



GARDEN THYMES

A Word from our MGNA President . . .



Carol Weand (F18)

Fall is coming ..., well that was yesterday, so now fall is here. I even have some tree leaves changing to their fall color, unless they are dying back from lack of water. Another year, another Alabama August/September drought! My vegetable garden is done for the year, for several reasons, but we have watermelons still on the vine with green stems. As always that pesky garden grass just keeps growing.

Our workshop committee took off for two months, but only after they planned a great hydrangeas workshop for September. Gigi Bullman made me want to add several more hydrangeas to my garden. At our last meeting Janet Boothe showed us what it takes to add interest with color and texture to our gardens

MGNA hosted the AMGA Fall Seminar on 26 September. After extensive planning and coordination we provided four great speakers to the 151 registered attendees. We also provided an opportunity for the attendees to enjoy our Huntsville Botanical Garden and purchase some lovely native azaleas from the Azalea Society of America.

We continue to work the challenges concerning our new greenhouse. We will persevere. Not withstanding, a great plant sale is already in the works for next April.

There are three notes on the administrative side. It's time to enter your CEUs and volunteer hours for the year. The membership committee will begin collecting dues for 2024 membership in October. It is also time for you to nominate individuals for the MGNA awards listed in our handbook. Send your nominations to Helen Carr or Debi Bonkoski as soon as possible.



In closing, I want to thank each of you for being great members this year. I look forward to seeing you at the October gathering at Allyson and Owen Hofer's farm in Tennessee. There will be a Sign-up Genius to let us know you are coming and what you are bringing. In addition to your tasty potluck dish, bring one or more plants to swap or just pass along if

you wish. Directions will be provided.

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Special points of interest

- AMGA Celebrating 50 Years
- New Communication Team
- Christmas Social



Mary Lou McNabb giving her interesting, informative, and entertaining talk

AMGA CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Article by Suzanne Kirkhuff and photos by Walt Lindblom, Cathy Hales, and Suzanne Kirkhuff

This wonderful Fall seminar in the Arbor at the Huntsville Botanical Garden saw Master Gardeners attending from all over the state of Alabama. The highlight was Mary Lou McNabb speaking to us. Mary Lou was one of the persons who helped found Master Gardeners in Alabama and was part of the first Alabama class.

Other speakers were Susan Parker who gave a presentation on the Demonstration Vegetable Garden which is located in the Huntsville Botanical Garden. Jeremy Foulks, Executive Director of the Habitat for Humanity spoke on his organization.

After we finished our lunch, several of us toured the DVG and other gardens and then returned to the seminar for our next speakers.

The Azalea Society had native azaleas for sale at the seminar.

Cindy Upton, who is a Master Gardener and works for NASA's Marshall Space Flight center, spoke on the difficulties growing plants in space.

Last but certainly not least, Harvey Cotten gave a brief history of where we have been and where we are going horticultural wise.

AMGA Fall Seminar Pictures



Carol Weand, MGNA's president



Susan Parker speaks about the DVG



Jeremy Foulks speaking on Habitat for Humanity



Mary Lou McNabb and Harvey Cotten catching up on old times



Harvey Cotten talked about the past and the future of horticulture



Cindy Upton speaks on growing plants in space



OUR NEW COMMUNICATION TEAM

By Carolyn Wade (W12)

MGNA's Communication Team has some new faces. Walt Lindblom and Jim Mullen have agreed to take photos at MGNA events. If you see these guys at one of our events, workdays, workshops or just around, be sure to smile for the camera.

Maria Cayse has agreed to take over the role of digital historian for MGNA. Maria will make sure that our archives are kept up to date – these include our meeting minutes, financials, workshop flyers, past award winners, photos and ALL things MGNA. Maria will also keep copies of forms used – membership, Jane R Parks, reimbursement requests and others.

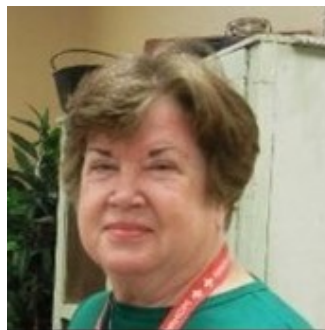
Anita Reeves has stepped up to take over the Public Facebook page. Anita will post articles supporting ACES as well as MGNA events and happenings. Thanks, Teri Estes, for your help this past year with this endeavor. You did a fantastic job.

Anita Reeves will join Jane Jones in working on the MGNA website and keeping them up to date. Paul Gohmann will help with making sure pages are current.

Thanks to these members for stepping up to help out – but remember, they all need your help as well. If you take photos, please be sure to share them, notice something wrong on the website, let one of the team know so it can be corrected. MGNA is made up of us all and we all need to share in the responsibilities.



Walt Lindbolm



Jane Jones



Maria Cayse



Jim Mullen



Paul Gohmann



Anita Reeves



Amazing Hydrangea Workshop

By Suzanne Kirkhuff (F07)



You are probably wondering how a workshop could be called amazing. We broke a record in attendance at the Huntsville main library on September 19 with over 80 attendees plus six committee members. Gigi Bullman was also an amazing speaker. There was nothing but praises for her presentation.



