



MGNA's Website Relaunched

It's been a long time coming, but MGNA's new website is here. Anticipated for launch in early October, the new website at www.mginfo.org will have a fresh new look and loads of features you'll enjoy.

With so many people utilizing smart phones and mobile devices, a new navigation structure has been developed. The top menu focuses on information the general public is mostly likely there to find, while the bottom menu offers MGNA Members and Master Gardeners in the area an expanded section of organizational links and resources. Content on the home page will include visual prompts for both the general public and Master Gardeners.

The new website will have a new and completely reorganized page that lists MGNA projects and support teams, an improved integration with Google Calendar, a page for MG Intern information, a contact form, a public mailing list form, and a vastly improved "Garden Thymes" newsletter page and archive of past editions.

Perhaps the most

WEBSITE RELAUNCH Continued on Page 6

Hummingbirds, Oh My!

By Deen Rice (W'14)

When I received the email regarding the hummingbird migration study, I knew I wanted to go. My best friend and I journeyed over to the home of Margie Anderton in Killen on September 10th. I'm so glad we did. Ms. Anderton had at least 18 quart-sized feeders in her garden. I've never seen so many hummingbirds in one place. Dr. Bob Daly estimated there were 1,000 – 2,000 in the area that day.



Hummingbird catching. Photo by Shirley Hallman.

According to Dr. Daly, a good method to estimate quantity is to count all the hummers you see at one time, and then multiply that number by 5 or 10.

To catch the hummingbirds for banding, feeders are placed in wire cages with an opening large enough to reach your hand into. There was an elaborate system set up for opening and closing the doors of the cages once the hummers were

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Huntsville Herb Society

Herb Fair

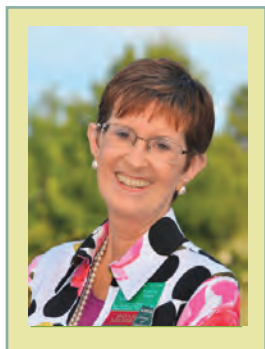
Oct 7 & 8, 2016

9AM - 4PM

Huntsville Botanical Garden

Look for us under the pavilion
at the Fall Plant Sale

Contact Cookie Kruvand (W'99) for more information.



From The President

Fall is coming, really it's coming, and the heat is going to turn to cooler temps. Fall is a wonderful time of the year with mums and asters not to mention fall colors (if we get any this year).

Despite the fact we are winding down 2016, there are still a number of events and projects to work on or attend. Check the MGNA website at www.mginfo.org for the latest on dates, times, and places.

MGNA has made progress this year but we are most excited over the new website which should be up and running around the first of October. The IT Team has been working diligently on the new

format and a comprehensive but easy navigation menu. Please make sure you check it out and give us your feedback.

Our monthly meeting in November is our Annual Business meeting at 12 noon at the Huntsville Botanical Gardens, Murray Hall. Please attend.

*"Give me odorous at sunrise a garden
of beautiful flowers where I can
walk undisturbed."*

Walt Whitman

Kathie Bass (F'02)
MGNA President

GARDEN THYMES

VOL. XXV, ISSUE 5

Editor in Chief

Jessica Wood (F'14)

Regular Contributing Editors

Bill Fuller (W'97)

Jean Lee (W'95)

Brenda Tapp (W'98),

Carolyn Wade (W'12)

Lynn Overman (F'15)

The Garden Thymes newsletter is published six times a year: February/March, April/May, June/July, August/September, October/November, and December/January. Editorial deadline is the 20th of the month prior to publication.

The newsletter along with the Writer's Guidelines are posted on www.mginfo.org, under the Newsletter tab near the bottom of the Home Page.

Master Gardeners of North Alabama was incorporated in 1988 and is now a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation.

The Alabama Master Gardener program is conducted at the county level by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

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Field Trip
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Calendar

OCTOBER

October 6, 10 a.m. to noon

Patterns in Nature Workshop — Madison County Extension Office, Huntsville; presented by Karen Reed.

