s state climatologist John Christy reiterated the clear message I got from our MG classes, “*Alabama gardeners are 10 days away from a drought at any given time.*” As we move through our historically dry months of October and November while the daily count of the days without rain ticks upwards, we begin to feel desperate.

Drought is more than just lack of water. High temperatures occurring in conjunction with periods of no rain increase intensity of a drought. Sunlight can do one of two things when it hits the earth’s surface. If the sunlight reaches water on the earth’s surface, it will evaporate the water, cooling the air in the immediate area. If there is no moisture available on the earth’s surface, the sunlight converts to heat energy.

High temperatures are defined by counting the number of days during the summer that the thermostat rose above 90 degrees. The norm for Montgomery during the last 50 years was 78 days at 90 or higher. The hottest of hot season temperatures in Montgomery was counted in 1954 when there were 127 days above 90 degrees.

In 2016 there were 119 days in Montgomery when the temperatures rose above 90 degrees. Twenty-seven of those days were in September! October temperatures set 110 daily records for high readings across the state. On November 1st the temperature was 86 in Auburn! The Alabama Climate Report for October reminds us we have had dry Septembers and dry Octobers before but rarely do both months in the same year fail to produce adequate rainfall.

There are six droughts that will remain in the history books as significant to residents of Alabama. Most accounts start with 1925-1932, 1938-45, then 1954, which was the absolute driest year out of the thirteen years of low rainfall from 1950-63. Large portions of the eastern North American continent were suffering from drought at that time.

In 1980-82 there were rainfall deficiencies in the entire state. Then from 1984-88 the drought became more severe. At one point the rain deficit was more than 50 inches, or an entire year’s annual rainfall for Alabama. That drought began with decreased rainfall in the winter and spring so that there was little recharging of the moisture in the soil. That sounds like what we experienced during January through May 2016.

