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NEWSLETTER OF THE BALDWIN COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, INC.

www.baldwinmastergardeners.com

2024 BCMG Elected Board

- President:
Don Richerson
- Vice-President:
Ed Pickle
- Treasurer:
Cassandra Rabren
- Recording Secretary:
Pat Greer
- Corresponding Secretary:
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- Members at Large:
Barb Comstock
Kay Heinrich
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Mary Calvin

2024 Appointed Board Members:

- Monthly Program Co-Chairs:
Charlotte Hamm
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- Intern Class Coordinator:
Anita O'Connor
- Outreach Coordinator:
Eileen Huisman
- Finance Committee Chair:
Gail Hand
- Projects Chair:
Elmer Vick

President's Notes by Don Richerson

Many years ago, my wife and I were planning a trip to Provence, in southern France. Julie was a teacher of French and Spanish in both the public and private schools her whole career. We rarely vacationed during the school year, because she obviously had obligations. So, during the summers, we splurged.

We have been to the major cities and towns of both Spain and France in our blessed lives, but there was always something about Provence that captivated us. Before our first trip to Avignon and Aix-en-Provence, a friend recommended two books to us: "A Year in Provence", by Peter Mayle and "The Markets of Provence" recipes by Ruthanne Lane. After reading them, we were hooked. If you read these books and try the recipes, you'll find yourself ready to book a trip.



Until Covid, we were in either country for at least two weeks each summer and eventually, we found "our" town, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, in the department of Vaucluse overlooking the Luberon range of mountains. But our attraction to the area was the markets! Every day in different towns, a market was held - fresh produce, every kind of food, kitchen supplies, clothing, spices, you name it and it was there. And it just so happened that our little village had a prominent Sunday market. It remains the pre-eminent Sunday market in Provence.

I wish we had more markets in Baldwin County as they do in Provence. We have so much to appreciate and celebrate about our county, but the farming and agricultural interests are superior. Add the cattle, poultry, and seafood industries and a local

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

What We Do.....	3
Native Plants Garden at Coastal College.....	4
July Awards Luncheon.....	4
July Birthdays.....	5
Meeting Minutes.....	5-7
Coastal Ala. Farmers & Fishermens Market...7	
Mark Your Calendar.....	8



President's Notes by Don Richerson (continued)

market should be a staple of the economy. But, it isn't.

Besides Fairhope and Foley, who has a weekly market? Are they publicized? How can we as BCMG, help with this effort? These markets should be a part of our lives here. Helping our farmers and sustainable agricultural entrepreneurs should be a priority, but it's lacking. We collectively need to support our local markets in every way that we can.





What We Do by Charlotte Hamm

Our annual awards luncheon is coming up on July 10. We will recognize many members as our interns get their badges, some will receive stars, other Master Gardeners will mark various levels of achievement. What do those hours represent? Personal accomplishment, dedication to the organization, volunteerism, shared knowledge, giving of time and talents even when we are exhausted and there is still much to be done! How about investment in the lives of others? As we researched speakers in search of program speakers for the AMGA conference, I came across this article. It seemed to reflect just what we do as Master Gardeners. When we volunteer, we are investing in our communities and the lives of others. Consider that as you read the article below. Our conference dinner speaker, Steven Chamblee, has given permission to reprint his article, "The Greatest Gift".

The Greatest Gift

by Steven L. Chamblee

I stood fully upright, tears streaming down my dusty face, and tilted my eyes skyward. Misty clouds swirled around the chiseled mountains to my left and the sun had already dropped behind the peaks of the huesteca. My back ached from many hours of digging rock, and I felt my hamstrings seize up and release, threatening to bring me down with muscle cramps. I smiled. I was born for this moment. Everything I had ever done was simply part of a pathway that led me to this place, this project, this realization. I said a silent prayer of thanks as shafts of sunlight backlit the clouds above me, forming stunning halos that looked like angels.

Just 5 days ago, I hopped off the bus in Monterrey, Mexico, slept a few hours, and gave my presentation on butterfly gardens to a group of local schoolteachers. My job was done and I could now relax and explore the city, or so I thought. A simple, heartfelt plea from three teachers led me to an elementary school called Nezaldi. I was supposed to give them a few pointers on gardening and plant selection. No problem, I do that all the time...or so I thought.

