

GRASS ROOTS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALDWIN COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, INC.

APRIL 2026

www.baldwinmastergardeners.com

VOL. 34 ISSUE 4



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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Lynn Barnes

Becoming "Grounded"

Recent studies have suggested that walking outside barefoot can connect your body to the Earth's electrical charge. It's called earthing or grounding. It is supposed to help regulate your body's electrical system, reduce inflammation and improve overall well-being. The Earth has a natural electrical charge and when you touch it, you can absorb electrons which are believed to balance your body's electrical system.

On a beautiful balmy morning recently I was sitting on my screened porch drinking coffee. There was much to take in—so many different birds at my feeder and so many distant bird calls. Perennials were greening up and shooting out of the ground. I slipped off my shoes and walked slowly around my back yard barefoot. It felt so good! Dew was still on the grass and it took me back to my childhood when we were young and carefree! I was careful where I stepped and that helped me slow down. I was getting grounded!



PRESIDENT'S NOTE

By Lynn Barnes

If you think this might be safe in your yard, I suggest you try it. It might connect you to your own piece of God's green earth and give you some joy!

Our recent Spring Workshops were educational and inspiring and all who attended were treated to some excellent programs! We will soon be hosting our Spring Plant Sale—so exciting! Thanks in advance to everyone for all your hard work to make this project a fine achievement. It's a win-win for the public who shop with us and it helps our annual treasury. Thanks again for pitching in!



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Carolyn Koch	04-03
Frieda Romanchuk	04-10
Patty Rowland	04-14
Sheryl Bly	04-16
Linda Mong	04-16
Gayle Floyd	04-19
Teresa Gillis	04-21
Joyce Price	04-26
George Holman	04-27
Julie Cox	04-28
Catherine Kiser	04-30

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

April

MONTHLY PROGRAM NOTES

By Charlotte Hamm

"The Legacy of Baldwin County Agriculture"

Presented by: Kim Marsh

April 8th, 2026 @ 10 am

Kim Marsh, of Loxley, AL, is passionate about community history, family heritage, and agriculture. Kim is currently the curator at The Museum of Loxley, a position she has held for two years. Before being hired at the museum, Kim was a volunteer at the museum for a year. Starting in April, Kim will be the newest member of Loxley's Beautification Committee. With her role as curator at The Museum of Loxley, Kim has made community involvement a priority. Any opportunity presented from speaking at Rotary Club meetings, to giving tours at the museum to home schoolers, 4-H'ers, and Girl Scouts, to giving presentations to snowbirds in Gulf Shores, Kim gladly accepts in order to spread the word about Loxley's and Baldwin County's rich history.

The Master Gardener program is near and dear to Kim's heart. Last fall, Master Gardener Laurie Simpson helped the Baldwin County 4-H group when they came to the museum for their community service project. This project was a beautification project for The Museum of Loxley, in which the 4-H group supplied large planters, soil, and flowers. Laurie assisted and taught the kids the how to's for proper planting. This year Kim and Loxley's Beautification Department are working with Carmen Flammini and Ken Gates on a pollinator garden at the museum, which will be Loxley's Community Pollinator Garden.

In her spare time, Kim enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband Doug. Weather permitting, each week Kim and Doug go to the beach and go boating. In between beach and boat trips, Kim tends to her raised garden beds with herbs and flowers, along with the many outdoor plants she loves to care for.



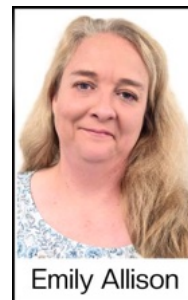
BCMG 2026 INTERN BIOS



Here is the final group of the Intern Bios. Please help to welcome them to our organization.

