

The Dirt | March 2023

Mobile County Master Gardeners

The President's Message

by Harry Surline

We had an exceptional meeting at Cornerstone Gardens. The weather co-operated and we did not get rain. Over 40 members RSVP'd for the meeting which was great turnout.

The meeting at Cornerstone Gardens was a learning experience for me. Now I know what an early Mobile horse bath looks like. I learned a **torii** is a traditional Japanese gate most commonly found at the entrance of or within a Shinto shrine, where it symbolically marks the transition from the mundane to the sacred. There is a torii that separates two of the gardens in Cornerstone Gardens. We also learned that putting a fake alligator head in the koi pond will keep the herons away and protect the koi.

Vaughan Drinkard, our host and Master Gardener, and **Dave Paton**, the landscaper/ designer of Cornerstone Gardens were our tour guides. Vaughan and Dave talked about the design of the Garden, their efforts to build the torii, rebuilding the horse bath, and selecting plants and features in the Garden. Those two made the tour even more memorable. We had an exceptional meeting at Cornerstone Gardens. The weather co-operated and we did not get rain. Over 40 members RSVP'd for the meeting which was a great turnout. The meeting at Cornerstone Gardens was a learning experience for me. Now I know what an early Mobile horse bath looks like. I learned a **torii** is a traditional Japanese gate most commonly found at the entrance of or within a Shinto shrine, where it symbolically marks the transition from the mundane to the sacred. There is a torii that separates two of the gardens in Cornerstone Gardens. We also learned that putting a fake alligator head in the koi pond will keep the herons away and protect the koi.

Continued below...

MCMG Officers

President Harry Surline
251.605.4667
h.surline@gmail.com

Vice President Carol Williams
251.367.0473
readingweeder72@hotmail.com

Rec Secretary Karen Ruckart
251.377.2312
kzruckart@gmail.com

Corr Secretary Brenda Howard
251.423.3108
ecks89tl@gmail.com

Treasurer Jane Finely
251.605.0625
janefinely@bellsouth.net



Soil

I can't see through the soil
but I don't need to see
to believe
something is happening
beneath and below.

Sometimes we don't see

Facts about soil:

- Healthy soil has 6 layers, organic to bedrock.
- One inch of soil requires 500 years to form.
- There are about 5,000 different types of bacteria in one gram of soil.
- Soil smell of Mycobacterium vacii can trigger serotonin, an

the creation
but something is being created
lodged deep like a seed.

Beneath and below.

Beneath and below.

Beginning to grow.

-Tanner Olson

Source: The Gardener's Guide to Life,
Criswell Freeman, editor



- antidepressant.
- Streptomyces sp. contributes to soil's earthy smell.
- Tons of dry soil pass through earthworms each year.
- Over 1M earthworms can be found in one acre of crop land.
- 10% of world's CO2 emissions are stored in soil.
- 95% of food production relies on soil.

Source: The Vegetable Gardening Book, Joe Lamp'l



Harry's Corner:

Joke: Stealing flowers is
an awful crime.
Its de-flor-able.
Wiregrass MGA

Gardening Question:

In many liquor stores,
you can buy pear brandy
with a real pear inside
the bottle. The pear is
whole and ripe, and the
bottle is genuine; it
hasn't been cut in any
way. How did the pear
get inside the bottle?

