

GRASS ROOTS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALDWIN COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, INC.

AUGUST 2025

www.baldwinmastergardeners.com

VOL. 33 ISSUE 8



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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Don Richerson

As we endure the dog days of summer and are beginning preparations for our autumn attempts at gardening, I am reminded of the struggles many endure on a daily basis. In August of 1971, my new wife and I were moving to Augusta where I was beginning medical school and she was to embark on her teaching career: that of a French and Spanish teacher. We were both busy and apprehensive of what was to come. The Vietnam war seemed far away, still it was on the mind of most every American.

Like many of you, I am constantly reading. Historical fiction and nonfiction are my favorites. Recently, I have read of the anguish of Lyndon B. Johnson as he listened to Major Charles Robb, his son in law, serving in Vietnam, who would regularly send tape recordings to the President apprising him of the "real" status of the war. It was so emotionally painful to LBJ that he made everyone leave the room while he listened to the tapes. Imagine the emotions of the most powerful man in the world humbled and troubled by the information his son in law sent him.

In this, the 50th year since the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam, I see this country is still in the healing process. It was an awful time, yet we have plodded on. I find myself reading more and more of this time in our lives and closure seems so far away. I have been reading a book by David Yuzuk, "Women in War", and I'd like to share a snippet of this insightful book.



PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Don Richerson

My last day in Vietnam!

"The silence on the plane was deafening as we settled into our seats. Not a word was spoken, not a sound made. The weight of that moment still brings tears to my eyes, even now, years later. As the plane roared down the runway and the wheels lifted off the ground, something extraordinary happened. "The men around me—soldiers who had endured a year of relentless danger, who had been shot at, who had lived in grueling, miserable conditions—unleashed a raw, guttural roar. It erupted through the cabin, a primal wave of relief and survival, shaking the very air. They were going home, alive, in one piece.

"That sound, that visceral release, was unlike anything I'd ever heard. It was the sound of life reclaimed. I felt it too, but not like they did. Their lives had been on the line every day, teetering at a ten on the scale of danger. Mine? Maybe a four. I hadn't carried the constant dread of death like they had. Their joy, their relief, was profound in a way I could only witness, not fully share. Unless you've lived through something like that, it's impossible to truly understand. "That moment—their roar, their survival—is seared into my memory, a moment I'll carry forever. I returned home in August 1971, but Vietnam never truly left me. Time and again, back in the States, the war would resurface—not always in painful ways, but sometimes in moments of unexpected connection or reflection. It's a part of me, woven into who I am, for better or worse."

US Army Nurse Laura Hines Kern

After reading this, I was breathless and emotional. The Army deferred my induction until the end of my residency. The war was long over when I began my service at Ft. Campbell, KY, in July 1978. Many of my fellow doctors and nurses had served bravely in Vietnam and I learned so much from them all. I was truly blessed by my brief time in the Army.

Why this now, you ask? In the midst of whatever obstacles we face, imagine those brave soldiers and the "raw, guttural roar" they spontaneously offered on leaving the war zone. I remain humbled by them. So, as we plant your fall crops, be thankful for many unsung heroes from this time and before and since, and let's lift them and one another up. Happy gardening - because we can!

arborday.org - Plant Trees in Honor of Others

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Sam Andrews	07-09	Mary Calvin	08-04	Karon Pennington	08-20
		Barry Gilliland	08-04	Jean Vick	08-20
<i>Happy Birthday</i>		Shirley Ryals	08-05	Lori White	08-20
		Aletza Boucher	08-09	Sandra Walton	08-21
		Elmer Vick	08-10	John Fitzhugh	08-22
		Jacqueline Gray	08-12	Phyllis Holman	08-23
		Teresa Shoemaker	08-13	Lisa May	08-26
		Pat Atzman	08-15	Charmaine Peterman	08-26
		Daniel Powell	08-19	Andreu Riebe	08-28

MONTHLY PROGRAM NOTES

By Charlotte Hamm

August Speaker
Kevin Scasny

AUGUST SPEAKER

Should I bring my plants in tonight? Maybe I need to turn the sprinkler on? When should we schedule our workday—will it be sunny or stormy?

