

The Dirt | September, 2023

Mobile County Master Gardeners

The President's Message by Harry Surline



MCMG Officers

President Harry
Surline
251.605.4667
h.surline@gmail.com

Vice President
Carol Williams
251.367.0473
readingweeder72@h
otmail.com

Rec Secretary
Karen Ruckart
251.377.2312
kzruckart@gmail.com

Corr Secretary
Brenda Howard
251.423.3108
eeks89tl@gmail.com

Treasurer Jane
Finley
251.605.0625
janefinley@bellsouth
.net

I think all of us would like to see the Mobile County Master Gardeners grow as a more effective organization helping people in Mobile County. I offer the following comments as a guide for us to grow. (With thanks to **Robin Krchak**, executive director of Mobile Botanical Gardens.)

How Do We Grow?

Have a vision and a big dream.

If you don't dream big, you get stuck.

Be willing to do the work.

Some days you must clean the toilets.

Have patience.

Sometimes you must wait - and do so with a good attitude.

Learn to deal with what you cannot control.

Sometimes you need more than patience.

Pick up after yourself.

Happiness is not a finished product; it is a beautiful work in progress.

It is better to do it together.

Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who did.

Be thankful and grateful.

Being thankful is a feeling, being grateful is an action.

What you should do every day.

Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out.

Sometimes you must let things go.

. . . to be able to say goodbye and welcome the new.

The Dream Garden

The Dream Garden needs volunteers! Right now, the Dream Garden needs help. Volunteers are needed to water during this hot weather. If you are signed up to help in the Dream Garden, please go out and help maintain the Garden by watering, weeding or whatever else needs doing. If you are not currently volunteering in the Dream Garden, **call Marsha Stolz 251-689-5993** or the person in charge of one of the individual gardens and ask what needs to be done. If you can spend one hour a week, you will make a difference. You can come out early in the morning before it gets hot or later in the afternoon, when it is cooler.

Needed: a couple of folks to help adjust the planting benches heights in the greenhouse. Call me (251.605.4667) or email me (h.surline@gmail.com) if you can help.

Plan ahead to volunteer. The fall plantings will take place in



October on a Friday and Saturday. The prep and planting dates will be announced in the October issue of **The Dirt** in **"In the Loop."** The vegetable area will be prepped for planting on Friday, and on Saturday, the winter vegetables will be planted.

The spring planting will be in March and April, so keep your volunteer calendar open! For the first 6 months of this year, the vegetable garden has yielded 308 pounds of produce given to the Mission of Hope. Did you know that 20 different vegetables will be grown in the Dream Garden this year? Help is needed to plant and maintain this extraordinary vegetable garden.

Gary Bachman, PhD, will be speaking at our meeting on September 6. His topic will be "Preparing for Fall Gardening." Improve your fall gardening by learning from a knowledgeable and entertaining expert. He may also bring some plants to give away! Check him out on YouTube for great gardening information!

Dr. F. Todd Lasseigne, Director, Bellingrath Gardens and Home will be our speaker on Wednesday, October 4. His topic will be Bellingrath's Magical Mums Display. Dr. Lasseigne spoke at the Alabama Plant seminar this past Wednesday and is an entertaining and interesting speaker. Don't miss this meeting.

Joel Potter, ACES Urban Regional Extension Agent, Certified Arborist, will be speaking on Wednesday, November 8, about his favorite topic: trees; specifically, replacing freeze-damaged trees.

Annual Bus Trip

Carol Williams has arranged a great bus trip to Auburn to view the gardens at the university. The trip will be on October 18th and we will park at and depart from the Jon Archer Center at 6:00 am. The cost will be \$25. Registration for the 56 bus seats will be available: <https://www.mobilecountymastergardeners.org/book-online>, beginning September 1.

Please note MCMG's congratulations to MGs **Judy Stout, Dana Renta, and Carol Mackey** for being nominated to the Mobile Botanical Gardens Board of Directors. They will be a great asset to the future of MBG.