October 10, 12 p.m.

MGNA Board Meeting — County Extension Office, Huntsville; president@mginfo.org.

October 13, 6 p.m.

MGNA General Meeting — Murray Hall, Huntsville Botanical Garden; www.mginfo.org.

October 17, 12 p.m. CANCELLED

MGNA Education Workshop — Madison County Extension Office, Huntsville; Presentation: Selecting & Maintaining Fruit Trees, presented by Ken Creel.

October 21

Chattanooga Reflection Riding Arboretum — more info come; MGNA contacts Gloria Couch and Anna Bright.

NOVEMBER

November 7, 12 p.m.

MGNA Board Meeting — County Extension Office, Huntsville; president@mginfo.org.

November 10, noon

MGNA Annual Corporate Meeting — Murray Hall, Huntsville Botanical Garden; www.mginfo.org.

November 15, 1-3 p.m.

MGNA Education Workshop — Madison County Extension Office, Huntsville; Presentation: Simply Orchids, presented by Diane Campen.

DECEMBER

December 5, 12 p.m.

MGNA Board Meeting — County Extension Office, Huntsville; president@mginfo.org.

December 8, 6 p.m.

MGNA Christmas Social — Huntsville Botanical Garden Arbor; www.mginfo.org.

Master Gardeners may find more calendar items on the Auburn Service Report Database for Madison County. Send your calendar items to newsletter@mginfo.org.

Final 2016 Field Trip: Reflection Riding Arboretum



Image courtesy of Reflection Riding Arboretum website.

By Brenda Myers (W'09)

Our last 2016 field trip will be to the Chattanooga area to visit Reflection Riding Arboretum on October 21, with lunch planned for a place near the river.

Hope to see you sign up and join us. Details will be in the email invite that will go out. Friends and family are invited and welcomed! 🌿

More information and registration for workshops at www.mginfo.org.

Featured Herb

Hops

Botanical: *Humulus Lupulus* (LINN.)

Family: N.O. *Urticaceae*

By Dorothy Thomas (F'09)

Native to temperate zones from Western Europe to Asia, hops are hardy from USDA zones 3 through 8, die back to the ground in winter, and are heat-tolerant in summer. Hops can be grown in partial shade to full sun in moist organically rich soil. In the summer when the blooms are opening up and still green, harvest and dry them for later use. With this in mind, hops do not keep very long when stored.

The female flowers are impressive, chartreuse, cone-like “strobials” which look a bit like tiny one-inch artichokes. They typically begin to appear in July and August and ripen into harvestable pine-scented hops by September. They can be used in herbal remedies, homemade beers, or left on the vines to add interest in the garden.

Hops were already garden plants in Pliny’s day, when ancient Romans enjoyed the young shoots in spring salads. Pliny is also the source of its species name *lupulus* because, he reported, the vine strangled and killed willows as wolves (*lupus*) killed sheep. The common name “hops” derives from the Anglo-Saxon *hoppen*, to climb. Hops were used from medieval times to the present to treat headaches, insomnia, and a wealth of other ailments. Hops have for centuries been used to induce sleep. By the 1600s, the early settlers had established crops in the United

States. Native tribes including the Delaware, Cherokee, Mohegan, and Fox soon discovered that it settled nerves when brewed as a tea. Hops were once believed to cause melancholia and suicide. This old belief has since been reversed, so that in aromatherapy, the mere odor of hops is used as a treatment for depression. Even Abraham Lincoln had a little “hop pillow” to sleep against; the odor was calming to the nerves and eased emotional gloom.