We Master Gardeners reference the weather forecast multiple times throughout the year. But how much do we really understand when we listen to the forecast on TV? Our August program will help you understand a lot more of that forecast as we welcome Kevin Scasny, a retired meteorologist. He has 42 years of experience in the operational application of short and long-range weather and climate forecasting. A career veteran of the Air Force with Special Operations experience, he provided deployed tactical forecast support for numerous worldwide contingencies and “black world” Air Force, Army, and joint military operations.

In addition to deploying as the Command Meteorologist for the multinational peacekeeping and famine relief operation in Somalia, he commanded, coordinated, and provided direct land, sea, air, and space weather support for all in-theater U.S. and international coalition forces.

During his military career, he also served as the primary staff meteorologist to senior Air Force and Army generals, their staffs, and aligned commands. After retiring from the Air Force, he worked with Planalytics, a private sector long-range weather forecasting company specializing in “year ahead” weather-driven demand sales forecasts for major retail businesses such as Wal-Mart, Target, Home Depot, Lowe's, Trane, Scotts, and Terminix.

Kevin spent his last 20 working years producing long-range and in-season wildfire fire and tropical/natural hazard forecasts to the Southern Area Coordination Center (a sub-unit of the National Wildfire Response Organization) and the southeast region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Atlanta, Georgia.

He continues to research the connections of solar, geo-magnetic, tectonic, and other multi-decadal ocean/atmosphere oscillations and patterns on climate.



2025 JULY AWARDS BANQUET

By Linda Bizzell



2025 BCMG Board of Directors

Cassandra Rabren, Sara Semmes, Gilda Underwood, Lynn Barnes, Mary Calvin, Anita O'Connor, Kim Scasny, Mackey Ezell, Elmer Vick, Don Richerson



Scholarship recipient
Adrian Faust



2025 Interns: Aletza Boucher, Ken Gates, Gary Pugh, Eileen Greene, Marilyn Bullington, Barry Gilliard, Claudia Barbee, Nicholas Stroh, Nancy Schlack, Laurie Simpson (not pictured Jen Kinsey, Debbie Tollefson, Nicole Reid)



Scholarship recipient Mary Michelle Conway's mother

2025 JULY AWARDS BANQUET

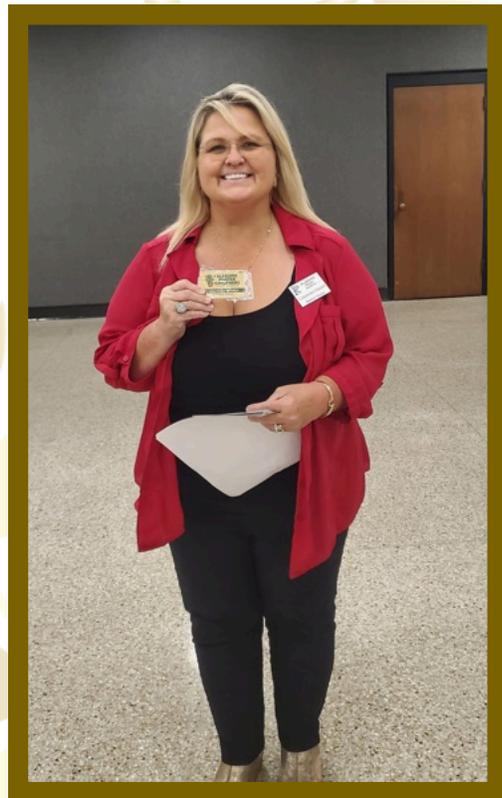
By Linda Bizzell



100 hours, Bronze star: Laurie Simpson, Ken Gates, Aletza Boucher, Eileen Greene, Robin Newell, Beth Murray, Sue Barnwell, Claudia Barbee, Vicki Frank's (not pictured Tom Fortner, Jim Faulkner)



500 hours, Gold star: Jacqueline Gray, Sheryl Bly (not pictured, Elizabeth Wojtaszek, Maureen Krison, Linda Crowell)



1000 hours, Gold badge: Cassandra Rabren (not pictured Kay Heinrich, Susan Mattingly)



2000 hours, Platinum badge: Deborah Marriott, Eileen Huisman (not pictured Maria Logan-Montgomery)

PAST EVENTS

By Kay Smith

Turtle Habitat Workday at the Pelican's Nest

On Friday, July 11, 2025, the long-promised event took place—installation of plants in the Turtle Habitat! After delays from the City of Fairhope due to collapsing gullies and the resulting road construction, and more delays due to afternoon thunderstorms, the volunteers from Baldwin County Master Gardeners met to install the trees, shrubs, and perennials in the Turtle Habitat at the Pelican's Nest Science Lab. Constructed by Father Nature Landscaping Service, and certified by the Alabama Wildlife Federation, this habitat will contain only native plants and provide a home for turtle species found in the state of Alabama. The turtles will enjoy munching on mulberries, blackberries, and native strawberries. They will also forage on coreopsis, ferns and a variety of herbs.