All new interns will be highlighted soon, but in the meantime, note the three new interns below, **Ted Atkinson, Kkahn Nguyen, and Alissa Gochey**. Also pictured below with **Jack LeCroy** is **Patti Hicks**, newly certified Master Gardener. So glad she made it from "paper to plastic!"

NEED HELP!!

To all MGs and interns: the helpline is in need of people to man the phones. Please contact **Cindy Findley** 251.786.4245 or **Diane Anthony** 251.574.8445 for details.

Continued below...



~~~~~Harry's Corner~~~~~

**Gardening Question**

Congratulations to **Marianna Parker** who identified the four photos.  
A. Okra, B. Chinese Chestnut, C. Lantana, D. Red Canna

**Riddle**

What do you call a **stolen** yam?

**Words of Wisdom**

God made rainy days so gardeners could get their housework done.

**Joke**

Why are husbands like lawnmowers?  
They are difficult to start, emit foul odors, and work only half the time.

Send your answer to the gardening question to [h.surline@gmail.com](mailto:h.surline@gmail.com).

All Photo sources: Mobile County Master Gardeners.

**Editor's Note:** Recently an unofficial survey (Part 1) was sent out to the Master Gardener membership asking recipients specifically what was being done to encourage pollination in their respective landscapes. Part 2 below outlines what has and is still causing ongoing pollinator trouble, and Part 3 will focus on local, state, and national legislative response.



**Polli-Nation, Part 2**

Last month's newsletter documented how a few Mobile County Master Gardeners promote and aid pollination in their own environments. This month's Polli-Nation will examine the main reasons pollinators are in trouble.

Pollinators are crucial to the food chain and ecosystems. The USDA estimates that pollinator-dependent crops are valued at more than \$2B. The food chain and ecosystems are strongly affected by **climate** and there is scientific evidence ours is changing. Climate change has been tagged as a key cause of pollinator decline. As pollinator health declines, crop health declines. Rising temperatures and adverse weather directly impact crops which impact bees, birds, butterflies and even bats.

Besides climate fluctuation, another major factor in pollinator decline is the use of **systemic pesticides**, especially a class known as neonicotinoids\* and a few other pollinator-toxic chemicals. Once applied to seeds (seed dust) or sprayed on plants, this class of pesticide inserts itself into pollen, nectar, and water droplets impairing navigation, foraging, general behaviors, and not least of all, lowering pollinator immune response which makes them more susceptible to diseases such as a multitude of viruses, bacteria, and insect infestations. One notable disease in bee hives is American foulbrood (*Paenibacillus larvae*) which weakens and kills honey bee colonies. (Bees and monarchs, since they are readily available for observation, are used as standards of measurement for pollinator decline.)

\*List of individual chemicals in the neonicotinoid class and purveyors available upon request.

Compiled by Barbara Boone

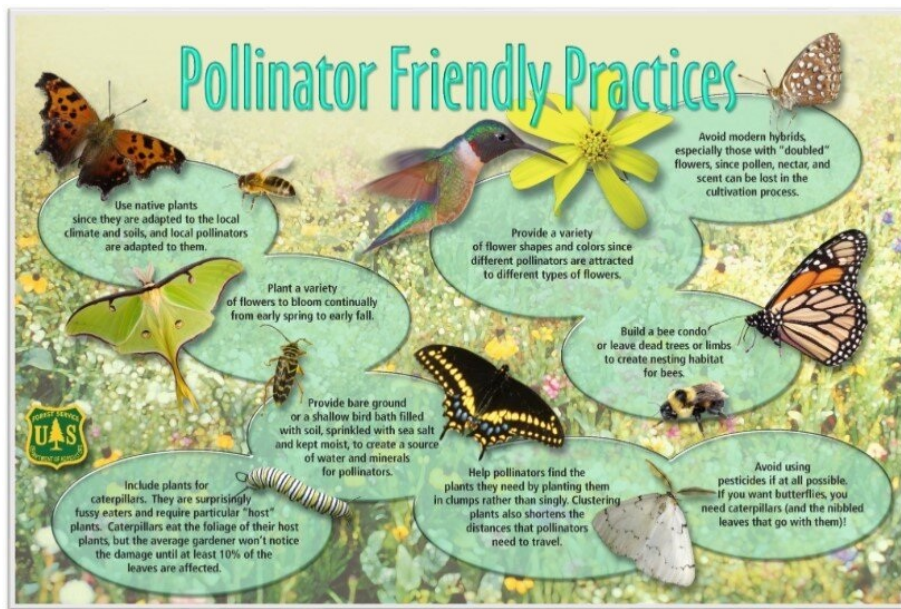
#### Sources:

Pollinator Partnership, June, 2023

Beyond Pesticides, June, 2023

Pollinator Friendly Practices from Pollinator Partnership, 2023  
aces.edu

Jack Rowe, REA Baldwin County



Chronicles  
by Barbara Boone