Not all the effects were necessarily positive. The term “hopping mad,” which had already found its way into English literature by the 1660s, was probably first spoken in hop-cultivating centers like Kent, blaming hops for the drunken rages of “hoppers” who were the day laborers working seasonally in the hop fields. Hoppers were regarded as the lowest dregs of society, not only unsightly because of their poverty and lack of hygiene, but also for their arms, legs, and faces frequently being scarred by infected purple eruptions. Severe contact-dermatitis known as “hop-picker’s disease” was caused by continuous exposure to the abrasive vines & the volatile oils of the strobials.

Basic Hop Tisane

Place 1 ounce dried hops per 1 quart jar and fill with boiling water.

Strong Infusion - Cover jar. Steep for at least 4 hours but not more than overnight. Strain infusion and store in refrigerator for up to 48 hours. Serve hot or cold.

Mild Infusion - Steep for 10-20 minutes. Strain and drink. This method is milder flavored as well as less effective. Serve hot or cold

Note: Herbs such as chamomile, peppermint, lemon grass, ginger and other herbs, can be added 🌿



Image courtesy of stocksforms.net.

HUMMINGBIRDS *Continued from page 1*
inside, but the trained “catchers” were just reaching inside the cage and catching the birds with their hands. The hummers were then placed in drawstring mesh bags and taken over to the banding table, where the bags were attached to a circular gizmo that looked suspiciously like a bicycle wheel with hooks. Once the hummers are removed from the bag, Dr. Daly said you have about 3 minutes to complete the banding process before the birds start getting stressed. In addition to banding, the hummingbird is aged, sexed, weighed and measured before it is released unharmed. The information is entered into a computer for tracking. One year, Dr. Daly actually caught two hummers he had banded on the same day and same month 8 years before and they had consecutive band numbers. Almost unbelievable!

Here’s some hummingbird trivia: The hummingbirds usually

found in North Alabama during spring, summer and fall are the ruby-throated variety. Labor Day is the peak migration time. During the migration season, most hummers in your yard will leave in the late afternoon and fly about 20 miles to roost. They will then rest and feed at the new location for one to two days and then continue their southward journey. In the Fall, many travel around the coastline to South America rather than flying across the Gulf of Mexico due to the risk of hurricanes. In the Spring, they are more likely to fly across the Gulf. Oil rigs aid in their journey by hanging feeders, both nectar and seed, for migrating birds. You will not impede the ruby throated hummingbird’s migration by leaving your feeders out into the Fall. Hummingbirds nest twice a year and lay two eggs at a time. Hummingbirds do not migrate in a flock. It’s every bird for itself. Hummingbirds can live seven years or longer, but most die

within the first year of life.

The U.S. Department of the Interior issues Master Bird Banding Permits to specially trained and experienced individuals for the banding of hummingbirds. Over 200 master and sub-master hummingbird banders are permitted in North America. Dr. Robert Daly, Emeritus Professor of Biology is one of these. If you would like to report unusual hummingbird observations, a banded bird or most especially a Winter hummingbird, please call or email: Dr. Daly at rwdaly@una.edu or humbander1943@yahoo.com, or 256-718-6972.

Many thanks to Margie Anderton for opening her garden to us and to Dr. Daly for including us in his hummingbird migration study. 🌿



Deen Rice (F'14)



Image credit: Deen Rice (F'14)

News

Janet Szofran Moves to Seattle

We moved last October to be closer to our son and family. We're in a 3-story townhouse with a balcony for plants and a small patio with enough room for the raised bed "Keyhole Garden" that my husband Frank installed. Direct sunlight is limited. However, I do have green tomatoes and a plant I bought with tomatoes on it has fruit that is trying to turn red! I inquired about the Master Gardener program here, but would have to repeat the entire course, which is all day on Saturday for the required number of weeks. I'm thinking about it, but not very seriously.

Please say "Hello" to everyone

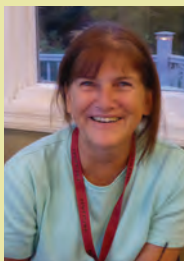
Janet Szofran ('92)
janet@szofran.net

Noteworthy from MGNA Meetings



Ann Tippie

Ann Tippie (W'12) and Carolyn Wade (W'12) won the Give A Hand at the August and September MGNA Member Meetings.