Monday morning found me standing awkwardly in front of a group of children as their teacher told them who I was and what I would be doing. Their eyes looked at me with such hope and trust. As I smiled back at them, I saw more than beautiful faces; I saw among them some legs that wouldn't walk and hands that could not grasp. I knew at once that Nezaldi is a special place where disabled children learn to be a part of the world, not apart from it. I knew at once I had a chance to truly serve, to truly make a difference in some children's lives. I have been blessed with some talents, and now was the time to use them.

The garden area was 39 feet long and 10 feet wide. The soil was heavy clay and filled with softball-sized rocks. Somewhere there was a plant nursery—we'd have to find it. Somewhere there was compost and mulch—we'd have to find it. Somewhere there would be material for a pathway and some money—we'd have to find it. The only certainties: I can draw a plan, I can dig the soil, and my bus leaves at 9:30 pm on Wednesday.

I drew the plan Monday night, and we threw it away Tuesday morning when we were inspired to make a rainbow pathway from found bricks. We found a 3 year-old pile of burro dung for compost, and a teacher's new boyfriend to haul it in for us. (What men won't do for newfound love!) Rather than haul it all through the school, it was carried over the building in 5 gallon buckets and lowered into the garden area. Rocks were hauled away in the evening, right through the school, and bricks brought in on the return trip. I told them we needed some really big guy to do the heavy digging. Everyone laughed, and I plunged the shovel into the hard ground.

Of all the vendors at the plant market, only one sold herbs, and he wrote the name of every plant on every container for the children. Soon, the car was bulging with herbs, lantana, passion vine, ornamental sages, and a few surprises.

By 8pm Wednesday evening, every child had planted an herb into the garden and placed a brick into the rainbow pathway. The drab wall was painted bright blue, the compost bin was up, and the dream was reality. And under a brilliant sunset, a big ol' Gringo stood on a little rainbow in Mexico, wept without shame, and thanked God for the gift of being able to help others.



The Native Plants Garden at Coastal College by Mary Calvin

Many thanks to Jackie Gray, Sue Barnwell, Sara Semmes, and Gilda Underwood for help with weeding at the Coastal College Native Plants Garden.



Baldwin County Master Gardeners **July Awards Luncheon**

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Social Time at 10:30 a.m.

Awards and Lunch at 11:00 a.m.

Foley Civic Center

407 E. Laurel Avenue

Foley, Alabama

Pot Luck Lunch

Please bring a dish to share and a utensil to serve your dish.

There will be a beverage table with water, iced tea and coffee.

July Birthdays



7-2	Ann Hutchison
7-9	Sam Andrews
7-15	María Curow
7-15	Nancy Mason
7-16	Gordon Cooper
7-16	Charlotte Hamm
7-30	Mary Hamilton
7-31	Jimmie Van Valkenburgh

Life...is all about the Journey.



Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer

Don Richerson called the meeting to order at 10 AM, and then asked us all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Don then asked if there were any guests attending today. Yes, Julia Walthall brought Tony Hickman as a guest. Fifty-six Master Gardeners and one guest were in attendance today. Don then asked the Past Presidents and Wayne de la Rua Award members to stand.

Charlotte Hamm gave an introduction for our speaker today, Carmen Flammini. She is the Regional Extension Agent, and recently presented a Seminar on butterflies at our State Conference. We welcomed Carmen as our new County Agent about a year ago. She will talk to us today about Soil Health.

Carmen stated that soil health was the passion of both her father and a professor of Chemistry while she was attending college. She started out by asking how you can make soil better, and what is soil? Dirt is what is in your house, and soil is the material to grow plants. Soil supports plants for food and fiber. It is a habitat for living organisms and sequesters carbon. Soil is composed of 25% Air, 25% Water, 45% Mineral Particles and 5% Organic Materials of which 10% is organisms, 10% is roots and 80% is humus.

