

# GRASS ROOTS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALDWIN COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, INC.

SEPTEMBER 2025

www.baldwinmastergardeners.com

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## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Don Richerson

As I was preparing to participate in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census scheduled for August 22-24, 2025, a random thunderstorm forced me to take cover. Imagine that in August in Baldwin County.

Sitting with my laptop, I became distracted from my task and began to investigate the John L. Borom Coastal Birdfest which I assumed would occur in early October, as in years past. But, I was wrong.

The Five Rivers Delta Center in Spanish Fort is an 70+ acre educational center which was sold to the sole bidder, Alabama Wildlife Federation, about 4 months ago. It is currently closed. There will be no Birdfest this year. Instead, the Coastal Birdfest is scheduled for Spring 2026 and the location has not been released to my knowledge. Alabama Audubon will assume the leadership of this vital festival. Here is the link to the press release from July:

### ALABAMA AUDUBON Press Release

So being a little bewildered about things I don't understand, my mind began to wander. Minding my own business, in my favorite chair, I observed a male Great Crested Flycatcher looking my parsley over. He must have seen the Black Swallowtails laying eggs there. And it struck me, we really do live in an incredibly diverse area. So, I poured myself a libation and gave myself 2 hours to see how many species I could observe from my chair in the diminishing rain.



## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Don Richerson

I observed several species of birds in roughly an hour and a half. In no particular order, I was privileged to see Carolina Wrens, both Great and Snowy Egrets, Great Blue Herons, Ospreys, immature Bald Eagles, Jays, House Finches, Canadian Geese, Pelicans, all sorts of Terns and Gulls, Black Crowned Night Heron, a flock of White Ibis, numerous Hummers, Brown Thrasher, Carolina Chickadee, Northern Mockingbird, White-eyed Vireo, House Sparrow, and what I think was an Eastern Kingbird.

I have been a amateur birder since I was 13, but even I was moved by which birds considered my yard and bayfront a haven or at least, a source of food or a place to "check out" or fly over. I forgot about the pollinator count.

As we enter the autumn and winter, let's remember our feathered friends and provide for them. Many will have to make long trips to their winter habitats and we are in the jumping off place for them. A wholesome meal before hitting the road is just what the doctor ordered.

See you at the September meeting!

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Veronica Herndon	09-01	Jill Boyles	09-16
Anita B O'Connor	09-01	Donna Greene	09-17
Myra Lassere	09-05	Rebecca Estes	09-19
Ken Cooper	09-06	Tampa Sykora	09-19
Marilyn Mannhard	09-07	Maureen Krison	09-21
Janet Davis	09-07	Pam Tucker	09-22
Theresa Sims	09-07	Ed Pickle	09-26
Sharon Thoele	09-08	Diane Roberson-Hill	09-27
Charlotte Croft	09-10	Celia Young	09-27
Linda Bizzell	09-13		

# MONTHLY PROGRAM NOTES

By Charlotte Hamm

## September Speaker

Daffodils are one of the joys of Spring that I have missed since moving to Baldwin County. Having lived in cooler climates before here, it was clearly noticeable that folks just don't plant Spring bulbs much in our area. Why is that? It is true that one can't choose cultivars by the prettiest picture, but there are select varieties that are proven to succeed in our much warmer climate. Just in time for your fall planting, join us for our September meeting when Elizabeth (Beth) Bolles, Environmental Horticulture Extension Agent from our neighboring county, Escambia County, FL, will discuss growing daffodils on the Gulf Coast.



Below Beth gives a personal introduction:

### Beth Bolles

I have served as a horticulture educator with the University of Florida in Escambia County since 1997. I assist both homeowners and professionals with evidence-based information to improve their gardening and landscaping practices. My degrees are from the University of Tennessee in both Horticulture and Entomology that complement each other well, enabling me to find solutions to a broad range of horticulture issues faced by the community. The best part of my Extension work is the variety of activities and topics that are involved in the job. Everyday can offer something new to learn. I especially enjoy learning about the local environment and determining the 'whys' behind a particular gardening practice or recommendation. If I had to choose my favorite gardening activity, it would be pruning trees because you often need to envision future growth and how it can be directed in a certain way for plant health and attractiveness. I do not enjoy installing sod very much.