Carolyn Wade

Limestone County Alabama Extension Agent Chris Becker also attended the September Member Meeting. He will be available to MGNA in the transition period following Ken Creel's departure. 🌱



Extension Agent Chris Becker

WEBSITE RELAUNCH Continued from Page 1

wonderful aspect of the new website will occur behind the scenes. Because the site is using the Wordpress platform, updating content to the website can be shared across a number of volunteers and is easy to learn, with no advanced skill required. What's also great is that our new hosting service (Blue Host) offers shared web hosting for Guide-Star Qualified Non-Profits like ours. While we'll still have a few costs associated with the website, they will be minimal in the big picture.

Another big development "behind the scenes" is the move to Google Apps for Non Profit for our @mginfo.org webmails. This ONLY affects project chairs and individuals in official leadership roles. Google offers their robust suite of professional business class email, cloud storage and productivity

software at no cost to qualified 501 (c) 3 organizations like ours. Once we get that transition completed successfully we will "shutter" our mastergardenersofnorthalabama@gmail.com and send out organizational email notices using news@mginfo.org .

Thank you to Jane Jones who has helped build the new Project Page and is working on other areas as I write. Again, I am always eager to hear from individuals who have time and interest to join this new website team and contribute their time and energy in making it a fun and informative website we can all call our own, and YES, it's a great way to log Master Gardener hours! Please email me at webmaster@mginfo.org . 🌱

Meredith Kilby (F'11)
Communications Chair

Harvest for Health Opportunity

Harvest for Health is a UAB study that pairs cancer survivors and Master Gardeners in their area to see if gardening will help survivors eat a more nutritious diet and improve physical activity.

Harvest for Health began with a pilot study in Jefferson County, Alabama, in 2011. Funded by grants, the original study showed survivors had improved strength — especially in the hands — improved mobility, and an increased ability to get up and down. The study has since been expanded to many counties including Huntsville and Madison.

UAB and ACES provide all the supplies — tools, seeds and seedlings, a raised bed or EarthBoxes® — a large gardening container on wheels — that can be kept on a porch or patio. Master Gardeners visit with the survivors monthly for one year, offering advice and answering questions from the

new gardeners.

MGNA members have volunteered with the Harvest for Health program for the past two years with varying degrees of success. Despite the benefits of gardening, some survivors find once they start recovering and feeling better they return to work and have little time to garden. Others, though, like the survivor Andria Cummings (F'07) and I worked with two years ago, not only enjoyed it, he embraced the project wholeheartedly. He was eager to learn, asked lots of questions, and continues to garden year round.

If you are interested in volunteering with this worthwhile project, please consider contacting Kerry Smith at smithkp@auburn.edu and signing up. Nervous about doing it on your own, find a friend and sign up to 'share your survivor' — I really think you'll be glad you did. 🌱

Carolyn Wade (W'12)

Ongoing Projects: Demonstration Vegetable Garden and Morris Elementary Outdoor Classroom

Article and Pictures By Carolyn Wade (W'12)

The Demonstration Vegetable Garden (DVG) is winding down from summer harvesting; so far we have harvested and donated over 1,500 pounds this year. During the summer months we have hosted the Education Department and Jr Master Gardener classes, providing raised beds for planting by the children as well as vegetables for cooking classes. Most recently we supported the Huntsville Botanical Garden's Farm To Table Fundraiser. We worked with Chef Chris McDonald from Washington Square Catering to supply vegetables and herbs for the Garden dinner. Chris and the decorators seemed very impressed with our vegetable patch and were happy to put into practice the 'Garden to Table' idea. We are gearing up for fall planting, and busy finishing our new fence and tiller shed. Watch for our email soon as we plan to have a garden clean up day. Be sure