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MGNA EVENTS



- October 14, Sat.: MGNA Picnic at Hofer's farm in Tennessee, details TBA
- October 17, Tues.: Cottage Garden workshop at Madison Library, 1-2 pm
- November 9, Thurs.: MGNA Corporate Meeting, details TBA
- November 20, Mon.: Floral Arrangement workshop at Huntsville Botanical Garden, \$35 each, members only, details TBA
- December 14, Thurs.: MGNA Christmas social and auction, details TBA
- April 12-13, 2024: MGNA Spring Plant Sale, details TBA

Master Gardeners of North Alabama, Inc.

Christmas Holiday Social

And

Silent Auction

Is

Thursday, December 14, 2023

Combining the Holiday Social with a Silent Auction was such a fun opportunity to socialize and browse beautiful auction items that we're offering it again this year!

The funds generated with the Silent Auction help our club serve the community with educational programs and acts of service.

Please help make this Silent Auction a success by donating to this effort.

Popular items were:

Gift Certificates

New items – (Particularly Gardening Items)

Handmade Crafts and Creations

Artwork

Jewelry

(Our local businesses get inundated with general requests for charitable donations, so instead, we are asking our members to donate an item for the auction.)

To arrange for pickup or delivery of your auction item, please contact

Cyndi Lindblom at Cyndi.lindblom@gmail.com

Or Barbara Stansky at barbarastansky@gmail.com

Your Participation Is Greatly Appreciated!

2023 Award Nominations

By Debi Bonkoski (F10)

It's that time of year again to think about who or what you would like to nominate for the 2023 MGNA awards. We want to know what people and what projects stand out to you and why.

Here are the categories for the awards:

Master Gardener of the Year

- 100 hours per year of volunteer hours
- Current member of MGNA and AMGA

Other criteria to be considered on page 25-26 of the 2023 MGNA Handbook



Lifetime Achievement

An MGNA member for at least 20 years and having made significant contributions to MGNA through volunteering

New Initiative

An individual award for forming a new program or improving an existing project or program

Group Project of the Year

- Active member of MGNA as project leader

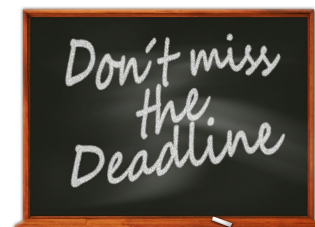
Successful and timely accomplishment of a project approved by the MGNA board

Friend of MGNA

An individual or group, not members of MGNA, whose support and assistance has enabled MGNA to meet its annual goals

Please contact either Helen Carr helenlcarr@aol.com or Debi Bonkoski dbonkoski1@yahoo.com with any nominations. The deadline for sending in nominations is **October 14**.

Your input and nominations are extremely important as you are the ones choosing the winners of these awards.





**Cathy Hales (W05)
MGNA Director**



Cathy & Tom Celebrating their 50th in Italy

It takes all kinds of folks in Master Gardeners, even those who prefer clean hands.

I have no gardening genes; my interest came from reading newspaper articles. My grandmother in Starkville, MS, grew bulbs and vegetables, and the one near Tupelo, MS, grew roses and vegetables. I admired the flowers but hated their vegetable gardens. Growing up, I shelled some peas because the stories about my relatives' escapades were pretty good but after the third year hearing the same stories, I grew bored. I much preferred reading, especially mysteries and biographies. I still like mysteries and biographies. My mother wanted nothing to do with the yard, but my father did cut the grass and plant tomatoes and squash. Now I cut the grass, and my husband, who grew up on a Mississippi Delta farm, handles the vegetables and herbs. I got him to use hydroponics and to put the water for the containers on a timer.

I graduated from Mississippi State in 1973, a few years before Harvey Cotten and John Grisham, with a degree in communication with emphases in newspaper journalism and communication theory. After eloping as soon as my parents paid my last semester's tuition, Tom Hales and I graduated and moved. I worked at the Memphis, TN, *Commercial Appeal* and the Houston, TX, *Chronicle*. My favorite job at the *Chronicle* was copyediting and writing headlines for The Lazy Gardener column. We moved to my husband's hometown, the severely impoverished Greenville, MS, and I worked at the *Delta-Democrat Times*. Two children later, in 1979, in search of great public schools and a great economy, we moved to Huntsville.. Paradise!

I spent some years as a stay-at-home mom, volunteering with PTAs and children's sports teams as my husband built houses. I helped found the Hampton Cove Garden Club (I had to learn to maintain the homestead), and graduated to the Garden Clubs of North Alabama. I served 10 years with the City of Huntsville Beautification Board, including working on the 2000 sign ordinance. During this time, I took the Master Gardener course, discovered I liked landscaping public parks, and went to work for the Huntsville Times. I quickly claimed editing Harvey Cotten's weekly columns and John Ehinger's bird columns. I also wrote headlines and kept the arts calendar. I was part of the 70% who were laid off in 2012.