# PAST EVENTS

## ALABAMA NATIVE MILKWEED POLLINATOR CENSUS - JULY



Riviera Utility



Grand Hotel



Riviera Utility



Grand Hotel



Pelican Nest



Pelican Nest

# PAST EVENTS

## GREAT SOUTHEAST POLLINATOR CENSUS - AUGUST

### GREAT SOUTHEAST POLLINATOR CENSUS COUNTS ARE DUE!

If you don't upload your counts,  
your count doesn't count!

The portal to upload counts will remain open until  
**September 17<sup>th</sup>** so you have plenty of time to complete  
Step #2. Upload your counts at <https://GSePC.org>

GREAT SOUTHEAST  
  
**Pollinator Census**



Pollinator Census - Fiery Skipper on Beth Murry's basil at her home. Picture by Beth Murry



Pictures by Carmen Flammini, with Lee Brady at Fairhope West and Spanish Fort Elementary Schools

# It's Time Again for WDLR Nominations



by Sam Andrews and Mary Calvin

WDLR Nominations Requested

Reminder!

The final deadline for nominations for the Wayne de la Rua Award is September 20, 2025 at Six PM. Please email your questions and your nominations to Sam Andrews, HibiscusFiend@mchsi.com (Note: That's "FIEND" and not "friend".)

A second method is to hand deliver your written nomination to Mary Calvin at the September 10 meeting.

## FALL EVENTS

See the Pathways Summer 2025 Edition for additional information



Alabama Extension Master Gardener  
2025 Fall Seminar  
"All About Pollinators"  
September 16, 2025  
First Baptist of Columbiana  
Registration \$40

## Gardening for Birds, Bees, Butterflies, and Bugs

October 2, 2025

Blount County Master Gardeners' Fall Conference

4 CEUs



Blount County Multipurpose Center  
6700 County Road 1, Cleveland, AL 35049

# SEPTEMBER EVENTS



## INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANT IDENTIFICATION, CONTROL, & PREVENTION WORKSHOP

Gain knowledge on the identification, ecology, control, and prevention of the most prevalent and destructive plants on the central Gulf coast.

### Training Designed for:

- Natural Resource Management Professionals
- Government Employees
- Plant Nursery Owners/Staff
- Landscapers
- Master Gardeners
- Homeowners

 September 26 2025

 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

 Weeks Bay Tonsmeire Resource Center  
11525 US Hwy 98, Fairhope AL 36532

\$25 per person, lunch included!

**REGISTER NOW**



<https://forms.gle/iUSgzxqppHNAFkKC6>

Questions? Email: [johanna.gertsch@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:johanna.gertsch@dcnr.alabama.gov)



# MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Baldwin County Master Gardeners

General Meeting 8/13/2025

Don Richerson, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at Gulf Coast Research & Extension Center, 8300 SR-104, Fairhope, Alabama. He asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an inquiry about any guests in attendance. Jim Toop was present for his second time. Don invited members with August birthdays to stand, as well as all past Presidents and Wayne de la Rua Award winners. Those individuals received applause from the group. A total of 65 people attended.

Don requested Charlotte Hamm to introduce the speaker for the day. Charlotte introduced Kevin Scasny, a retired meteorologist who has 42 years of experience in operational application of short and long-range weather and climate forecasting. He is a career veteran from the U.S. Air Force with Special Operations experience, having delivered tactical forecasting for numerous worldwide contingencies for the Air Force, Army and joint military operations. "This man knows weather"!

The audience was excited to learn Kevin brought colored butterfly picks he made with a 3D-printer for attendees.

Kevin began with explaining the difference between Climatology vs. Weather. Climatology being long-term weather forecasting and Weather being the current short-term forecasting. Climatology is based over a long period of time. Statistically 30-years is the base used as the central theorem. Long records of climate variables are essential for the study of climate. Examples given were for Climatology being the first frost and Weather being the current temperature or thunderstorm warning.

Kevin created charts and graphs utilizing data from Mobile's National Weather Service/NOAA, which holds the most extensive weather records for the region. His first chart covered the period for Coastal Alabama from 1948 to the present. Kevin stated there is no normal weather – it is a range of normal weather or average. Weather records date back to the early 1900s, in addition to some made by the Army during the Civil War.