After a respite in July, and even though it has been "hotter than the door hinges to Hades", the coming Fall season is cranking up. Hopefully we can let up on the AC

inside, and we can spend more time outside. However, we need to take precautions against mosquitoes which carry West Nile, Eastern Equine, dengue, and Zika viruses. **Please use mosquito repellent!**

Fall planting season time is upon us, and with that in mind, **Jack LeCroy** has been busy promoting how and when to plant a fall garden, especially vegetables. A Zoom presentation was held on July 20, and the same topic presented August 4 at Mobile Botanical Gardens for the First Friday series.

Extension is striving to develop and promote goals for the organization. The Helpline is a strategic goal to improve and train all members to participate both locally and state wide. **Jack LeCroy** facilitated a goal development meeting July 25. More to follow on this topic.

**Crew 22** met at Briquettes for their monthly meeting recently. Mulherin is fortunate to have this group's assistance. **Paul Ezelle** reports that the Crew meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month, sweaty and tired at the end of the day after adding shrubbery that will add color to the Mulherin landscape.

August 2 the monthly general meeting was held at Jon Archer. Gary Bachman was scheduled to speak, however a family emergency prevented his attendance that day. His presentation will be rescheduled in the coming months. Instead a series of videos were shown which highlighted the hydroponic system to be presented to Impact 100. Also the Auburn roof garden was highlighted, which gave us a preview of the bus trip scheduled for October 18. More information to follow on this road trip.

August 3 found Master Gardener mentors hosting their interns at a Meet 'n' Greet at Jon Archer. Everyone was excited to meet the new class of 18 internees which actually started August 10. Kudos to **Jackie Jenkins** who had oversight of the event. "Meet the Interns" coming soon.

Mobile Botanical Gardens hosted an ice cream social to recognize and honor the many volunteers who have helped MBG throughout the year. The sweet treats were enjoyed by all.

August 7 and 8 at the Ben May room at the main library was the venue for a leadership conference attended by Master Gardeners from counties all over Alabama via Zoom. Our next door neighbors, Baldwin County members, also attended on site. Good presentations by various speakers, especially **Jack LeCroy** and **Julie Conrey**.

Interns attended the first session August 10 at Jon Archer. Looks like another good class! When you have a chance, please introduce yourselves. Please thank **Dorothy White** for organizing teams for snacks and class "helpers."

Jon Archer was the venue Sept. 16 from 9:00 until 2:30 for the "Plant Alabama" Garden Seminar sponsored by Southern Living. Topics presented by various speakers were new annual and perennials, native plants, trees, container gardening, pests, and greenhouses. The speakers were top notch including new agent, **Joel Potter**.

#### **By the way, help out a fellow Master Gardener...**

by recommending how to prevent encountering snakes in the landscape. Even non-venomous snakes are causing her concern. So, what do we tell our snake-phobic friend? You know it's true, most of us are snake-phobic, too.