The following volunteers (seen in the top photo to the right) made the morning's work seem much lighter: Tony Hickman, Kay Smith, Jen Kinsey, Charlotte Hamm, Barry Gilliland and Eileen Green. Many thanks to Tony and Barry for their efforts in mixing soil amendments and digging holes! Charlotte, Jen and Eileen took the time to space and properly place the perennials. Everyone's extra efforts are greatly appreciated! This group of Master Gardeners made a fine team and the resulting garden is lovely.



Fairhope Educational Enrichment Foundation, Inc.
108 S. Summit St
Fairhope, AL 36532

AUGUST EVENTS

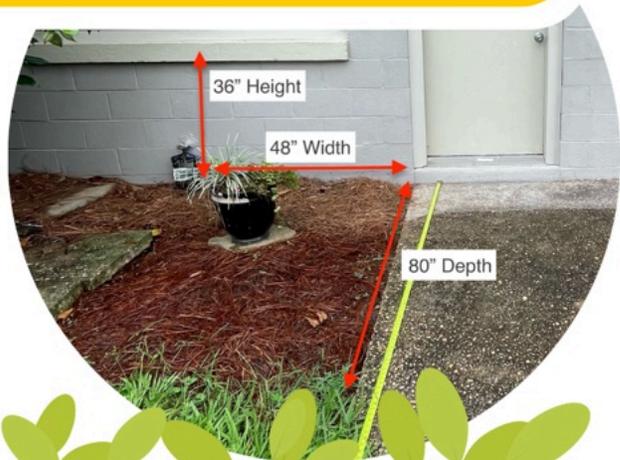


IT'S TIME FOR MORE AT 104! MASTER GARDENER DESIGN CONTEST

We need:

- Attractive and functional shelving for plant and container swap
- Potting Table for demonstrations, teaching and displaying material
- Must be constructed of weather - resistant material (e.g. treated lumber)
- Area measurements 48" W x 80" D x 36" H

All submissions due to Maureen Krison by email at mkrison051@gmail.com by Aug. 8th. 2025 The Project 104 committee will review designs before the Aug. monthly meeting and share the top choices with the membership



AUGUST EVENTS

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!
MASTER ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**



Teach Students Environmental Stewardship

Volunteers Travel throughout Baldwin County to public and private schools to present prepared environmental lessons to students.

August 21, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Gulf Coast Research & Extension Center
8300 Hwy 104, Fairhope

Our Lessons Include:



Energy
Invasive Plants
Groundwater Pollution



Recycling
Backyard Wildlife
Habitat



Water Cycle
Stormwater Pollution
Alabama Water Watch

**FREE
TRAINING**

**AUGUST
21**

**Call to
Register**

(251) 937-0222
email bannicj@aces.edu

It's Time Again for WDLR Nominations



by Sam Andrews and Mary Calvin

The Wayne de la Rua Award is presented annually to an active member of the Baldwin County Master Gardeners to recognize outstanding service to the organization and Extension. The award is unique as a peer-nominated, peer-selected, once in a lifetime prize. It honors dedicated Master Garden Wayne de la Rua who graduated with the first Baldwin County Master Gardener class in 1990.

If you have a candidate that you would like to submit for consideration, the WDLR Committee must receive your nomination no later than September 20, 2025. The committee will only accept written nominations of 200-300 words listing significant accomplishments including dates, activities, offices held, and others with whom they worked. You may use a short essay or outline format.

Your written nomination's purpose is to build a strong case to the BCMG membership as to why your Baldwin Master Gardener's nomination deserves the award over other candidates. State their MG résumé and why you feel your nominee is deserving of the award. You should include primary examples of your nominee's activities and character in support of your points. Your written nomination will appear in the October Grass Roots with the Committee reserving the right to edit your submission.

Please note that only one person may write and sign each nomination. Other master gardeners may write additional nominations. You may discuss the candidates among yourselves, but the spirit of Wayne de la Rua does not permit members to wage marketing/publicity campaigns.