The breakdown of particles is sand, silt and clay, sand being the largest size, silt the middle size, and clay the smallest size. Carmen then showed the soil texture triangle. She explained that when amending our soil, we need to first determine the pH that we currently have. Soil needs to have structure, water filtration for drainage, aeration, root growth penetration, and erosion resistance. Take a handful of the soil you currently have in your garden or yard. If it smells like a dirty sock, it is bad soil. She then went over the bags of garden lime, soil acidification and organic seed starter. Then she demonstrated examples of soil structure by pouring water into 3-quart jars, only one of which contained enough soil structure to have the water drip slowly. She reminded us that potting and garden soil we purchase at garden centers is just a medium with no structure. Water will flow quickly through this "soil", and nothing will live in it. Therefore, it needs to be amended to arrive at the optimum pH level for your use.

Before planting, Carmen suggests we add a layer of compost about two weeks before your intended planting time. The best compost is Black Cow and/or horse manure. Mix this manure (dry) with hay to keep it from burning your plants. Marilyn Mannhard commented she has three bins of compost she has made mostly of leaves and

(Continued on page 6)



Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer (continued)

table scraps. Per Carmen, coffee grounds (non-flavored) are also amazing to mix with soil. When using eggshells, wash them and put them through your food processor to reduce them to powder. When you have vegetables such as sunflower, carrots, and radishes, cut them off at ground level rather than digging the roots up at the end of the season. This can be critical to maintain good soil. When you have raised beds, do not let them go without a cover crop between seasons. Some examples of good cover crops are red clover, beans, hemp, and radishes. Adding perlite also helps allowing oxygen in the soil. It is also okay to sterilize your soil between plantings. After sterilization, add some cover crops to enrich your soil before planting your garden.

Carmen would like to talk to us about composting at a later date. She will talk to Charlotte Hamm about scheduling. And Carmen reminds us she will be doing a talk on butterflies on Friday the 21st from 10-noon and again 5-7. Registration is required.

Don then asked for a 10-minute break.

After the break Loree Hadley asked for more photos from the State Conference. She particularly would like to see group photos of attendees and committees. She is preparing her video for the Awards Banquet next month. Please send your photos by email, but no more than two photos in each email.

Elmer Vick has asked for help at the Daphne Greenhouse next week. He knows it might rain the first two days of the week, so he would prefer Wednesday or Thursday.

Dolores Hammack has tentatively planned the Fall Plant Sale for October 18 and 19. This will be at Weeks Bay and open to the public. The Spring Plant Sale is scheduled for April 10, 11 and 12 and she will be contacting Graham Creek to determine if this would be a good place for this event.

President's Remarks: Concerning a few of our members: Patsy Conner fell and broke her shoulder. Mark Lammon, from the class of 2014, passed away.

Don reported that we have appointed a committee to review and amend the Policy and Procedure Manual. Barbara Comstock and Kay Heinrich will head the committee with Mickey Ezell, Keith Cardwell, Tom Fortner, and Sara Semmes. Tanys Waldron and Myra Lassere will act as advisors. Carmen Flammini will also help. Sam Andrews responded to Don concerning the Policy committee's need to adhere to the BCMG, Inc's 501(c)3's approval documents and By-Laws. He mentioned that the Extension Agent is not a part of the Corporation as our Master Gardener/Stake Holders with voting rights. Carmen should not be serving on the Policies and Procedures Committee. Carmen stood up to defend herself saying that Kerry Smith instructed her to apply her duties with a strong hand especially as to emphasize Extension. She suggested that Sam call Kerry if he doubted her. Finally, Sam suggested the President/Board consult an Attorney on this issue. Don turned that down. Julian Walthall made a motion that we table this discussion for a later time. Our MG President, Don Richerson, called for a vote to table this issue for another time with a second from Gail Hand. The motion passed.

ACES Report: Carmen reported that the table at the Foley Farmers Market is open for us every month. She will call to see if one of the people on our Speaker's Bureau could give a 20-minute talk. She has a sign there saying "Master Gardeners Are Here". She has five new projects proposed for Foley that need workers. She would also like to see volunteers come up with projects in all the different areas. Carmen thanked us for all we do. She will have a volunteer fair in the Fall and hopefully all the committee members will tell you what they are doing at that time. More is coming.

