



December 2024
Volume XXXII Issue XII



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:
Lydia Chan
- Members at Large:
Barb Comstock
Kay Heinrich
- Past President:
Mary Calvin

2024 Appointed Board Members:

- Monthly Program Co-Chairs:
Charlotte Hamm
Brenda Montgomery
- 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

Wishing all of our members a Merry Christmas and a Happy Hanukkah as we enter the "best time of the year", according to Andy Williams. Not only is it a time of celebration of birth and rededication, but also a time of personal reflection. As I sat in my den the week before Thanksgiving to write this article, I encountered a "burst of can't rhyme it", as my friend Jimmy Buffett once wrote. And then, it hit me.

The year was 1956. My family lived in west Mobile in a neighborhood comprised of lower middle class families just off of Cottage Hill Road, 80% of whom worked at Brookley Air Force Base, as my parents did. As a six year old, I just knew Santa would bring me a bike and a model train. I'm not sure what happened, but this would be the most memorable Christmas of my life, until I became a parent.

On Christmas morning, my brother and I awoke to the wonderland that was a 1950's American Christmas scene. And there, before me, was a Lionel train set that puffed smoke (!) and a green Schwinn bicycle with a basket. I couldn't believe it. Santa had gotten it right. The fact I wanted a red Schwinn was forgotten. The train set was so much bigger than I had imagined. Plus there were clothes, a farm set, a Coke truck, a paint set, and the stocking was full of goodness. And attached to the TV was a record player. There is not a word to describe how I felt. Well, maybe overwhelmed.

Move to today, my parents are both gone. I have two brothers. But I vividly remember that glorious morning almost 70 years ago. It is with this excitement and hopefulness that I look forward to 2025 and what it has in store for the BCMG.

2024 has been a wonderful year. Seed and plant swaps, a banner tree give away during the various Arbor Day celebrations across the county, and the education and now input of an enthusiastic intern class started us on this path. With the help of

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President's Notes by Don Richerson (continued)

scores of members, we were the hosts of the very successful AMGA Conference in Daphne. Our two plant sales exceeded expectations, and we are on the cusp of becoming the only Master Gardener organization in our state to have obtained Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries Grower and Dealer certificates for our greenhouses. But, we have so much more to do.

We owe our seasoned members a huge debt of honor and thankfulness. Their wise guidance in the past has led us to this day. I feel we are at the dawn of the Golden Age of BCMG. Old traditions, new ideas, hard work and dedication of our active members, and input from our alumni members, can transform this organization into an even better one, the envy of the entire state. I am not sorry for the hyperbole.

As I said at the beginning of my term, rather disjointedly, I admit, ask not what BCMG can do for you, but what can you do to help make BCMG better. As we enjoy the Holiday Season, I hope we all can use some of the time to reflect on the past and how it molds us all. I want BCMG to be fun!



December Birthdays



- 12-1 Katherine Shepard
- 12-3 Cassandra Rabren
- 12-5 Lynn Andrews
- 12-6 Alice Kohler
- 12-7 Beverly White
- 12-11 Reba Cunningham
- 12-11 Maura Daniell
- 12-12 Michelle Patton
- 12-12 Elsie Reed
- 12-18 Mike McQueen (Retired County Agent)
- 12-18 Ann Shirley
- 12-22 Terri Withee
- 12-27 Steve Urbanek
- 12-28 Lydia Chan
- 12-31 Teena Reed
- 12-31 Patrick Waldrop

Life...is all about the Journey.

Hello Alabama Extension Master Gardeners –

This is a short note with two announcements I shared at the November 5 AMGA Advisory Council meeting. You'll also hear these at your MGA's monthly meeting, but this provides a double-check in case you're unable to attend your local meeting.

- Search for Excellence (SFE) awards. I encourage every MG Association to nominate an outstanding group project for these. There are six categories. Choose the one that best fits your community contributions through an outstanding project. The deadline for award submissions is January 1 each year. Find the SFE Guide and SFE Application outline here [Resources - Alabama Master Gardener Associations | Alabama Cooperative Extension System - ACES.edu](#)
- Extension Master Gardener (EMG) Volunteer Program Memorandum of Understanding ([MOU](#)). With 32 MG associations in Alabama, each group is unique in various ways – your projects, members' interests, activities, community's needs, etc. And yet, we are all part of a single program family. The MOU describes our commitment to this family. It was part of each intern's training, and last year became part of each EMG volunteer's Service Report. Signing the MOU maintains everyone's active status in the Service Report.

Note that your signature will be requested again in January 2025 because of revisions. The upcoming changes will provide document clarity and maintain alignment with policies at Auburn University and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

Please contact me with any questions. Thank you for everything you do to support this important Extension program.