Kevin discussed the variability of our growing season over the years, noting that it typically extends from April to November. He observed that 1951 was an unusually cold year. He also advised gardeners to exercise caution regarding freezing temperatures, as November can be a risky month according to the data presented in the chart. His Miscellaneous Temperature Notes were:

- Frost 33°-36° or colder
- Freeze 32°-28° (tender plants)
- Hard freeze 28°-25°
- Severe Freeze 24° / below -4° (noted-duration of severe freeze)

# MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Satsumas are of interest as they are common in our area. Kevin stated that they remain hardy at temperatures as low as 20°. The plants that have had freezing conditions before will be more resilient. Florida commercial growers use continuous watering to shield plants from freezing. Intermittent watering is not a good idea.

Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation or AMO and CLIMO Impacts: A natural climate phase. One phase of warm water and then cold will last about 20-30 years. This data goes back to the late 1800's. The pictures shown in shade of red and blue help to understand the warm and cold temperatures of the ocean waters. The underwater changes affect the surface water temperatures and also affect the short-term weather. Research indicates that the AMO influences temperature and drought conditions on land. Additional findings suggest that underwater volcanism and tectonic activity contribute to ocean warming. There are hundreds of buoys especially in the Pacific that measure water temperature and salinity. A lot of sensing is being done by satellite, but satellites can't see much below the surface.

Kevin referred to the solar system, earth around the sun, and revolution of the solar system in the Milky Way galaxy that has an effect on climatology and weather. Global warming was also discussed. There is evidence that we are in a cooling oscillation period. Kevin mentioned when temperatures are given it should be noted if we are in a positive AMO or a negative AMO and in an El Niño or La Niña. Kevin gave an example of how we may affect things locally by our actions, but not globally. His example was the huge wind turbine farms in West Texas. These turbines take energy out of the wind. This action changes the local temperatures.

Kevin discussed the surface map showing areas of high and low pressure; air descends with high pressure and rises with low pressure. In case of freezing weather, he advised checking the dew point at 8:00 PM. As a rule of thumb, the dew point at 8:00PM typically reflects the overnight temperature.

The Atlantic is expected to experience cooler conditions. According to Kevin, a cooler AMO cycle is typically associated with fewer hurricanes. The AMO does not remain in a cold phase. Kevin's charts display the cycles of cold and warm phases in the AMO, as well as the occurrence of named hurricanes. The Tropical Atlantic Storm Climatology shows the peak season of storms from September 7<sup>th</sup> through September 12<sup>th</sup>. Forecasters say we are now entering Phase II of the season.

Kevin took questions from the audience. There was a call to have a 15-minute break before the meeting reconvened.

After the break, Don Richerson convened the meeting and asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the General Meeting held on July 16<sup>th</sup>, as published in the August Grass Roots Newsletter. There being no corrections or additions, Lynn Barnes made a motion to approve the July 16<sup>th</sup> minutes. Mary Myers seconded the motion with all in favor.

# MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

RESOLVED, Approval of the July 16, 2025 General Meeting minutes as published in the August Grass RootsNewsletter.

Presidents Report: Don Richerson stated he received a call from the Daphne High School principal with official news that the Daphne greenhouse was no longer accessible to Baldwin County Master Gardeners. The school is building a 20,000 sq. ft. cafeteria that is under a 400-day construction contract. Retrieving supplies from the greenhouse will not be possible. Dolores Hammack and her committee have elected not to have the Fall Plant Sale. What are the greenhouse options, Don asked. We are currently in negotiations to build a greenhouse with Weeks Bay Reserve or Hope Community in Fairhope. There needs to be care taken in how we consider partnering with a 501 (c) 3 organization, as we are also a 501 (c) 3 organization.

Don announced he is on the Alabama Master Gardeners Association's (AMGA) Nominating Committee and would like to nominate a BCMG member for one of the two open AMGA Member at Large positions. The Members at Large will be voted on at the AMGA Conference in May 2026. Interested members are encouraged to contact Don or any Board member. Don encouraged members of BCMG to consider becoming a representative at the state level.

Vice-President Report: Lynn Barnes announce that Master Gardener Judi Smith is retiring from her kitchen position. Everyone applauded Judi! Judi's last month to serve will be December. She is willing to provide mentorship to an individual interested in assuming kitchen responsibilities. Please consider this volunteer position.