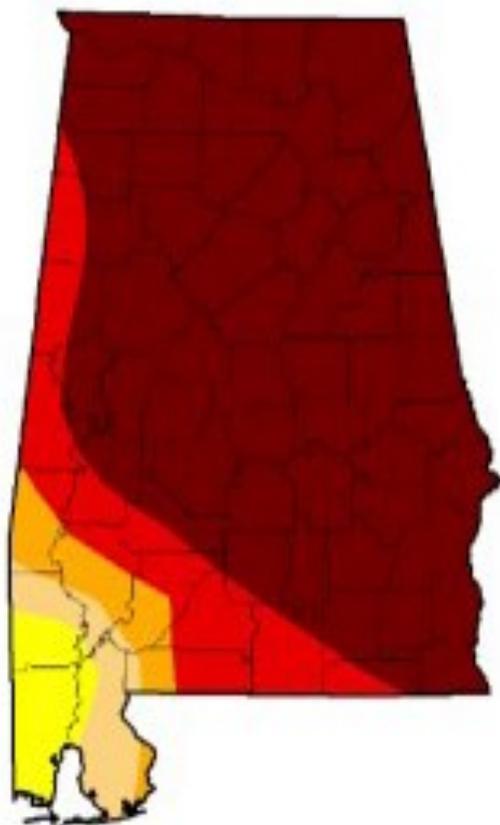


Potpourri—Continued

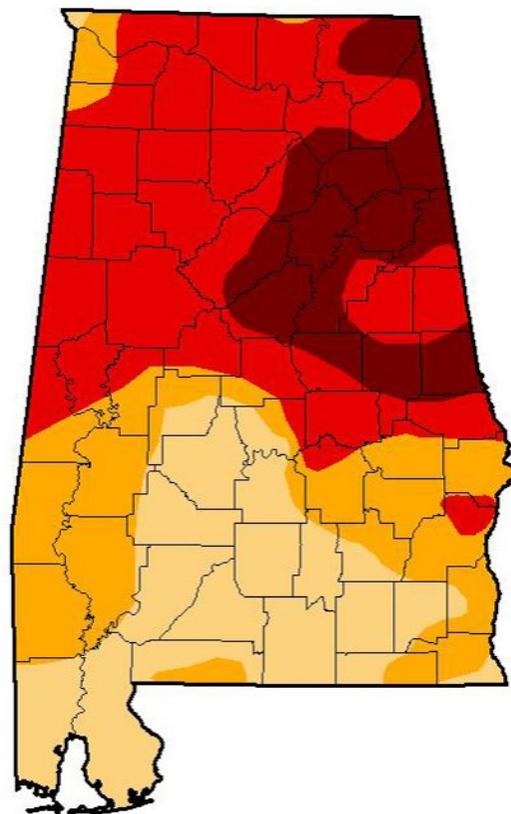
Comparison of droughts in 2007 and 2016

In 2007, residents of Alabama experienced the *100 Year Drought*. By August 2007, 75% of Alabama was under the exceptional drought category. In 2007 there 14 days of temperatures measuring 100 degrees. For comparison maps in early November 2016, estimate the northeast corner, 10% of Alabama, is in an exceptional drought. Exceptional is the worst category, the deep, dark red color. About 23% of Alabama is colored the brighter red of extreme drought. Unfortunately that touches parts of Lee County.

One difference needs to be remembered when comparing 2007 to our current experience in 2016. *Drought is more than just lack of water; high temperatures increase its intensity.* The 'tipping point' for the drought we are experiencing right now is the daily record high temperatures recorded through October this year.



August 2007



November 2016





Potpourri—Continued

After the drought of 2007, Petals from the Past owner, Jason Powell reviewed his notes and wrote an article for Fine Gardening magazine. He describes a number of tough non-irrigated plants that survived the drought and remained healthy through the following years. You might want to consider the following as replacements for plantings recently lost.

Three are native to the Southeast,

Mapleleaf viburnum *Viburnum acerifolium*

Winterberry *Ilex verticillata*

American beautyberry *Callicarpa americana*

Five are not native to the U.S.

Panicle hydrangea *Hydrangea paniculata*

Flowering quince *Chaenomeles speciosa*

'Anthony Waterer' spirea *Spiraea × bumalda* 'Anthony Waterer'

Chaste tree *Vitex agnus-castus*

Glossy abelia *Abelia × grandiflora*.

You can view the entire article at:

<http://www.finegardening.com/10-drought-tolerant-shrubs>

Another excellent reference is ACES publication, "Drought-Tolerant Landscapes for Alabama."

<http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1336/ANR-1336.pdf>.

Answer to Quiz on Page 2: Turkish (Mediterranean) House Gecko

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Hemidactylus turcicus*

STATUS: Exotic.

DESCRIPTION: A fairly small gecko, *Hemidactylus turcicus* reaches only four to five inches in length. They have large elliptical eyes, but no eyelids. Their open eyes are protected by a transparent scale called a "spectacle". Their skin is translucent to pinkish white, with black spotting on the body and spots or striping on the tail. They have rows of keeled knobby tubercles (nodules) down the back and tail. Toes are unwebbed, clawed and free of extended pads. The toes of the gecko tend to attract a lot of attention, as they adhere to a wide variety of surfaces, which allows them to climb smooth vertical surfaces with ease. Each footpad of the gecko has almost 500,000 fine stiff hairs called "setae" that allow it to cling to vertical surfaces. In addition, the gecko's toes are extremely double jointed, allowing them to peel off their toes from the tips of their toes inward. This allows them to grip the surface from different angles increasing surface tension.

DISTRIBUTION: *Hemidactylus turcicus* is one of the most successful species of geckos in the world. Originally native to southern Europe, it has been successfully introduced over much of the world, intentionally and unintentionally. In Alabama, populations have been found sporadically in the southern half of the state.

HABITAT: Found locally in and near buildings of urban areas. In nature it would be found under palm leaves and in the crevices of tree bark and rocky outcroppings.

FEEDING HABITS: They are a voracious feeder on moths and small roaches and are especially attracted to outside lights in search of insects. Geckos are nocturnal and may be seen feeding on insects near lights after dark.

LIFE HISTORY AND ECOLOGY: The Mediterranean house gecko is the most conspicuous gecko in North America. It can be found from twilight to dawn darting along walls and ceilings to feed on insects attracted by lights. Highly territorial, the males will vigorously defend their favorite foraging areas. They have a distinct voice, similar to a bird chirping or a high pitched squeak, which is thought to be a territorial message. Mediterranean geckos have very few natural predators. Birds would feed on them, but seldom have an opportunity to prey on geckos since they are strongly nocturnal and therefore only appear at night. Unlike many reptiles and amphibians, this species also appears to be hardy to pesticides and herbicides.