~~~~~

If you are like me, your inbox is besieged with seed catalogs for fall planting, so get those seeds, sow them with anticipation of a good harvest, as as always, plant with love and harvest with wonder and joy.

Master Gardener of the Month



The August Master Gardener of the Month began in the small town of Marion Junction, Alabama. After graduating from Auburn University with a degree in Microbiology, she moved to Mobile to work with the Alabama Dept of Public Health at the state regional lab in Spring Hill. After her two children went to LSU in Baton Rouge, she retired as lab manager and began a new pursuit in which she has had similar success.

Our MG of the Month of August, **Carol Dorsey**, certified in 2016 and really enjoyed bringing the joy of gardening to others. That motivated her to pursue training to use horticulture in achieving therapeutic goals in our community. The training and engagement led to her Advanced Master Gardener Certification in Therapeutic Horticulture in 2023. Now she brings her gifts to the residents at Strickland Youth Center, the Mobile Medical Museum medicinal garden, and Full Life Ahead, a gardening program for disabled adults.

When the Alabama Master Gardeners created Grow More, Give More, Carol saw how compassionate a program it can be when able gardeners produce enough food to share with others who may not be able to provide fresh vegetables for themselves. She has since led the MCMGs efforts in Grow More, Give More which now needs ambassadors to support and expand the program. Also, the Medical Museum will participate in the reveal of the refurbished Moulton sculpture garden and pond at Children's and Women's Hospital and MGs are invited to help. Our new intern class will participate with Carol and others in community gardening led by the nonprofit, Mobile Urban Growers, Inc. All will be working alongside Mobilians who enjoy growing fresh produce for themselves and their neighbors in community gardens found in city, county, and private lots. Feel free to contact Carol Dorsey whenever you need to increase your volunteer hours. She always has a lot of work to share!



A History of Tomato Ketchup

A bumper crop of tomatoes is every gardener's goal. Peppers, beans, and eggplant are desirable, but tomatoes are the Holy Grail. A healthy harvest is cause for celebration. A pest-ridden, blossom end-rotted, sun-scalded, cat-faced, or a leaf-wilted tomato vine might require a horticultural intervention.

Tomato lovers, I digress. What if the soil was tested and Auburn indicates it is in good condition, the weather cooperates, your neighbor does not send a cloud of Roundup over your fence, and insects are only the beneficial variety? This *could* happen, right? It probably won't, but enough tomatoes are harvested and therapy is avoided.

So, we have a decent harvest, enough for that iconic tomato sandwich everyday (white bread, lots of mayo, S&P), salads, and spaghetti sauce galore. The abundance can be preserved by drying, freezing, or most often, canning. Even though tomato preservation methods have evolved over the centuries, what about that red, tangy condiment we douse on everything? Ketchup, that is. Understand this...what we know today as ketchup didn't start out as what we recognize as ketchup.

Tomatoes were brought to England from South America in the 1500s, but were not eaten during Medieval times because the plates eaten on contained lead, and the tomato acidity leached into the food, leading to lead poisoning, not a desirable side effect. The real precursor to ketchup came from China about 300 B.C. in the form of a kind of fish sauce, going by the name of "ge-thcup" or "koe-cheup." This sauce was useful because it survived long ocean voyages, and because of its long life, it spread globally.

Ketchup had its Golden Age in the 18th century when various recipes made their way to the European palate, and then later to America. A Philadelphian scientist, James Mease, made the culinary leap to a more tomato-based product, writing that the best ketchup came from what were called "love apples," the name by which tomatoes were known, as some believed tomatoes had aphrodisiac powers.

In 1869 that ubiquitous company that is touted as having 57 varieties became popular, especially after ingredients made the product even tangier and the shelf life longer. By the way, 57 was chosen because the founder's wife's lucky numbers were 5 and 7. (Good to know when you are a *Jeopardy* contestant or for cocktail party banter.)