Emily Allison

Emily Allison lives in the Bon Secour Watershed area with her husband Dave and son, Eric. She is a third generation resident of Baldwin County. Emily and her family keep busy at home with chickens, cats, border collies, and a scarlet macaw. Her other hobbies include, photography, showing border collies, gardening with native plants and growing orchids. She has quite a collection of orchids and the orchid that started her hobby is also her favorite one. It is called *Laeliocattleya* "Frosty Pink".
Mentor- Kim Scasny



Emily Allison

Donna Armstrong

Forty years ago, Donna Armstrong followed her parents to Baldwin County and purchased the 10 acre property next door. She has been married to her husband for 27 years and has 4 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She owned her bakery in Foley for many years and after that she worked in bakery sales. In 2014, she owned and operated a shelter for victims of human trafficking called Hope Haven. Unfortunately, it was shut down in 2020, due to COVID. She is now retired and has time to expand her garden knowledge. Donna is curious about herbal remedies and would like a simple life that is close to nature. She is growing organic food for her family and currently enjoys volunteering with children at Rotary Club Youth Garden.
Mentor- Joyce Hewitt



Donna Armstrong

Brian Boucher

Brian Boucher was born in Corinth, MS and was raised in Jackson, MS. He and his wife, Aletza (Class of 2025), moved to Gulf Shores in 2022 after he retired from 30 plus years in sales for a wholesale wine and spirits distributor based in Memphis, TN. Brian enjoys serving his community and volunteers with Share the Beach as a Bon Secour Refuge Team Member and serves in the Toolbox Ministry for St. Andrew by the Sea Church. He is a recent graduate of the Gulf Shores Police Academy and is also a member of the Gulf Shores Garden Club. Brian was inspired to become a master gardener after learning more about the program when his wife was an intern. His favorite plant is the blueberry bush, because it has various colors of foliage during the year and has edible fruit.
Mentor-Mickey Ezell



Brian Boucher

Marie Cooper

Marie Cooper is a transplant from Long Island, New York. She relocated to Point Clear from Florida in the 1990's. She has 2 grown children, a son Brian, living in Boston and a daughter, Alicia living in Georgia with her two grandsons. Since retiring as a Physical Therapist aide, she has volunteered with the Council on Aging in Mobile and Baldwin counties. Currently, Marie volunteers with South Baldwin Literary Council teaching children to read. While volunteering at the Rotary Youth Garden in Fairhope, Marie became interested in becoming a Master Gardener.

Mentor- Eileen Greene



Linda Kitchens

Linda Kitchens moved to Baldwin County seven years ago from the Atlanta area. She grew up in upstate New York, Rhode Island and Virginia. Her early job experience includes working at the Pentagon and as a crew member on an auto-train going from Virginia to Orlando. Linda and her husband have a son, recently retired from the military in NC and a daughter who lives in Houston with her young family. They are enjoying the area due to her husband's love of salt water fishing and her desire for a yard and garden. Linda has long been interested in becoming a master gardener but couldn't manage it when she was working. Now that she's retired and settled in Daphne, she is excited to meet new friends that share her love of gardening.

Mentor-Karon Pennington



Dawn McKinney

Dawn McKinney was born in Fort Thomas, Kentucky and attended Old Dominion University. She later moved to Mobile and finished college at the University of South Alabama. Dawn and her husband Tom married in 1983 and have three children. They have lived in Daphne for the past twenty-six years. She recently retired from USA after teaching Computer Science for twenty-four years. Dawn started the Service Learning Center while teaching in Mobile. Her father was in the Coast Guard and she has lived in many places and worked many different jobs, including being a cab driver. Her hobbies are walking and dancing. However, after a tango lesson led to a broken arm, she humorously blames her shoes! Dawn married into a family of avid gardeners and wants to learn more about the science of planting. She especially enjoys growing herbs, perennials, and ginger.

Mentor-Dianne Roberson-Hill



Leslie Nelson

Leslie Nelson was born in Fort Benning, Georgia. She visited Fairhope in 1994 and met her husband, Joe. After living in Mobile, they moved to Daphne in 2001 and currently reside on a spacious property in Stapleton. Leslie is a retired nurse and her husband is a retired Warrant Officer of 41 years. In addition to gardening, she loves spending time with her 6 grandkids, fishing, reading, doing yoga and drinking coffee. Leslie has been wanting to be a master gardener for years and was inspired by her neighbor from Texas. She struggles with her soil and wants to become more successful in gardening. Her favorite plant is roses because they are both hardy and delicate. Her favorite gardening experience was planting dwarf sunflowers seeds which grew 18 ft tall!