Kerry Smith
Alabama Extension Master Gardener
Program Coordinator
Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Auburn University Department of
Horticulture
smithkp@auburn.edu



**Baldwin County Master Gardeners
2024 Christmas Awards Luncheon**

Wednesday, December 11, 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.**

Coffee, Tea, & Water provided.



Garden Club Presentation on Amaryllis by Loree Hadley

I drove 532 miles round trip to speak to a Garden Club in Birmingham at the Graystone Founders Club. The topic was on growing and propagating Amaryllis. There were over 35 members that attended. Here are some selfies of the room with the members and pictures as people arrived.





Coastal College Greenhouse by Mary Calvin

Coastal College greenhouse now has a new watering system. Thanks go to Coastal College, Gilda Underwood, and the Schmieding Foundation for the funding. Thanks to ACES's greenhouse specialist Jeremy Pickens and Irrigation-Mart's Eric Houser for the planning and design. Many thanks to Projects Chair Elmer Vick, Honorary Master Gardener Jean Vick, and Coastal College's Justin Henderson for figuring out how to put it all together and lots of hard work.

Now it's time to grow more plants!



Seven BCMGs attended the Garden Club of Alabama District 8 meeting at Gulf State Park on October 24. A presentation by the Director of Plants at the Gulf State Park followed the meeting. The subject was on compost containers in the ground.



L-R: Deborah Marriott, Becky Estes, Charlotte Hamm, Eileen Huisman, Liz Wojtaszek, and Sharon Smith. Not pictured: Jimmie Van Valkenburgh



Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer

Don Richerson called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He then asked us all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were 85 attendees at today's meeting. Don asked if we had any guests today. Charlotte Roberts is here today from ACES to help us with nominations for the Board of Directors for 2025 and the Wayne de la Rua ballots. Other guests included Tom Meyer, husband of Mary Meyer; Wayne Fogarty, husband of C Fogarty; and Tony Hickman, a new resident of our area who has transferred to BCMG. Don then asked that those with birthdays this month stand, those who are Past Presidents and those who are previous WDLR winners to stand.

PROGRAM: Brenda Montgomery then introduced our speaker for the day, Dr. Mark Hammond, who will talk to us about Blue Zones. Dr. Hammond is an Internal Medicine Physician. Many of us have heard of him and a few have heard this presentation, but some of us have not. He went to medical school in the early 80's and went through a medical crisis several years ago. Why do people get sick? What are the root causes of chronic diseases? These are the questions that motivate him. He found that 80-90% of chronic diseases come from the food we eat. And what do we know about how to help them? We lead the world in rescue medications, so why are we still not well? Dr. Hammond then read the book by Don Buettner, *Blue Zones*. Science is the key to health. It comes down to what is on your plate at the dinner table. The places that are now considered Blue Zones are Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya Peninsula, Costa Rica; and Loma Linda, California. The only Blue Zone Dr. Hammond has been to is Costa Rica, and he feels this country will be the first carbon neutral in the world. What we need to do here is give up all our cars and plow up Rte. 98 and make it a walking trail. Lots of people are catching on, but it still seems like a slow process.



Those who live in Blue Zones live the longest lives. The 7th Day Adventists are the largest group in the Blue Zones in the US. They take Genesis literally and feel it is the Creator's intent to make us live healthy lives. Why do we need Blue Zones? In the world in 1990, the US was the 5th in life expectancy. We have now gone down to 33rd place. Some races, though, have lower life expectancy, such as African Americans and American Indians. Also, advertising is not in our favor. Processed meat is a high carcinogen, but the ads for fast foods are made to look like something good to eat. We are getting messages on what we should eat, along with ads for how to fix the diseases that are caused by what we eat. These can add to the hazardous rates of cancer and heart disease. Portion size is gone on a Blue Zone diet.

Dr. Hammond showed us examples of how to get closer to a Blue Zone in our lives.

Increase your Expectancy and Move naturally.

Move

Right Tribe	80% Rule
Loved Ones First	Plant Slant
Belong	Wine at 5
Down Shift	Purpose

Note: Wine at 5 means dark red wine, if desired, and no more than 4-5 ounces a day. There are too many downsides to alcohol.

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Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer (continued)

Eat wise from the garden with a whole food's emphasis. You can easily make subtle differences over time in each zone as shown above.

Dr. Hammond then demonstrated the 7th Day Adventist guide for eating.

- 1.6% are totally vegetarian.
- 2.2% are Lacto-ovo vegetarians.
- 3% are Pesco vegetarians, i.e. adding fish to their diets.
- 4.3% are semi-vegetarian, i.e. adding meat a couple of times a week.
- 6.3% are non-vegetarian.