So, the next time you are out in your garden rejoicing or lamenting over your *Solanum lycopersicum* crop, or you're flooding those fast food fries with our favorite condiment, remember that this fruit and its by products like ketchup did not appear over night, requiring centuries of culinary evolution. No wonder that ketchup pours so slowly.

Compiled by Dirt Diva

Source: The History Channel, Ancient Foods, 2012.



Did you know that tomatoes are having .a moment? You may have heard of the coastal grandma decor theme, and certainly you have heard of barbiecorp. But have you heard of tomato girl summer? Tomato girl summer refers to romantic Italy with its iconic cheese, pasta, and long summer sundresses which are preferably red. Ciao!

Source: HGTV Trends, August 2023



Master Gardeners!

It is almost September and you know what that means? It means it's time to start paying your dues for 2024.

The amount of your dues is unchanged from last year -- \$25 total, with \$10 of that amount going to the Alabama Master Gardener Association. We have to forward that State portion by **DECEMBER 31st** for you to be eligible to attend any State level committees or functions.

The Mobile County Master Gardeners will have a full agenda for 2024. We will have in-person meetings at the Archer Center again this year. In addition, we will have "Field Trip" meetings on occasions. The on-going revitalization of the Dream Garden, along with the Spring Festival and the Greenery Sale will offer lots of opportunities for you to work with plants and other gardeners. There are a lot of promising and rewarding activities going on for this year, and your renewal of your active membership is only \$25 – **that is a DEAL!**

You can pay your dues by one of two ways this year.

- 1) You can pay your dues online in a simple process with no postage expense. Simply follow steps electronically a-e:
 - a. Go to <https://www.mobilecountymastergardeners.org/>
 - b. Pull down the "More" menu on the right hand end of the tool bar (it's right before the Facebook Logo)
 - c. Click on "MG-ONLY Membership Dues"
 - d. Enter your information and make the payment
 - e. Please send Catherine 'Mo' Moates an email at memo366@att.net to let me know you paid online – it just lets me (Bob Howard) know when I

need to get to work, but you will have done your part. Be sure to let me know if you have any changes to your contact information – address, phone number, email, etc.

2) Or you can still use the old way – just take a few minutes to write a check for your dues of \$25.00 payable to **Mobile County Master Gardener Association** (or MCMGA, for short). Then mail your check to Catherine Moates
1360 Repoll Rd
Mobile, AL 36695

We are looking forward to a great year for our Association in 2024. We hope to hear from you SOON!



From the Greenhouse: Tip, Trick, Hack of the Month

Editor's Note: This month FTG features another Tip, Trick, or Hack from within the MCMG membership. Simple yet useful. Read on...

Kari Picuch submitted her tip which is a reminder to us all. She composts all her grass clippings into a 3-bin system. Also when Kari mows, she adds grass clippings around her plants, leaving a small space between plants and the clippings to allow good water drainage. Fewer weeds and good mulch, a win-win!

Kari will get a gift certificate to the Mobile Botanical Gardens. Congrats, Kari!

Compiled by Dirt Diva



In The Loop

by Theresa Davidson

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

for Master Gardeners and Interns



September MCMG General Meeting

Jon Archer Center

Dr. Gary Bachman, Heritage Garden Urban Nano Farm and our keynote speaker for the Spring Festival, returns!
Wednesday, September 6

Meeting, 10:00 am -- Social Time, 9:30 am

Topic: Preparing for Fall Gardening

Harry Surline, 251.605.4667, h.surline@gmail.com

CEU for speaker, MGA/AMGA meeting (usually .5, only the business portion)



September Board of Directors Meeting

Jon Archer Center
Tuesday, September 5, 10:00 am
Harry Surline, 251.605.4667, h.surline@gmail.com
MGA/AMGA Administration