Lynn noted that there is a new survey available on the BCMG website under Members Information – Committee Interest Form. Andreu Riebe reported that only 15 members have taken the survey. Lynn urged everyone to complete the survey so volunteers can serve in their areas of interest. The BCMG Nominating Committee has met and will have a slate of candidates to be announced in October. Voting will be at the November General Meeting.

Members were asked to contact Charlotte Hamm regarding potential topics or speakers for future meetings. Lynn thanked Charlotte for arranging engaging speakers and for serving in this role for a third year.

There was a drawing for three door prizes given to three lucky attendees!

Treasurer's Report: Cassandra Rabren reported the checking account has \$97,242.43. There have been membership dues collected for 2026 in the amount of \$1,976.68. The interest earned from the \$20,000.00 matured CD is \$869.93 and needs to be moved on the report to the checking account. The total current assets are \$99,395.82. There is one CD we have for \$5,000.00 that will be maturing on September 4<sup>th</sup> with earned interest of \$122.27. Cassandra will be investigating current CD interest rates.

# MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

The Fall Plant Sale in 2024 earned approximately \$6,000.00. Everyone put in a lot of effort despite the lower return compared to the Spring Plant Sale. Let's look forward to the next Spring Plant Sale.

Members planning programs or projects for next year should submit 2026 budget figures to Mickey Ezell or Cassandra by the November meeting. Mickey said project leaders will meet in September to determine their funding needs. Cassandra said if you have a budget figure for 2025 it will not be moved to the 2026 budget without a request.

Old/New Business: Myra Lassere asked for volunteers to work at the Robertsdale greenhouse on Mondays or Tuesdays. Master Gardeners are at the greenhouse from 9:00AM to noon. Myra stated that three Robertsdale students participating in FFA competed in Horticulture at the state level, earned first place, and will advance to Nationals. Myra has a list of plants for FFA students to identify and will be asking BCMG members to donate any plant they have on this list to help the students with this identification project.

The EMG Service Report online is being updated. Starting Friday, Security sign-on requires entering your email ID on the first page and your password on the second. Contact Andreu with questions. Myra reminded all Master Gardeners, if you work at the High School, you will have to take Auburn's online course called "Youth Protection Program". This course needs to be taken each year. Also, you will need to be a certified Master Gardener and sign the MOU located on the EMG Service Report.

Don announced that María Curow, Merchandise Coordinator, has added a Master Gardener's spiral notebook to the merchandise table displayed at the General Meetings.

Project Updates: Beth Murray, Co-District Leader for South Baldwin county, described an event called The Great Southeast Pollinator Count. This is the first year that Alabama has been invited to participate. Bethany O'Rear from the ACES Extension Office is heading Alabama's participation. This is a one-or-two-day pollinator count that you can do from home. The counting event is August 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>. Select a plant, observe it for 15 minutes, and record the number of insects that land on it during this period. Please go to the website for more information: [www.gsepc.org](http://www.gsepc.org)

Beth reviewed the division areas of Baldwin County for Master Gardener's projects: North, South, Central and West. This division was made to make things easier for volunteers that would like to take part in a project in the area where they live. Beth asked leaders of projects to put their name and contact information on a Project Board showing the area they have a project. It is anticipated that volunteers will select a project or specific area within the county in which they wish to contribute their time. Beth will have this Project Board located at the Gulf Coast Research Center for members to view and update at each meeting.

# MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Mary Calvin announced she added a project to the new Project Board. She wants to invite interested volunteers to join her at the Coastal Community College beginning October 6<sup>th</sup>. The group will be working with native plants on Mondays and Thursdays beginning at 8:30AM.

Mary described Wayne de la Rua as the first Master Gardener. He worked with Ed Tunnell, Extension Agent, to begin the first Baldwin County Master Gardeners class in 1990. We honor Wayne de la Rua by having an Award once a year in his name presented to an active Master Gardener member to recognize their outstanding service to the organization and Extension. The Award is peer nominated, peer selected, and a once in a lifetime prize. Mary encouraged everyone to submit a nomination letter about a deserving member for this Award and send your letter to Sam Andrews at [hibiscusfiend@mchsi.com](mailto:hibiscusfiend@mchsi.com). The deadline for your nomination is September 20<sup>th</sup>. In the October Grass Roots Newsletter, you will see who is nominated and make your choice. Voting takes place in November, and the Award is presented in December.