Please email your questions and your nominations to Sam Andrews, HibiscusFiend@mchsi.com (Note: That's "FIEND" and not "friend".) Again, the nominations deadline is September 20, 2025. Remember, time is short!

Wayne De La Rua Award – Questions and Answers

- 1) What is the Wayne de la Rua (WDLR) Award?
- 2) Who was Wayne de la Rua?
- 3) How is the winner determined?
- 4) Who are past WDLR winners?

1) The Wayne de la Rua Award is a lifetime achievement award that a Master Gardener earns through a lengthy demonstration of passion and hard work toward our BCMG, Inc. organization and its mission. Rarely, a member might make a singular, perhaps one-time, contribution of outstanding merit. Nevertheless, it is the quality, not the quantity of service hours that a Master Gardener contributes that earns a WDLR Award. Each December, we conduct an Award Ceremony announcing that year's winner at our year-end banquet. A Baldwin Master Gardener may only win this lifetime achievement award once.

It's Time Again for WDLR Nominations



by Sam Andrews and Mary Calvin

2) Wayne de la Rua, originally from Pensacola, moved to Alabama in 1970, retired from Reichhold Chemical in 1979, and convinced Extension Agent Ed Tunnell to start a Master Gardeners class in 1990. Wayne faithfully attended the meetings for several years. By the time of his death in 1998 he had around 54 varieties of Native Azaleas. He often searched along the rivers and streams of Alabama. The legacy he left behind is a successful, ongoing and flourishing Master Gardeners program.

3) Nominations are solicited through Grass Roots in August and September and published in October. Voting takes place by email from November 1 - 12, 2025 or in person at the November 12 monthly meeting. Each active Baldwin Master Gardener votes once for the nominee that they believe to be most deserving.

4) Your organization, the Baldwin County Master Gardeners, Inc., maintains a plaque containing a list of all the past WDLR winners in the Help-Line Office.

Past winners are as follows:

1997 - Wayne de la Rua
1998 - Maureen Nation
1999 - Jill McArthur
2000 - Herb Nall
2001 - Jane Wright
2002 - Mary Gibson
2003 - Gail Terrell & Joanne Caglione (tie)
2004 - Carol Griffin
2005 - Harry Anderson
2006 - Sherry Eubanks
2007 - Tanys Waldron
2008 - Sam Andrews
2009 - Joyce Mudrak
2010 - Pat Libby
2011 - Selena Vaughn
2012 - Marilyn Mannhard
2013 - Jim & Nancy Gaines (joint nomination)
2014 - Oattie Dailey
2015 - Gene Sellier
2016 - Pat Greer & Myra Lassere (tie)
2017 - Loree Hadley
2018 - Pam Tucker
2019 - Paula Pritchett
2020 - Jamie Van Valkenburgh & Julian Walthall (tie)
2021 - Arren Graf
2022 - Lynn Andrews
2023 - Judi Smith
2024 - Mary Calvin

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Baldwin County Master Gardeners

General Meeting 7/16/2025

Don Richerson, President, called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM in the auditorium of the Foley Civic Center, Foley, Alabama. He requested everyone to rise and join in saying the Pledge of Allegiance. Don asked Lynn Barnes to introduce our guests. Lynn announced we have two scholarship recipients, Adrian Foutch and Mary Michelle Conway. Adrian is here today with her parents, Jennifer and Matthew Foutch. She is pursuing a degree in Landscape Architecture Design.

Lynn announced that in the July edition of the Mobile Bay Magazine, our very own Alabama Cooperative Extension Agent, Carmen Flammini, was featured as one of the 2025 Mobile Bay Watershed Award Winners. These awards recognize the environmental guardians of our communities.

Don requested all past Presidents and recipients of the Wayne de la Rua Award to stand. The members recognized their contributions with applause. There were 64 people in attendance.

Don asked all Board Members to come to the front for pictures. As the group assembled, Don inquired if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the General Meeting held on June 11th as listed in the Grass Roots Newsletter. Elmer Vick made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11th General meeting as written with a second made by Lynn Barnes. All approved.

RESOLVED, approval of the minutes of the General Meeting held on June 11th as listed in the July Grass Roots Newsletter.

Don announced that Andreu Riebe is delayed with setting up the computers to record the Individual Interest Forms, but hopefully that will be done during the second half of today's meeting.