Mentor Wanda Martin



Leslie Nelson

Lawanna Sharpless

Lawanna Sharpless was born in Selma, Alabama and has lived the last 20 years on Ono Island in Orange Beach. She taught in Baldwin County Public Schools, and was honored as Teacher of the Year. She and her husband Johnny are realtors in Orange Beach and in 2023 they were featured in an article in the Wall Street Journal. They both enjoy feeding the neighborhood critters-opossums, deer, feral kitties, and occasionally a raccoon or red fox. Lawanna is a marathon runner and is active in the Ono Island Ladies' Club, Ono Ladies Too, and Meals on Wheels. She is excited to learn how to take care of plants and feels the master gardener program will be another way she can reach out to her community.

Mentor- Beth Murray



Lawanna Sharpless



MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Baldwin County Master Gardeners

General Meeting 3/11/2026

Lynn Barnes, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. She asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. She asked if there were any visitors in the audience. Marianne Todd from Fairhope stood and introduced herself. Lynn then asked those with birthdays in March to stand. She continued by asking past Presidents and past Wayne de la Rua award winners to stand. There were 87 attendees that signed in for the meeting.

Lynn called on Charlotte Hamm to introduce our speaker. Charlotte presented Kip McConnell Vice President of Business Development for Plant Development Services. Plant Development Services is a Division of Flowerwood Nursery in Loxley. They bring to you Southern Living plants, Encore Azaleas, Sunset Plant Collection, Better Boxwoods, and Butterfly Candy. Mr. McConnell is a graduate of Auburn University's Ornamental Horticulture program and has spent 40+ years in the horticulture industry. He has experience in botanical garden management, new plant development, landscape design and installation, retail merchandising, and nursery supply sales.

Kip McConnell began with a description of Flowerwood Nursery beginning in six locations in three states with over 1000 acres of production facilities. The Plant Development Services started with the Encore Azalea, which was twenty-five years ago. The goal was to go directly to the consumer market which has great rewards. Southern Living magazine, the eighth largest magazine in the country, came to Plant Development to create the Southern Living plant brand, serving as its licensee. They continue to look for new plants to bring to market.

Currently, the Southern Living collection features several sasanqua camellias, which bloom during the fall. Additionally, there is one camellia japonica noted for its larger bloom and extended flowering period. The team sought a camellia variety that would offer an earlier blooming cycle.

In China they have a native summer blooming camellia. These camellias were not successful in growing here. As a result, they started hybridizing their summer blooming camellias with our camellia japonica. Luckily, they got the good traits: reblooming and summer blooming, sun tolerance, nice big blooms and cold hardiness like our japonicas. All these hybrids are fast growing.

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

The recently imported camellias from China must undergo a mandatory quarantine period as required by the USDA. The plants are held in quarantine for two years to ensure they are free from diseases or other issues. They are then released. Sometimes you get a few plants, and you begin building the cuttings from those plants, a process that is slow. You will begin seeing these new summer blooming camellias this fall or for sure next spring in local nurseries and large garden centers.

Kip presented pictures of the new cultivar plant blooms. The colors were predominantly red, with shades that ranged into pink. He also had pictures of the breeder in China showing the bloom size compared to their faces. These camellias begin to bloom in late July and continue flowering throughout most of the year. Reaching a height of 6-8 feet, they form a sturdy trunk, and with regular pruning, are well-suited as patio trees. Kip recommended checking Southern Living plant website for plant updates.

The new camellia names are "Early Surprise", "Early Celebration", and "Early Wonder". Plants will come to market in 2- and 7-gallon containers. A new Encore Azalea coming to market next spring will be Autumn Velvet, a dark maroon color. Kip McConnell answered every question with enthusiasm and expressed gratitude to the audience for their participation. The event concluded with applause.

After a 10-minute break, the meeting resumed at 11:00 AM.

Lynn Barnes called the meeting back to order.