Reptile enthusiasts: St.
Patrick drove snakes
from Ireland according
to lore. Is this true or
false??

~~~~~  
**Mary Townsley** correctly  
answered the question  
"Of all vegetables, only  
two can live to  
reproduce for several  
planting seasons. What  
are they?" Mary's  
answers were

#### *The President's Message, continued....*

**Pepper Woolsey** (Class of 2020) will be our speaker on  
Thursday, March 2. Pepper will be speaking on "Deep  
South Permaculture, Food Security, and Community  
Resilience." Permaculture is a design system for  
regenerative agriculture based on the ethics of earth care,  
people care, and surplus share. This will be a presentation  
that can tell us about future goals and methods of  
gardeners.

Remember this date, **Saturday April 1** This is the day of  
our first Spring Festival. The Spring Festival will be  
focused on container gardening and will be at the Jon  
Archer Center from 9:00 am to 2:00pm. Vegetable plants  
for sale by MCMG at the Spring Festival have been  
selected to be suitable for container gardening. There will  
be tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers, peppers, and squash  
plants ready for your containers. We are expecting to have  
about 4000 plants and hundreds of caladium bulbs for  
sale. For those of us, who haven't been vegetable  
gardeners, or want to learn about improving their gardens,  
there will be lectures and demonstrations to explain how  
we can begin. Vendors and food trucks will also be on  
hand, as well as tours of the Dream Gardens. Admission  
is free. We want every MCMG member to join in to make  
this an enjoyable day for everyone. Please contact  
Theresa Davidson or Carol Williams to help and earn  
hours.



asparagus, artichokes, and perennial onions. I should have asked for four vegetables not two. The fourth vegetable is rhubarb. Congratulations, Mary!

Send or text your answers to:  
[h.surline@gmail.com](mailto:h.surline@gmail.com) or  
251-605-4667  
Best answer or answers will be in next month's President's Message.

On Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, we will meet for the monthly MG meeting at Mobile Botanical Gardens. Seth Allen, Horticulture Director & Curator of Collections, will tell us about the Bog Garden, a relatively new feature at MGB. This is a tremendous opportunity to learn about bog gardens and what goes into making a bog garden. My impression is April is one of the best months to view a bog garden.

I am getting excited about the **Spring Festival** and the container gardening opportunities. I have a bare bones patio and I can now envision it with multiple containers, all growing vegetables to pick fresh for dinner. **Come on April 1!** See more information below.



## Two Important Upcoming Events: Festival of Flowers and Spring Festival

### Festival of Flowers

We are in the home stretch for the 2023 Festival of Flowers being held on the campus of Ascension Providence Hospital located at 6801 Airport Blvd. in Mobile, AL. In a little more than a month (**March 23rd-26<sup>th</sup>**) Baldwin County Master Gardeners will showcase their collective creative efforts displaying an inspired interpretation of a "Zen Garden". "Discovering the nuances of Japanese culture have been both fascinating and enlightening", says Brenda Montgomery, chair of our display for this extraordinary 30 year anniversary event. Along with Deborah Marriott, Honey Ennis, and Charlotte Hamm, we have been attentive to detail as well as authenticity. Including the entrance, we have modeled many artisan elements to be truly representative of the Japanese Zen Garden. From the beautiful artwork, the thoughtful design of our plant selection and the special water feature, this journey has been greatly enhanced by people in the community who have offered their expertise, products and time. Along with many generous volunteers from Mobile County Master Gardeners, we hope to promote a truly memorable occasion. Don't miss the largest outdoor flower show in the Southeast and for additional information, go to [FestivalofFlowers.com](http://FestivalofFlowers.com). See you there!

**Festival of Flowers Contact: Theresa Davidson**  
**251.510.4961**  
**[theresadavidson80@gmail.com](mailto:theresadavidson80@gmail.com)**

### Spring Festival-the Newest MCMG Community Event!!!

MGs are buckling up and comin' in hot in March! Harry wants us to remember the date, **Saturday April 1**. This is the day of our first Spring Festival. The Spring Festival will be focused on container gardening and will be at the Jon Archer Center from 9:00 am to 2:00pm. Vegetable plants for sale by MCMG at the Spring Festival have been selected to be suitable for container gardening. There will be tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers, peppers, and squash plants ready for your containers. We are expecting to have about 4000 plants and hundreds of caladium bulbs for sale. For those of us, who haven't been vegetable gardeners, or want to learn about