Even with these statistics, only 10% follow the guidelines. However, this is still higher in plant-based vegetables than most Americans.

For evading diabetes, a diet of more plant food and whole foods are best. This type of diet also has been shown to lower hypertension. Adding exercise is also beneficial. Vigorous exercise is best, but moderate exercise for 15 minutes a day is also good. Gardening is a good moderate exercise and also gives one more Zen moments and joy.

Behavior also matters. Attitudes and emotions can add to suffering. Family and faith are key components of good health. Also included in this is spending time in nature and spending time away from electronics. For family harmony, no smoking, plant heavy diet, constant moderate activity, social engagement, and legumes are best. To get started, convert one meal a week to plant based for 1 year. This could equal driving 1,120 miles in your car. Lower your carbon footprint by converting from meat to vegetables.

Dr. Hammond then showed us statistics from Ft. Worth, Texas and Alberta Lea, Minnesota, where going to a Blue Zone resulted in an 8.5% reduction in health care costs, 48% reduction in health care claims, and added 2.9% to their life expectancy.

What about a Blue Zone in our area? It needs a lot of community support. The Mapp Center at the corner of 181 and 104 has a teaching kitchen on the 3rd floor, which is based on Blue Zone 101. There is no newsletter, however, Dr. Hammond is on Facebook. You can also look for *Plant Pure Nation*, a documentary from several years ago. And, Dr. Hammond would be willing to meet with us on a 1 on 1 basis. His diet for the day is: Oats with chia and flax seeds, plus cocoa powder, berries and walnuts and soy milk. Dark coffee and green tea are also good. For lunch he has a smoothie with leafy greens, carrots, mangos, pineapple, protein powder, and green beans – focusing on green and yellow. Dinner is composed of beans, legumes, and pasta with bread. Dessert can be blueberries with yogurt and grape nuts cereal and/or vegetable oatmeal cookies. He eats nuts all day long. Eating this way can cause a 10-20% reduction in one's food bill.

For those who do not like vegetables, a smoothie is the answer.

We can contact Mark Hammond MD at pinpatient@comcast.net or call him at 901-331-0468. He will stay at this meeting until the end for more questions.

Don Richerson then called for a 15/20 minute break.

Corrections/Additions/Approval of October Member meeting minutes: There were none, therefore, Gail Hand made the motion, with a second by Wanda Martin that the minutes be filed as printed. The motion passed.

President's Remarks: Don Richerson received a call from Kerry Smith advising that the Alabama

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Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer (continued)

Department of Agriculture is investigating us for illegal sales. Crystal Stewart and Tim Reynolds of the enforcement division relayed to him that a garden center in the Elberta area advised them we were selling camellias at the Foley Farmers Market and commenting the prices were lower than the big box stores. We had taken some to sell there after the Fall Plant sale, but no one mentioned the lower rates. Don received another call this past Thursday stating that the Ag Inspector was going to inspect the area where we propagate and germinate our plants. Most other areas in the state propagate and germinate in their members' personal yards. The Board of Education will not be investigated. We were also told that if we gross more than \$25,000 a year from our Plant Sales, there is a \$50 license we need. Also, we are the only county in the state that cannot sell citrus to anyone who will be taking it out of the county. Don feels optimistic about this issue and feels he can take care of it himself. But he will ask for others to help if the need arises. Will we get a fine? Possibly. And we do not know what the amount of the fine will be. What about the 3 MG ladies who were selling these camellias? Per Don, they are going to jail! Marta Stouts commented she would bail them out.

The inspector commented that there are so many Garden Clubs in the area, and they only have 2 plant sales a year, so they are turning a blind eye to what they are doing. Don reminded him that BCMG only holds 2 plant sales a year. And it does not matter that we are a non-profit organization. Don asked us to keep this information close to our vests.

We were also advised that the Memorandum of Understanding will be changing. Also, all hours are to be reported before December 31st.

Further, Don received a call last night regarding one of the candidates for the 2025 Board of Directors. One of our nominees is not certified; she did not record enough continuing education hours last year. Don regrets having to do this, but the By-Laws are clear on this matter.

Budget Report: Gail Hand reported she has finished her budget; however, a few corrections need to be made. She will present the finished budget by the end of December. Gail offered her thanks for all the input she received.

Treasurer's Report: Cassandra Rabren has a print left over from the State Conference. Looking at the Sign-In sheet, she has picked Mia Martin as the winner of this print.