Everyone was invited to break for lunch, during which a blessing was offered by Don Richerson, expressing gratitude for the meal and time shared.

After a delicious lunch, Don formally resumed the meeting. Lynn Barnes announced Mary Michelle Conway as the second scholarship recipient and noted the check is enroute to Auburn. She is pursuing a major in Forestry. Mary Michelle was unable to attend today's luncheon due to her internship commitment in Birmingham. We are pleased to welcome her mother, Michelle Conway, to accept this award and to also welcome her grandmother, Sharon Penton. Michelle Conway came to the podium to say thank you and express how much our scholarships have meant to her daughter.

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Master Gardener Maureen Krison and volunteers have landscaped around the AL-104 classroom building. Maureen is organizing a design competition for an outdoor table featuring shelving, intended for members to use when sharing plants and conducting potting demonstrations. The project requires the use of weather-resistant materials and will be situated near the building's entrance. Detailed dimensions have been provided.

All entries must be submitted by August 8th. The top design will be presented to the membership in August. Lynn has a flyer for anyone wanting to participate. "Think of the volunteer hours you will get".

Anita O'Connor congratulated all of the 2025 Master Gardener interns that will be receiving their official badges today. Anita and Don then began presenting the Baldwin County Master Gardener Awards to certified Master Gardeners - Aletza Boucher, Barry Gilliland, Claudia Barbee, Debby Tollefson, Eileen Greene, Gary Pugh, Jen Kinsey, Ken Gates, Laurie Simpson, Marilyn Bullington, Nancy Schlack, Nicholas Stroh, Nicole Reid, and Pat Atzman.

Don congratulated the Master Gardeners who are receiving their 100-hour Bronze Star Award - Aletza Boucher, Claudia Barbee, Eileen Greene, Ken Gates, Sue Barnwell, Laurie Simpson, Beth Murray, Robin Newell, Thomas Fortner, Jim Faulkner and Vicky Franks.

Master Gardeners who are receiving their 500-hour Gold Star Award - Elizabeth Wojtaszek, Jacqueline Gray, Linda Crowell, Maureen Krison, and Sheryl Bly.

Master Gardeners who are receiving their 1000-hour Gold Badge - Kay Heinrich, Cassandra Rabren, and Susan Mattingly, and those receiving their 2000-hour Platinum Badge - Deborah Marriott, Eileen Huisman, Maria Logan-Montgomery, and Pam Schultz.

Don announced that he has extra badges for the 2023 class. He said our goal is to have badges at times that coordinate when the state has badges. If you have questions about your amount of volunteer hours, please see Don Richerson. He and Andreu Riebe have worked on organizing the hours despite challenges.

Old Business: At our last Board Meeting we accepted the resignation of Julie Cox as a Member at Large and selected her replacement with newly certified Master Gardener, Barry Gilliland. A motion was made by Myra Lassere to elect Barry Gilliland to the Board as Member at Large for the remainder of the term. Lynn Barnes seconded the motion with all in favor.

RESOLVED, election of Barry Gilliland to complete the Member at Large term on the Board of 2025.

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Lynn Barnes announced that, starting in January 2026, new members will join the Board, while some current members will continue to serve on the 2026 Board. A Nominating Committee was formed at our last Board Meeting. The Nominating Committee will be meeting soon, and you might be invited to serve on the Board. There are many positions where you might serve. So, say yes if called! A slate of candidates for election to the 2026 Board will be presented to members for their vote at November's General Meeting. We will be emailing you a questionnaire about your interests and skills in volunteering with the Master Gardeners.

Sara Semmes announced there is a "Monarch Butterfly Workshop" tomorrow, July 17th, at the Pelican's Nest Pavilion in Fairhope from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Also, there is a "Hydroponic Systems Workshop" on July 23rd in Mobile County and on July 24th at the Gulf Coast Eco Center in Gulf Shores. Both workshops are from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Thanks go to our photographer, Linda Bizzell, and jeweler, Tom Meyer. It was announced that the butterfly arrangements on the tables are available for guests to take home.

There being no further business, Elmer Vick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lynn Barnes seconded the motion. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.

The next General Meeting will be held at the Gulf Coast Research & Extension on AL-104 on Wednesday, August 13th. Social begins at 9:30 AM with the meeting starting at 10:00 AM.