improving their gardens, there will be lectures and demonstrations to explain how we can begin. Vendors and food trucks will also be on hand, as well as tours of the Dream Gardens. Admission is free. Let your friends and neighbors know about this event. We want every MCMG member to join in to make this an enjoyable day for everyone. By the way, you can now order a t-shirt from our website - just click on the festive yellow t-shirt to start the process. MGs at the festival are encouraged to wear one.

<https://www.mobilecountymastergardeners.org/shop-1>

Please contact Theresa Davidson or Carol Williams to help and earn hours.

**Update!** Over 2100 tomatoes and peppers were potted on Friday, Feb 24, for the festival plant sale and it was accomplished in about 2 hours. Assisting MGs was help from Tori, Alysia, Penny, Kyle, Jeremy, and Bill, that is an amazing thing for MGs to have accomplished in that timeframe. More updates to follow.

## **Spring Festival Contact: Carol Williams**

**251.367.0473**

**readingweeder72@hotmail.com**



## **Chronicles** by Frank Millsaps

Love. History. Share.

The highlight of each month is the Membership Meeting with specific speakers and exhibits. Each one has been wonderful and February's meeting was no exception. Master Gardner **Vaughan** Drinkard, Jr., hosted approximately 40 Master Gardeners to experience a little-known jewel in the heart of Downtown Mobile known as Cornerstone Gardens. Along with the caretaker of the gardens, Dave Paton, both show the immense love they have for this unique piece of history. Vaughan is descended from the original owners of the home, built in 1903, and opened to the public in 2016. Cornerstone Gardens has 80 feet frontage on Government Street and extends 400 feet to the rear. The Gardens boasts one of the largest Mulberry Trees in Mobile. Near the entrance is a beautiful fountain that aptly establishes the serene nature of the Gardens. There are several beehives with over 60,000 bees per hive and over 300 Camellia Cultivars. Carol Dorsey donated a magnificent Staghorn Fern, over 43 years old. The Japanese Garden begins at the Torii Gate which represents a bird in flight and houses many Swifts, birds that decrease the number of mosquitos in the gardens. In the Koi pond, realizing a problem with Cranes flying in and eating the fish, a solution was found by placing an alligator head in the pond. They have not seen a Crane since. Between the English Garden and the Japanese Garden, Vaughan's wife hung several hand painted teapots from the trees for birdhouses. Unique. As the tour finishes, you see an artesian well-fed horse bath with a carriage house. Within the beautiful gardens, guests can appreciate not only the serenity of the gardens but the love these protectors of history have and their desire to share it with us. Thank you, Vaughan and Dave, for all you do!

The 2022 Intern Class had its first group luncheon January 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Jerusalem Café in Mobile. Organized by **Lisa Davis** and named Crew 22 by **Mary Ann Tomberlin**, the luncheon consisted of 1 ½ hours of food, fun and education. Several members discussed the effects of the



recent cold spell on different plants and Patti Hicks gave a presentation on pollinators and distributed literature. Crew 22 was formed to keep active the bonds that were formed during the class and to add continual education on a one to one basis. Thanks to Lisa and Mary Ann for their efforts, those who participated, and to those who will participate in the future. The class had a mutual respect for all and a desire to keep the class close.

Finally, if you have not joined in with Jack LeCroy on the third Thursday of each month you are sorely missing out. Jack is hosting an hour Zoom meeting at 6:00 PM to discuss horticulture particular to our area. The first class was "Proven Plants for South Alabama" and was very informative with many rave reviews.

Remember, it is up to you to be a "Get To" or a "Got To" person, so put those garden plans in action today.



## Master Gardener of the Month

by Carol Williams

An article by Bill Finch in our local newspaper that mentioned Mobile County Master Gardeners piqued **Linda Kloter's** interest. Finishing her career as a physical therapist, Linda joined the intern class of 2015. There she happened upon a familiar face the first day: Melissa Wold, her course advisor in Allied Health at the University of South Alabama when she began her physical therapy training!

Now they are both Master Gardeners, among people from all walks of life who bring their skills and gifts into Master Gardeners and find a place to fellowship and work together. Linda would recruit new members by telling them about working with MGs with all sorts of skills and ideas working on diverse, interesting projects. They are new friends with new ideas. MGs are so interesting to get to know!

The Greenery Sale is our largest fundraiser and Linda has expertly managed the funds for the Greenery Sales nearly every year since she joined. Her husband, Brian, is a gifted woodworker so for several years he made the beautiful bird houses sold at the Greenery Sale. Many MGs and Mobilians can proudly show off his master work. Fortunately, Linda's first career was bookkeeping so when Linda Abernathy needed to step down from Treasurer, Linda gladly studied with her and became Treasurer in 2018. Serving through 2022, Linda is now turning that job over to Jane Finley, a retired economics professor, and she expects to spend a little more time with Brian and her family.