Treasurer's Report: Cassandra Rabren reported we have \$50,376.82 in our checking account and \$20,745.56 in our CD. The CD matures on July 10th. She is looking for a good rate of interest and has found PNC is now at 5.8%. She will talk to Regions Bank to see if they can match this. Cassandra also has with her today some Greenhouse blueprints for those who took this class at the State Conference. Please see her to pick one up. Today is also your last chance to pick up your free Pictorial Directory. And she has a few things that are left from the Silent Auction, such as an oyster shell plaque and a group of prints for anyone who would like to purchase them.

(Continued on page 7)



Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer (continued)

One of the Conference attendees purchased a basket of goodies that was put together by the 2021 class. This wonderful lady has donated this to our group to raffle. A ticket was given to each person who attended today's meeting. The winner is **Kay Smith!**

Intern Class Update: Anita O'Connor is not with us today; however, all of her Interns will be receiving their badge at the Awards Banquet next month and a few of them will receive a star.

Corrections/Additions/Approval of Minutes May 2024: There were no corrections to the May 2024 Joint meeting minutes. Therefore, a motion to approve these minutes was made by Elmer Vick with a second from Mickey Ezell. The motion was passed.

Kids Day will be this Friday, June 14th starting at 8:30 AM. Volunteers are still needed.

July Luncheon Update: Eileen Huisman reminded all that the Awards Luncheon will be on Wednesday, July 10th, in the Foley Civic Center at 10:30. We will not be using the kitchen, so please bring your own serving utensils. And if you are bringing something cold or hot, please bring your ice packs or hot pads. Thank you.

Elmer Vick made a motion to adjourn today's meeting, with a second by Gail Hand. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market

Many thanks to our amazing Baldwin County Extension Master Gardeners (members and interns) who were answering questions and interacting with the community at the Coastal Farmers and Fishermens Market!!! Our MGs are there the first Saturday of each month.





Mark Your Calendar

July 3, 2024	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
July 10, 2024	BCMG Awards Luncheon, Foley Civic Center, 10:30 a.m., Pot Luck Lunch.
August 7, 2024	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
August 14, 2024	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker: John Borom, <i>"BirdFest"</i>
Sept. 4, 2024	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Sept. 11, 2024	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker TBD
Sept. 11, 2024	Wayne de la Rua Nominations close at end of September General Meeting
October 2, 2024	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
October 9, 2024	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker TBD
Oct. 18-19, 2024	BCMG Fall Plant Sale, Weeks Bay Reserve
Nov. 6, 2024	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Nov. 13, 2024	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker TBD
Nov. 13, 2024	Election of Officers and Board of Directors
Nov. 13, 2024	Wayne de la Rua Voting closes at the end of the General Meeting
Dec. 4, 2024	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104
Dec. 11, 2024	BCMG Awards Membership Luncheon, Foley Civic Center, 10:30 a.m.
April 3-5, 2025	AMGA Conference, First Baptist Church, Prattville, AL, <i>"Fountains of Knowledge"</i>
April 10-12, 2025	BCMG Spring Plant Sale

Grass Roots is compiled and edited by Lynn Andrews, assisted by Sam Andrews. The newsletter is available before the monthly general meeting on our website: www.baldwinmastergardeners.com.

Submission of articles, items of interest, photos of BCMG events, garden tips, garden jokes, etc. are greatly encouraged and appreciated. Articles should be submitted in Microsoft Word format, PDF or, if necessary, "rich text format" (*.rtf). **Pictures should be JPG's at least 1 MB in size.** **Articles and pictures must be submitted by the 20th of the month.** Please attach, not "embed", photos into your email. Send to grassrootsnews@gmail.com. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND PICTURES BY TEXT.**

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Baldwin County Master Gardeners
c/o Baldwin County Extension Office
302-A Byrne Street
Bay Minette, AL 36506



Next meeting: WEDNESDAY, July 10, 2024

Location: Foley Civic Center,
407 E. Laurel Avenue, Foley, AL

Social begins at 10:30 a.m.
Awards and Luncheon: 11:00 a.m.

POT LUCK lunch.
Please bring utensil to serve your dish.



Reminder: Submissions for the newsletter are due by the 20th of the month.