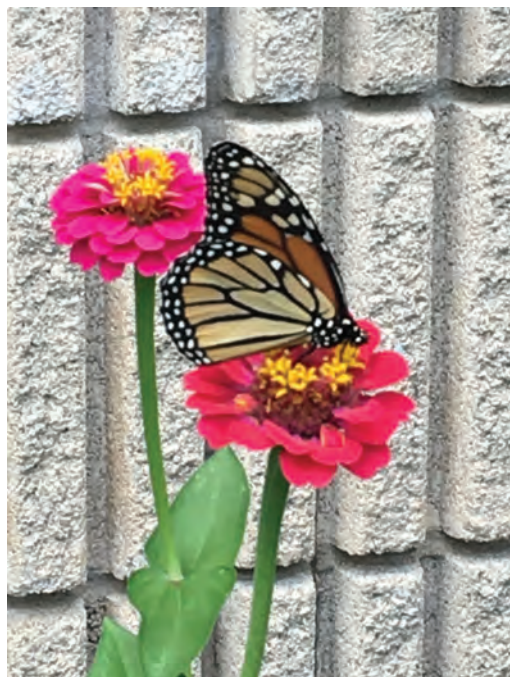
to stop by the garden to see our scarecrow - I. D. Buggs, County Extension Agent.

Square Foot Gardening is alive and well at Morris Elementary School. Thanks to Betsy Fletcher (W'07), Susan Allbritton (F'14) and my husband for helping to clean the greenhouse and install the garden beds. Many thanks as well to Jessica Wood (F'14) and her husband for pressure washing part of the greenhouse and to Tom Simpson (W'12) for installing a sink for our use. This year's class of fifth graders, 22 students so far, are really excited to get started. They have planned their gardens and plan to plant them next week with lettuce, onions, garlic, flowers and more. The students are excited to research and present vegetable facts to their classmates, as well as keeping the birdfeeders full. Several of the students were in

our very first class of second graders at the school, it's nice to see them again. We have a busy year planned so please consider joining us on Tuesday mornings from 11:50am until about 1pm when we work with the students.



Clockwise from top right: County Extension Agent I.D. Buggs scarecrow; Blonde Okra, an heirloom in the DVG; and square foot garden installation by Betsy Fletcher and Susan Allbritton at the Morris Elementary Outdoor Classroom.



Buds and Blossoms in the Village

Article and Pictures By Jennifer Johnson (W'16)

It seems that projects are most successful when those involved come together because of a similar passion. “Buds and Blossoms in the Village” encompasses many passions including a love for the ministry at Lincoln Village, a love for each other, and a love for digging in the dirt for our Creator.

There are many other talented volunteers who have come before us with a desire to teach the children how to love the earth and all that grows from it. When we started working in the gardens in March, there were many established plants and even raised beds! We just breathed new life into them by tilling, mulching, pulling some weeds and planting plants that we love. While we share similar passions, some of us brought our own unique interests to the table. Some brought a love of vegetables, some a passion for zinnias,

some an enthusiasm for butterflies and creepy crawly things, and some a talent for design. But we all are dedicated to the children at Lincoln Village.

This summer, we worked with the Summer Camp kids to teach them about seeds, life cycles, butterflies and bees. This fall, classes love to walk through the Outdoor Classroom where they have seen monarchs, black swallowtail caterpillars and gulf fritillaries to name a few! They have seen butterflies laying eggs and caterpillars turning into chrysalis. The children have pumpkins growing in the Educational Garden. Every time they walk to the Science Lab they see birds and butterflies enjoying the herb and nectar garden. The gardens are certified butterfly and monarch gardens by the North American Butterfly Association. Many of our plants were donated by Master

Gardeners like you!!