Linda will continue to serve as a volunteer in MCMG. We thank Linda for the success she and her skills have brought to Master Gardeners. Congratulations,

Linda Kloter, as February Master Gardener of the Month.  
(MGoM photo to follow in next issue. Apologies to Linda!)



## From the Greenhouse

### Tips, Tricks, or Hacks

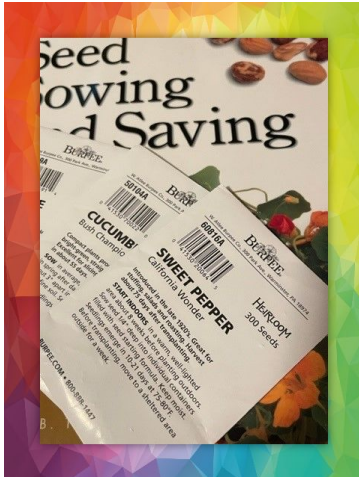
by Barbara Boone

**Editor's Note:** This month's new addition to *The Dirt* is Tips, Tricks, or Hacks, a focus on easy and smart ways to save time, add efficiency, and just get the job done!

This issue's tipster is **Bob Howard** (2019), a gardener with at least 20 years of experience, and the recipient of a MBG gift certificate. Bob says he has relocated many azaleas with only one lost in the transplanting process. His tip is as follows:

Use your pinkie finger as a measuring device when determining soil depth when sowing seeds. Depending on your finger length, tip to cuticle is 1/2 inch, tip to first knuckle about 1 inch.

Keep sending your tips for future inclusion.



## In the Loop

by Theresa Davidson

| Event<br>(Category)                                                                                                             | Date/Time                                                              | Contact(s)                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MCMG Monthly Meeting<br>Our speaker is Pepper Woolsey: "Deep South Permaculture, Food Security, and Community Resilience (CEU)" | Thursday, March 2,<br>2023 10:00 AM Jon Archer Center                  | President: Harry Surline,<br>251.605.4667<br>h.surline@gmail.com      |
| MCMG Spring Festival Planning Committee Updates Meetings Jon Archer Center Large Auditorium (program or workshop for public)    | WEDNESDAYS:<br>February 22, March 1,<br>March 8, March 22,<br>March 29 | V.Pres: Carol Williams<br>251.367.0473<br>readingweeder72@hotmail.com |
| MCMG Spring Festival Work Days                                                                                                  | March 30 and 31, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm                                     | V.Pres: Carol Williams<br>251.367.0473<br>readingweeder72@hotmail.com |



|                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mobile Botanical Gardens' Spring Plant Sale 5151 Museum Drive (community special project)                                                                                                    | Friday, March 17- Saturday, March 18; 2 shifts each day, 8:45 am-12:00 pm and 12:00 pm- 3:00 pm                                            | Theresa Davidson MBG Volunteer Coordinator 251.510.4961 thesadaavidson80@gmail.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Festival of Flowers, Ascension Providence Hospital (municipal event/county fair)                                                                                                             | Thursday, March 23 - Sunday, March 26, 2023, Greatest need for volunteers is Sunday, 2 1/2 hour shifts, free admission day of volunteering | Theresa Davidson MG Volunteer Coordinator 251.510.4961 thesadaavidson80@gmail.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| MCMG Spring Festival Alabama Cooperative Extension Schillinger Rd. Mobile, AL (program or workshop for public)                                                                               | Saturday, April 1, 2023 9:00 AM-2:00 PM, MG's arrive at 7:00 am                                                                            | V.Pres: Carol Williams 251.367.0473 readingweeder72@hotmail.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Dream Garden Lay pine straw                                                                                                                                                                  | Wednesday, March 1, 9:00 AM                                                                                                                | Marsha Stolz 251.689.5993 marshastolz@msn.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Dream Garden Plant vegetable transplants                                                                                                                                                     | Monday, March 27, 9:00 am                                                                                                                  | Marsha Stolz 251.689.5993 marshastolz@msn.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| AMGA State Conference University of Alabama Campus Tuscaloosa, AL                                                                                                                            | Monday, April 3- Wednesday, April 5                                                                                                        | TBA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Orchid Society Meeting New attendees welcome! Info available on FB: Mobile Area Orchid Society                                                                                               | 4th Sunday every month (except June & December), 2:00 PM, 1260 Dauphin St.                                                                 | Lynn Coleman 251.622.3939                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Mobile Japanese Garden Planning and Touring, 700 Forest Hill Drive, Beautify this community and educational garden and help teach college students Community Gardening (community landscape) | Weekly: Mondays and Fridays, and As Needed                                                                                                 | Don Fry 251.422.8466 don.fry@comcast.net<br>YouTube tour: <a href="https://bit.ly/3bhyKWA">https://bit.ly/3bhyKWA</a><br>Website: <a href="https://mobilejapanesegarden.com">https://mobilejapanesegarden.com</a> Facebook: <a href="https://facebook.com/mobilejapanesegarden">https://facebook.com/mobilejapanesegarden</a> Twitter: <a href="https://mobile.twitter.com/mobjapangarden">https://mobile.twitter.com/mobjapangarden</a> |
| K.Sawada Camellia Club Mobile Botanical Gardens (CEU)                                                                                                                                        | Sunday, March 5, 2:00 pm                                                                                                                   | Vaughn Drinkard 251.377.2577, vdrinkard@yahoo.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| DREAM GARDEN: Join a Garden Room (education/demonstration)                                                                                                                                   | Contact a Garden Leader or Marsha Stolz to join a team. Volunteer and work as                                                              | Marsha Stolz 251.689.5993 marshastolz@msn.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

needed.

|                                                        |                    |                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grandma's Pass Along Garden                            |                    | "Catherine Moates<br>251.366.6163<br>memo366@att.net          |
| & Olivia Reinhaus<br>251.458.7383<br>omcvea@gmail.com" |                    |                                                               |
| Native Garden                                          |                    | Melissa Nichols<br>251.680.7779<br>indigigardener@gmail.com   |
| Shade Garden                                           |                    | Bob Howard 251.423-3108<br>rwhoward51@gmail.com               |
| Vegetable Garden                                       |                    | "Marsha Stolz<br>251.689.5993<br>marshastolz@msn.com<br>&     |
| Mary Ann Days<br>251.391.5806<br>masdays@comcast.net"  |                    |                                                               |
| Herb Garden                                            |                    | Jackie Jenkins<br>251.422.6675<br>jjackiejenkins108@gmail.com |
| Cottage Garden & Formal Garden                         |                    | Glenda Eady<br>251.342.4248<br>jerryeady2@comcast.net         |
| Building Garden                                        |                    | Marsha Stolz<br>251.689.5993<br>marshastolz@msn.com           |
| Community Gardens                                      |                    | Carol Dorsey<br>251.209.3483<br>bcdorsey63@gmail.com          |
| Mobile Medical Museum: Robert Thrower Medicinal Garden |                    | Carol Dorsey<br>251.209.3483<br>bcdorsey63@gmail.com          |
| Grow More Give More                                    | Ambassadors needed | Carol Dorsey<br>251.209.3483<br>bcdorsey63@gmail.com          |
| Therapeutic Horticulture                               |                    | Carol Dorsey<br>251.209.3483<br>bcdorsey63@gmail.com          |



Classroom in the Forest  
(youth programs)

Mary Jo Broussard  
251.574.8445  
mjb0054@auburn.edu

Speakers Bureau  
(program or workshop  
for public)

Office Manager/Phone  
Lines

Cindy Findlay  
251.786.4245  
cndyfindly@att.net

Updates on the  
Volunteer tab or  
Calendar tab at Master  
Gardener Service  
Report Login  
(acesagmg.site)

## Connections

In addition to the events and activities highlighted **In the Loop**, occasionally there are requests made to which Master Gardeners and interns can additionally respond.

Please note the following:

- **Help is needed again with refreshments for the upcoming meeting.**
- **Keep those snacks coming! Questions to Lydia Criswell-251.610.5543**
- **Need items for raffles. Contact Jackie Jenkins-251.422.6675  
jjackiejenkins108@gmail.com**
- **Donated coffee mugs for Cuppa Cheer for the 2023 Greenery Sale. Contact Peggy Wright-251.679.2983 (c) 251.462.4230pwright2273@comcast.net**
- **Ongoing pine cone collection also for the 2023 Greenery Sale. Cones clean, in good shape, cinnamon color, and all sizes needed. Please bring cones in a labeled bag and place behind the stage curtain at Jon Archer.**
- **Skewers needed for drilled pine cones for the 2023 Greenery Sale.**



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

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