Maureen Krison referred to the Master Gardener Design Contest flyer in the Grass Roots Newsletter. The Design Contest was for constructing something outside the building that would hold containers, shelving for plant swaps, and a potting area. The contest ended on August 8<sup>th</sup> without a design submission. If you have any ideas, please submit them to Maureen.

There being no further business, Myra Lassere made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mickey Ezell seconded the motion with all in favor.

The next General Meeting will be held at the Gulf Coast Research & Extension Center, 8300 SR-104, Fairhope, Alabama on Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>. Social time is scheduled for 9:30AM, followed by the meeting at 10:00AM.

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## IT'S TIME FOR MORE AT 104!



### We need help:

Does ANYONE weld within our group? Please come forward!

Does anyone have any scrap materials and/or a vendor connection that might reduce the cost of these materials?

Does anyone have construction abilities with a little time to volunteer their help?

Does anyone have any native plants that they would like to donate to the cause to help us create a fuller and more symmetrical view from the street? Please walk around the building the next time you are there and reach out to Maureen @ 404.312.5429 or [mkrison051@gmail.com](mailto:mkrison051@gmail.com).

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR



CEU Opportunities - Access more information at [aces.edu/calendar](https://aces.edu/calendar)

## Onsite Classes

### [Dig In and Discover: Forestry](#)

📅 Sep 9, 2025 at 5:00pm  
📍 Fairhope, AL

Learn about forestry and land management.

### [Touchdown Tastes: Game Day the Healthy Way](#)

📅 Sep 10, 2025 at 10:00am  
📍 Mobile, AL

Learn how to eat healthier on game day.

## Online Classes

### [Back 2 Basics Gardening Series](#)

📅 Sep 10, 2025 at 10:00am

Learn about rain barrels and rain water harvesting.

### [Natural Resources Webinar Series: Wildlife Management Services for Private Land](#)

📅 Sep 10, 2025 at 12:00pm

Learn about technical assistance from Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

### [Chicken Disease Prevention](#)

📅 Sep 16, 2025 at 5:30pm

Learn how to prevent disease in your backyard flock

### [Back 2 Basics Gardening Series](#)

📅 Sep 24, 2025 at 10:00am

Learn about Elderberries

One Sign that you may be a Serious Gardener

Your idea of winter fun is sticking your hand in the compost pile to feel if it's hot.

## 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](mailto:robin.rn@baldwinmastergardeners.com)





By Andreu Riebe

## Volunteer Hours & Login Update

Here's your friendly reminder: don't wait until December to enter your volunteer hours! Recording them soon after each activity saves you the year-end scramble and ensures your contributions are counted accurately for awards and recognition.

### New Login Process

You may have noticed a change to the Service Hour Report login. Previously, both your email and password were entered on the same page. Now, the process is split into two screens:

- Page One: enter your email address
- Page Two: enter your password

This "split login" is becoming more common. While it may not seem like much, it helps systems detect suspicious login attempts (such as bots trying random email/password combinations) and lays the groundwork for stronger security features, like multi-factor authentication.

You can log your hours anytime at  <https://www.acesagmg.site/>

So, next time you finish a project, take a moment to log your hours. Future-you will thank present-you when December rolls around.

### Got Tech Questions?

Send them to: [Grassroots@baldwinmastergardeners.com](mailto:Grassroots@baldwinmastergardeners.com). Your question might be featured in the next Tech Corner!

### How do I submit something to Grass Roots?

Send your article or photo to:

 [grassroots@baldwinmastergardeners.com](mailto:grassroots@baldwinmastergardeners.com)

Deadline: 20th of each month

- Articles: Google Docs, Word, PDF, or Rich Text
  - Photos: JPG or PNG (minimum 1MB). Attach files or share via Google Drive.
- Please include subject names for group photos!

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

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



# CALENDAR

- 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. 08, 2025 BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 10, Speaker TBD
- NOV. 01, 2025 Wayne de la Rua voting begins, NOV. 01<sup>st</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>
- 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.



Don't forget- Bring plants to meeting to help out Roberstdale High School FFA. There are 2 separate list that were sent to your email. For more information, contact Myra Lassere, myralassere@gmail.com.

## 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 September 10, 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.