I really don't enjoy getting my hands dirty but I like knowledge about gardening and facilitating what plants want to do. I tell my children that unlike computers, family members and co-workers, plants want to do what's right. I continue to work with nearby towns' beautification judging. After taking the Master Gardener course in 2005, I pulled out lots of yard plants, but my yard doesn't look much better now. I do have some of my grandmother's daffodil bulbs. I did follow in the paths of my grandmother (the bulb grower) and mother and play duplicate bridge.

My favorite Master Gardener experience: The tour of Hudson Alpha

My favorite Master Gardener tip: Cut your Amazon boxes to fit and put between the soil and mulch. No sunshine on soil equals no weeds.

Morris Elementary

Article by Carlita Edwards (W21)

Photos by Carlita Edwards and Anita Reeves (W19)

Morris Elementary School has given MGNA an opportunity to provide gardening instructions to Ms. Pride's 4th grade class during the school year. We began our first class with the students after Labor Day. Our meeting times are Wednesdays from 1-2 pm.

The class has been divided into four groups by color. They are Red, Blue, Yellow, and Green Teams. The students have been assigned to a team by Ms. Pride. They will remain with the same team for the school year. Students have been equipped with aprons and garden journals that are color coded to their group. Adult volunteers will remain with the same group for the year.

The instruction and activities are based on Alabama School Garden curriculum and the Junior Master Garden program. Activities are in alignment with Alabama standards in Science, Math, and English.

We began our first class by introducing types of soils: clay, sand and garden soil from one of their assigned raised beds. The students also included compost in the comparisons.

Students placed equal amounts of the soil samples from the previous week with an equivalent amount of water in a jar with a lid. They shook the jar to combine ingredients, then set that jar aside until the end of class for the contents to settle. They discussed and recorded observations.

Students used a funnel and catch container constructed from a 2-liter clear plastic soda bottle. First they added their sample to the funnel, then equal amounts of water, and timed at set intervals. Students filled out a comparison chart in their garden journal.

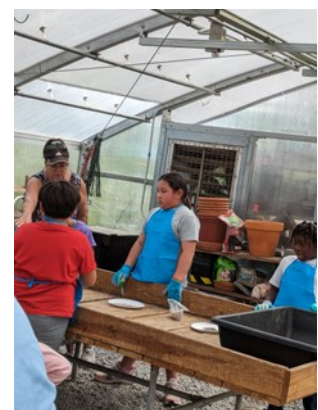
We also harvested sweet potatoes, planted transplants of broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, lettuce and kale.



Allyson and Owen Hofer and Morris students-green group



Marilyn Porter and Andra Jiggers with Morris students-red group



Donna Everett with Morris students-blue group

DVG Happenings

Picture and Article by Susan Parker (F17)

Here is part of the current master gardener crew participating in our Ask a Master Gardener Day on Saturday July 8, 2023. The DVG was in top shape to receive garden guests.



Left side: Susan Beam, Carlita Edwards, Diane Rodgers, Rick Brown, and Lisa Crump
Right Side: Ben Gremillion, Connie Carr, Lynn Myers, Gina Lewis, Susan Parker, and Teri Estes

Advisory Council Meeting at Petals from the Past on August 1

By Cyndi Lindblom (F13)

East Central MGs won third place in the International Master Gardener Conference for one of their projects.

Conferences:

2024 – Baldwin county will be Paradise Found April 22 – 24 at the Daphne Civic Center. They have speakers lined up and are ready to go. By far the most organized group. They do need vendors

2025 – Autauga County will host their conference at the Prattville Baptist Church and it is Foundations of Knowledge – learn, share, grow.

2026 – Tri-County MGs (Madison, Morgan, Limestone) will host in Huntsville more info to follow.

Dec 15 Intern Graduation in Auburn - Statewide

Leadership training August 7 & 8

And finally, closing with the Transformation Garden in Auburn, we, the Master Gardeners have the rights to name the garden path BUT we, AMGA, have to come up with the money pledged for those rights.



JOAN MOREHEAD HOSTED A MASTER GARDENER TOUR LAST JUNE

By Cathy Hales (W05)

On June 29, Joan, a friend of several Master Gardeners, arranged a tour of her yard along with seven other nearby yards for a Master Gardener and their friends' tour. Joan has an eye for tablescapes and floral arrangements, as well as

landscape design. It was a hot day but the beautiful yards made you forget the heat.

Below are some photographs of her lovely yard.



MEMBERSHIP DUES DUE

by Elouisa Stokes

With the beginning of Fall comes the beginning of the new Membership Year. Dues are due by December 31 but we begin taking dues in October to make it easier for members. Our dues are \$30 per year. You may get the membership form on our mginfo.org web page. On the Home page, scroll down to the bottom of the page to Forms and Registrations. Choose the membership form, print it, fill out the information, and send it to Elouisa Stokes, 2415 Glenn St SW, Huntsville, AL 35801. You may also pay by check or cash at the fall meetings. Looking forward to seeing all of you. Elouisa Stokes, 256-604-8669 for information.

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. . Editor*

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