October MCMG General Meeting

Jon Archer Center
Todd Lasseigne, Ph.D, Executive Director of Bellingrath Gardens
Topic: Bellingrath's Magical Mums Display
Wed, Oct 4: 10:00 am; Social Time 9:30
Harry Surline, 251.605.4667, h.surline@gmail.com
CEU for speaker, MGA/AMGA meeting, .5 business portion



November MCMG General Meeting

Jon Archer Center
Joel Potter, ACES Urban Regional Extension Agent, Certified Arborist
Wednesday, Nov. 8: 10:00 am; Social Time 9:30
Topic: Replacing Freeze Damaged Trees
Harry Surline, 251.605.4667, h.surline@gmail.com
CEU for speaker, MGA/AMGA meeting, .5 business portion



First Friday at the Gardens:

Veronica & Don Culberson, Honey of the Hill Apiaries,
More than Bees: Pollination and the Importance of Natural Diversity in Our Environment
Mobile Botanical Gardens, Larkins Center classroom,
5151 Museum Drive. acashin@mbgardens.org to register
CEU



Prepare Snacks for MG General Meetings:

Jon Archer Center
Lydia Criswell, 251.610.5543, criswells2@mchsi.com
MGA/AMGA Administration



On the Same Page: Workshops for MCMG's

Jon Archer Center
Jack LeCroy, 251.574.8445, jml0003@auburn.edu
Fridays, 10:30 am -11:30 am
September 1: Finding research-based resources
September 8: How to control weeds
September 22: How to input hours and why
September 29: How to recommend chemicals
CEU



Monthly Garden Zoom Class

Jack LeCroy
3rd Thursday of the month, 6-7 pm, Sept. 21
"Pollinator Gardens"
Diane Anthony, jda0002@aces.edu, 251.574.8445 or
www.aces.edu/go/gardenzoom to register
CEU



16th Annual Go Run 5K, 1 Mile Fun Run

(benefitting Mitchell Cancer Center Gynecological Research)

Saturday, September 16, 8:00 am - 11:00 am, USA Campus

3 Volunteers to man a booth- distribute MG info, handouts, and seed giveaways THEME: Gardening- More Than a Hobby Barbara Boone, 251.680.8263
Municipal Event/County Fair



Annual Bus Trip

Auburn University

Wednesday, October 18, 6:00 am – 7:00 pm

MCMG Fare: \$30, Register

Carol Williams, 251.367.0473,

readingweeder72@hotmail.com

CEU



Dream Garden

Planting Fall Vegetables

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 6 and 7, 9:00 am

Bring Gloves

Marsha Stolz, 251.689.5993, marshastolz@msn.com

Education/Demonstration



Floral Design Workshop for Christmas Greenery Sale

Joyce Petty, Guest Designer, Atmore Flower Shop

Thursday, October 5, 10:00 am, Jon Archer

Cost: \$10, includes all materials needed, except pruners/nippers--Take your creation home!

Paula Reeves, 251.463.4560, paulareeves7@gmail.com

CEU for Master Gardeners, Greenery Sale for Interns



Mobile Botanical Gardens (MBG) Fall Plant Sale

Thursday – Saturday, Oct. 26-28, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Theresa Davidson, 251.510.4961,

theresadavidson80@gmail.com

Community Special Project



Market in the Park

Cathedral Square, downtown Mobile

Saturdays, Oct. 4-Nov. 18, 7:30-noon, 2 shifts

Bob Howard, 251.423.2605, rwhoward51@gmail.com

Municipal Event

Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities

for Master Gardeners and Interns



Orchid Society Meeting

Mobile Japanese Garden meeting room, 700 Forest Hill

4th Sunday of the month (except June & Dec), 2:00

Lynn Coleman, 251.622.3939, lynncolman411@gmail

CEU for the presentation



Gulf Coast Herb Society

Mobile Botanical Gardens 4th Tues. of the month,
(except July and Nov.), 5:30 pm
Beth Poates, 251.342.6508, poates57@hotmail.com
CEU for presentation