- She said if you do not have a 2026 Pictorial Directory please see Loree Hadley.
- Please register to attend Azalea 101 on March 24 at the Baldwin County Coliseum in Robertsdale. Hours are 8:30 registration with 9:00 AM opening until 3:00 PM. Cost is \$10.00 which includes lunch.
- Registration for the 2026 AMGA State Conference in Huntsville is closed. If you need to cancel your attendance, Lynn offered to assist you in getting a partial refund.

Lynn asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the February 11, 2026, meeting published in the Grass Roots Newsletter. A motion was made by Barry Gilliland to adopt the minutes as written with a second from Joyce Hewitt. Minutes of the February 11th General meeting were approved as published.

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS: Lynn Barnes proceeded to give out Busy Bee Awards. One was to Julie Cox for all the hours spent writing grant applications for a BCMG greenhouse. Shannon Russell came forward to accept the next Busy Bee award in recognition of her efforts in organizing our many projects.

Lynn asked Sara Semmes to talk about the upcoming Spring Plant Sale. Sara announced that volunteers are needed to help clean up the property at Weeks Bay in preparation for plant placement. The scheduled clean-up days in preparation for mowing will begin at 8:30 AM on March 30th and 31st. Volunteers are needed the Saturday before Easter, April 4th at 8:30 AM, to lay out the sale area and place signage. There are sign-up sheets for every day of the Spring Plant Sale. Sara requested everyone to please participate.

- The Fairhope Public Library's Plant Swap scheduled March 28th is cancelled.
- Master Gardeners will not participate in Earth Day-Fairhope on Saturday April 18th.
- Tuesday March 17th is our next workshop on Surprising Camellias. Forrest Latta, VP of International Camellia Society will be our speaker.
- Tuesday March 24th Azelea 101 will be held at the Coliseum in Robertsdale.
- Flyer handouts promoting the Spring Plant Sale are now available for distribution.

Lynn announced that the General Meeting scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month is occurring on April 8th, the first day of the Spring Plant Sale for members only. This General Meeting will remain as scheduled on AL-104. The speaker will deliver the presentation for attendees seeking CEUs and those not working at Weeks Bay. The business part of the meeting will follow the speaker. At adjournment we will head to Weeks Bay to join those working in the plant sale area. Everyone will enjoy a potluck lunch.

Lynn asked a show of hands if you are bringing items for the raffle table. Fran Posey- Eversole is organizing this raffle and needs to know what will be included. Please check with Fran. For those bringing items for the "Trash to Treasurers" table, please bring your contributions on Wednesday April 8th.

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

ACES REPORT: Carmen Flammini, Regional Extension Agent, expressed appreciation to Charlotte Hamm for arranging outstanding speakers for CEUs, which contributes to both professional development and BCMG members' enjoyment of learning. Carmen thanked everyone that has taken the Youth Protection Training online this year. Youth Protection Training is required annually for anyone who will be present around children, such as at schools, events, or in garden areas. In the future, each January we will be signing MOUs and completing the Youth Protection Online Training together after the General Meeting.

Carmen asked members of the audience to raise their hands if they have been working outside in a garden or on a community project in the last two weeks. Many hands were raised which caused a WOW from Carmen. She expressed pride in all the involvement of the BCMG and interns. Carmen stated that all doors are open to Master Gardeners. The community is seeking support and expertise from Master Gardeners.

On June 24th there will be a formal Pollinator training course by an Auburn Entomologist, on how to perform the Great Southeast Pollinator Census. This will be held at AL-104 from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM with lunch provided.

On May 16th there will be a "Storm Ready" event at the Gulf Coast Eco Center in Gulf Shores from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. There will be different speakers on safety, insurance, storm damage, picture taking, and ways to save.

On May 9th, at Foley Civic Center we will celebrate the Welcome Back Monarchs event as the butterflies return from Mexico. Volunteers are needed for kids activities, transplanting demonstrations, and distributing 300 native milkweed plants.

TREASURER REPORT: Lynn Barnes gave the Treasurer report as Cassandra Rabren was unable to attend.