We are a group of Master Gardener Interns and Lincoln Village volunteers called Buds and Blossoms. We meet the last Wednesday of every month 1:00-2:00 at Lincoln Academy and participate in a Saturday work day once a month. Many of us show up every Wednesday at 10:00 and love on the gardens by pulling weeds and letting the teachers know what to look for in the gardens. We work through the Volunteer Coordinator at Lincoln Village, Emily Fox. She would love to get you plugged into what we are doing in the gardens at Lincoln Village. Simply email her emily@lincolnvillageministry.com This is a great time to join us as we have new goals for Fall 2016 and are already looking ahead to next Spring! We would LOVE to have you dig in the dirt with us!! 🌱

September Field Trip to Florence Area

Article By Brenda Myers (W'09), Pictures By Anna Bright (F'09)

On September 3, a small group ventured to the Florence area where we were met by one of our own members who lives in the Florence area. Mr. Tom Hendrix met us at the Wichahpi Commemorative Wall and told us the story of his grandmother and his story of the wall. After hearing Tom speak, we strolled along the wall and took in the spirit of it all. Next on the agenda was a stroll on the Natchez Trace Rock Springs Nature Trail, where MG Anna Bright named many of the plants growing alongside the trail. From there, we travelled to the Hall Memorial Native Plant Garden at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), where we picnicked and met up with Margie Anderton. She helped design and put in the Hall Memorial Native Plant Garden and is still very active in it. Incidentally, Margie is also the individual involved with the recent hummingbird study that several MGNA members participated in. And we were again invited to come by her house that afternoon. It was a beautiful day and was enjoyed by all. 🌿



2017 MGNA Slate of Officers and Board

(to be voted on at the November 10 Corporate Meeting)

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: **Ann Tippee** (W 12)
 (Replacing Kathie Bass in 2017)

VICE PRESIDENT: **Sue Khoury** (W 13)

SECRETARY: **Carolyn Wade** (W 12)

TREASURER: **Dorothy Thomas** (F 07)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DIRECTORS: Serving a 3 year term of January 2017 – December 2019
 Jessica Wood (F14) (replacing Meredith Kilby)
 Flo Helman (W 05) (replacing Alice Brigman)

DIRECTOR: (completing Ann Tippee's term) - Serving January 2017 – December 2017
 Bonnie Gardner (F 02)



2017 Directors Continuing on the Board (no vote needed on these)

January 2017 – December 2017: **Tom Simpson** (W 12)

January 2017 – December 2018: **Bill Fuller** (W 97)
 Acacia Moore (F 12)



MGNA PRESS RELEASE

Seed Savers Exchange To Be Featured at 2017 AMGA Conference

The Master Gardeners of North Alabama (MGNA) will host the first Seed Savers Exchange at the 2017 AMGA Conference to be held in Huntsville May 1-3. Experts from the Sand Mountain Seed Bank (SMSB) will be on hand at the Jackson Center on Tuesday, May 2, to answer questions and facilitate exchanges. The SMSB is operated by Dove Stackhouse and Charlotte Hagood, and currently is home to ~600 varieties of peas and beans, melons, gourds, grains and greens, sunflowers, and marigolds.

Seed saving is the traditional method of harvesting and preserving seeds that have naturally adapted to their environment and offer a variety of tastes and resistance to disease and pests not generally found in the hybridized seed produced for commercial growers. Worldwide, there is a growing recognition that biodiversity is being lost as the commercial seed companies develop hybrids bred primarily for uniformity and visual appeal. Fewer and fewer varieties are being grown. Should a blight or pest strike, such monoculture crops could fail completely, threatening entire species.

Start saving your seeds now so you can participate in our 2017 Exchange! In most cases, seed saving is simple, and you'll be contributing to Alabama's biodiversity. Simple instructions can be found at:

http://www.seedsave.org/issi/issi_904.html

<http://www.rodalorganiclife.com/garden/beginners-guide-seed-saving>

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/vegetables/saving-vegetable-seeds>

<http://www.saltspringseeds.com/pages/how-to-save-seeds>

Contact:

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