One Sign that you may be
a Serious Gardener



The criteria for a
quality doctor
include the health
of the waiting
room plants.



Many Hands Make Light Work!

Revamped Committee Interest Form Now Available

The BCMG Committee Interest Form has been updated and is now live on our website with a fresh, easier-to-use design..

Each year, these forms help the incoming President make informed decisions when appointing members to committees. By sharing your interests, skills, and availability, you help ensure committees are well-staffed and ready to start the year strong.

Whether you'd like to continue in your current role or explore a new opportunity, completing the form lets leadership know how each member would like to be involved in the coming year.

Please submit your form by Friday, August 22.



Find it here: baldwinmastergardeners.com/bcmg-committee-interest-form

PICTURES NEEDED

Do you have pictures or video from 2025 BCMG events for our end of the year celebration?

Send the to Robin Newell at robin.rn@baldwinmastergardeners.com





By Andreu Riebe

Tech Corner

How to Access Previous *Grass Roots* Newsletters

Q: How do we access previous *Grass Roots* publications?

We're glad you asked! You can access the **12 most recent issues** of the *Grass Roots* newsletter directly on our website.

 **Visit:** www.baldwinmastergardeners.com/newsletters/

Each issue is labeled by month and year and opens in an easy-to-read PDF format. You can view them online, download for later, or print a copy to keep.

Looking for an Older Issue?

We keep a digital archive beyond the 12 listed online. If you're searching for an older edition:

- Email the **Webmaster:** webmaster@baldwinmastergardeners.com
-
- Or use the **Webmaster Contact Form** on our [Contact Us](#) page
-

We'll do our best to locate and send you a copy from our archives.

Submit a Tech Question

Do you have a tech-related question you'd like to see featured here?

 Send your ideas to:

Grassroots@baldwinmastergardeners.com

We might feature your question in the next Tech Corner!

Newsletter Committee:
Andreu Riebe, Kim Musson, Linda Crowell, Larry Musson



Baldwin County Master
Gardeners, Inc.
8300 State Hwy. 104
Fairhope, AL 36532



CALENDAR

- AUG. 06, 2025 BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
AUG. 13, 2025 BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 10, Speaker TBD
AUG. 22, 2025 BCMG Committee Interest Form Submission Due Date
SEPT. 03, 2025 BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
SEPT. 10, 2025 BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 10, Speaker TBD
SEPT. 16, 2025 AMGA Fall Seminar, All About Pollinators, Columbiana, AL. See Pathways Newsletter
SEPT. 20, 2025 Wayne de la Rua Nominations are due
SEPT. 27, 2025 Fairhope Plant Swap, 10a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Fairhope Library - Front Porch
OCT. 01, 2025 BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
OCT. 02, 2025 Blount County MG Fall Conference, Cleveland AL. See Pathways Newsletter
OCT. 03, 2025 Alabama Coastal BirdFest, Oct. 03-05, Five Rivers Delta Resource Center Spanish Fort
OCT. 08, 2025 BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 10, Speaker TBD
NOV. 01, 2025 Wayne de la Rua voting begins, NOV. 01st - 12th
NOV. 05, 2025 BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
NOV. 12, 2025 BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 10, Speaker TBD
DEC. 03, 2025 BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
DEC. 10, 2025 Awards Christmas Luncheon.
MAY 06, 2026 AMGA 2026 Annual State Conference, Gardening to the Moon and Back, Huntsville AL.

Remember



Labor Day

Sept. 1, 2025

2025 BCMG Elected Board

President: Don Richerson
Vice-President: Lynn Barnes
Treasurer: Cassandra Rabren
Recording Secretary: Gilda Underwood
Corresponding Secretary: Kim Scasny
Members at Large: Barry Gilliland, Tom Fortner
Past President: Mary Calvin

2025 Appointed Board

Monthly Program Chair: Charlotte Hamm
Intern Class Coordinator: Anita O'Connor
Outreach Coordinator: Sara Semmes
Finance Committee Chair: Mickey Ezell
Projects Chair: Elmer Vick

Next Meeting Dates:

Wednesday August 13, 2025
9:30 am - Refreshments
10:00 am - Meeting

BCMG Merchandise

Maria Curow and Dianne Robinson-Hill, BCMG Merchandise Coordinators will be selling BCMG Aprons, hats and t-shirts at monthly general meetings.