Our checking account is \$65,373.81; the CD is \$21,077.42. She has 2 interest numbers that are not yet added - \$582.08 and \$357.07. Our CD matures on May 9th. The Board has also asked her to put aside \$5,000 for the next State Conference. Cassandra is looking for a good interest rate on a CD. If you know of a bank that has a good rate, please contact her.

The Fall Plant Sale grossed \$24,331.85 with expenses of \$13,141.01 for a total profit of \$10,246.01.

She is collecting dues today. Sheryl Bly is at the back table to take your dues. Cassandra can check on her computer if you are not sure where you stand regarding dues.

Also, as treasurer, Cassandra would like to have an inventory of all the stuff that has been purchased with BCMG funds. She has some of the things, but not all of them, like chairs, tables, tents, tools, etc. If you have any of these items or know where they are located, please let her know. Cassandra would also like to set up a check in/check out system for our property. Thank you.

Intern Class 2025: Anita O'Connor has interviewed 30-35 people and told them what to expect from becoming a Master Gardener. She feels not all of them were expecting to put in volunteer hours. At this

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Meeting Minutes by Pat Greer (continued)

point, fifteen have gone through the registration process. She also has one holdover from last year and three who are transferring to our area. She will call some of the other interested people to see if they are willing to go through the process needed to begin the class. Anita will be asking those from the last three MG classes to be Mentors. She expects to have all this put together by the end of November. Susan Mattingly and Terry Delker will be doing the bios for *Grass Roots*.

Maria Logan-Montgomery has a neighbor who would like to become a Master Gardener. Anita asked that anyone who would like to sign up call Cathy Banning at the Bay Minette office to have them put on a list.

Outreach/December Luncheon: Eileen Huisman reported the Awards Luncheon will be on the second Wednesday in December -- December 11th. This will be a potluck lunch and will be held in the Foley Civic Center. The social will begin at 10:30 with the meeting starting at 11 AM and lunch at 11:30.

Election of Board: Mary Calvin asked all who are running for a Board of Directors office to please stand. She noted that Lynn Barnes is now the only one on the slate for Vice President. She then asked for a show of hands for those who approved of the slate of nominees. Those running for the Board of Directors has been approved. Don Richerson also announced that Mickey Ezell will be the Finance Chair, Charlotte Hamm will be the Program Chair, Anita O'Connor is the Intern Chair, Elmer Vick is the Projects Chair, and our new Outreach Chair is Sara Semmes.



Wayne de la Rúa Award Announcement:

Today is the last day to vote for your choice for the Wayne de la Rúa award this year. Anyone who has not yet voted, please obtain a form from Charlotte Roberts at the back of the room for your vote. Those nominated for this year are Mary Calvin, Mary Hamilton, Deborah Marriott and Elmer Vick. The Wayne de la Rúa winner will be announced at the December Awards Luncheon.

Adjournment: Gail Hand asked that the meeting be adjourned. All who agree stand. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.



KAZUKO RUSSELL

We are saddened to learn that Kazuko Russell passed away on November 30, 2024. Kazuko was originally from Okinawa, Japan and resided in Magnolia Springs. She was a long time member of BCMG from the class of 2000. She loved to garden and tend to her roses. She even has a rose named after her on the Foley Rose Trail.

Our thoughts are with her and her family during this difficult time. Kazuko's service will be December 10, 2024 at Vernant Park Baptist Church in Foley. Visitation will be at 10:00 a.m. and service at 11:00 a.m.



Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 4, 2024	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Dec. 5-7, 2024	Mobile County Master Gardeners Greenery Sale, www.mobilecountymastergardeners.org/hgs24
Dec. 11, 2024	BCMG Awards Membership Luncheon, Foley Civic Center, 10:30 a.m.
Dec. 31, 2024	Deadline to Record Volunteer and CEU Hours for 2024
Jan. 7, 2025	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104
Jan. 8, 2025	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker TBD
Feb. 5, 2025	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Feb. 12, 2025	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker TBD
Feb. 12, 2025	Volunteer Fair
March 5, 2025	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
March 12, 2025	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker TBD
April 2, 2025	BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
April 3-5, 2025	AMGA Conference, First Baptist Church, Prattville, AL, <i>"Fountains of Knowledge"</i>
April 9, 2025	BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy. 104, Speaker TBD
April 10-12, 2025	BCMG Spring Plant Sale

Grass Roots is compiled and edited by Lynn Andrews, assisted by Sam Andrews. Pictures courtesy of Loree Hadley, Eileen Huisman, and Mary Calvin. 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, December 11, 2024
Christmas Awards Luncheon

10:00 a.m.—Social
11:00 a.m.—Meeting, Lunch, and Awards

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

POT LUCK Lunch
Please bring utensil to serve your dish.



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