Camellia Club of Mobile

Jon Archer Center
2nd Sun of the month, Sept. 2023- April 2024, 2:00 pm
mobilecamellia.org, Camellia Club of Mobile FB Group
CEU for presentation



K Sawada Camellia Club

Most meetings at Mobile Botanical Gardens
1st Sunday of the month, Nov. 5, 2023, through March
2024 MBG, 2:00 pm Vaughn Drinkard,
vdrinkard@yahoo.com
CEU for presentation



Mobile Japanese Garden

700 Forest Hill Drive
Volunteer your MG skills any morning/afternoon.
Text Don to coordinate!
Don Fry, 251.422.8466, don.fry@comcast.net,
mobilejapanesegarden.com
Community Landscape



Community Gardens:

Grow More Give More with Mobile Urban Growers:
mobileurbangrowers.org
Community gardens in Midtown, Downtown, + other
neighborhoods, school sites. Search FB "Mobile Urban
Growers" and Community Gardens
Carol Dorsey, 251.209.3483, bcdorsey63@gmail.com
mobileurbangrowers@gmail.com
Helping Garden

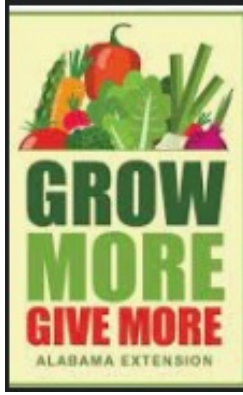


Mobile Medical Museum

Robert Thrower Medicinal Garden
Curating and maintaining everchanging collection +
gardening with Full Life Ahead, serving adults with
intellectual disabilities, usually on Wednesdays
1664 Springhill Avenue
Carol Dorsey, 251.209.3483, bcdorsey63@gmail.com
Helping Garden

Grow More Give More

Statewide Master Gardeners initiative to encourage food
gardening and sharing produce
2 Ambassadors needed: attend meetings, target areas



for grant development/grant funds fulfillment
Carol Dorsey, 251.209.3483, bcdorsey63@gmail.com
Community Food



Speakers Bureau

Paul Ezelle, 251.402.1798, paulezelle@gmail.com
Bob Howard, 251.423.3108, rhoward51@gmail.com
Program or workshop for public



Office Manager/Phone Lines/MG Helpline

Cindy Findlay, 251.786.4245, cndyfindly@att.net



DREAM GARDEN: Join a Garden Room (**See below**)

Jon Archer Center
Marsha Stolz, 251.689.5993, marshastolz@msn.com
Contact Marsha **or** a Garden Leader to volunteer and
work as needed.
Education/Demonstration

The Gardens:

Grandma's Pass Along Garden

Catherine Moates, 251.366.6163, memo366@att.net
Olivia Reinhaus, 251.458.7383, omcvea@gmail

Native Garden

Melissa Nichols, 251.680.7779, indigigardener@gmail.com

Shade Garden

Bob Howard, 251.423.3108, rhoward51@gmail.com

Vegetable Garden

Marsha Stolz, 251.689.5993, marshastolz@msn.com
Mary Ann Days, 251.391.5806, masdays@comcast.net

Herb Garden

Mary Ann Days, 251.391.5806, masdays@comcast.net

Cottage Garden & Formal Garden

Glenda Eady, 251.342.4248, jerryeady2@comcast.net

Building Garden

Marsha Stolz, 251.689.5993, marshastolz@msn.com

The Alabama Master Gardener Volunteer Program is an educational outreach program provided and administered by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A & M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity and employer. www.aces.edu



Mobile County Master Gardeners | 1070 Schillinger Rd. N., Mobile, AL 36608 251.574.8445

[Unsubscribe mobilemastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:mobilemastergardeners@gmail.com)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by mobilemastergardeners@gmail.com