\$55,122.27 checking account

\$ 5,122.27 CD maturing in May with \$154.95 interest

\$50,000.00 CD maturing in May with \$959.50 interest

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

INTERN REPORT: Anita O'Connor, Intern Class Coordinator, asked all the interns to please stand. Applause was made by the audience. Anita thanked all the mentors, as well as Kim Musson and Debby Tollefson, for preparing the bios for the newsletter. This Thursday is the course halfway point for interns, who are on track for certification. April 30th will feature the intern presentations, and all are welcome to join for the presentation followed by a salad and dessert party. Anita thanked Robin Newell and Kim Scasny for helping when Help Line was introduced to the class.

PROJECTS: Shannon Russell reported that in February they introduced 30 different projects. If you signed up for a project, please look for an email coming to you from the leader of that project. On March 20th, project leader Ken Gates is having a garden bed workday at Dyslexia Services in Robertsdale and needs additional volunteers. Shannon said there is an opportunity to volunteer as a co-leader working with Mickey Ezell at Weeks Bay Education Center's native plant garden.

A suggestion was made to start a Master Gardener plant swap group. If you want to join and have plants to share, please add your name and contact number to the Plant Swap signup sheet.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS: Charlotte Hamm, Program Chair, announced the possibility of a road trip to Jim Scott's Lake Martin garden. This garden spans two lake lots on Lake Martin and features woodland areas, stonework, multiple levels, and themed garden rooms. It is not handicapped accessible. The garden tour is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15th, and it's expected to be a lengthy day. There is a beautiful pavilion to enjoy a packed lunch. We plan to rent a 15-passenger van from Enterprise. A signup sheet is provided for those who wish to participate. Please note that a minimum of 20 participants is required. Departure will take place between 7:00 and 8:00 AM.

Deborah Marriott announced the 2026 Tour of Homes in Magnolia Springs on Sunday, March 22nd 1 – 5 PM. Tickets are \$40 in advance or \$50 at the event. All proceeds go to the revitalization of the Magnolia Springs Community Hall, built in 1894.

Ann Hutchison requested assistance with 17 trays of colorful coleus plants for the Spring Plant Sale. These plants are at her house in Magnolia Springs. Ann needs someone to care for them from now to the plant sale, as she will be out of town.

MEETING MINUTES



By Gilda Underwood

Dolores Hammack requested anyone growing plants for the Spring Plant Sales please send her a list of your plants, how many, and what size pot so Mary Calvin can make plant tags. Volunteer schedule sheets are available for the Plant Sale, detailing the days, times, and where help is needed. Contact information for the Plant Sale Committee leaders is also provided. You are welcome to show up on Monday, April 6th or Tuesday, April 7th and there will be tasks for you to do.

Tom Fortner spoke about advertising the Spring Plant Sale. Stacks of flyers are prepared to take to garden centers, etc. If you would like to take a stack of flyers to any of the following, please do so: Old Tyme Feed; Greenhouse Garden Center, Summerdale; Robertsdale Feed, Seed & Supply; Elberta Farmers Co-op; Racine's Feed and Farmer Supply; Parkway Equipment in Loxley; SiteOne Landscape, Daphne; Corner Copia Gardens. Tom also mentioned posting flyers at your beauty shop and favorite stores.

Tom thanked Kim Musson for getting the flyers printed so quickly.

Wanda Martin asked Speakers Bureau members to distribute flyers during their speaking engagements.

Lynn announced that Cassandra has a volunteer signup sheet for the Hospitality Committee. She needs 20 volunteers for this committee. Jobs will be pulling tags on plants being purchased, gathering wagons, locating loading spots for customers, etc.

Lynn informed Board members that the Board Meeting usually held on the first Wednesday of the month has been changed for May. The May 6th Board meeting will be moved to Wednesday, April 29th. This change is necessary because the 2026 AMGA State Conference is May 6-8. The May General Meeting remains on the second Wednesday of the month, May 13th.

Cherry Tomato plants and Black-eyed Susan plants were given to four attendees.

Barry Gilliland moved to adjourn the meeting, with Connie Gillespie providing a second. The motion carried unanimously. The general meeting was adjourned at 11:48 AM.

The next General Meeting will be held on April 8th at 10:00 AM with social time at 9:30 AM.

PAST EVENTS

February Field Trip

Baldwin Master Gardeners recently had a special opportunity to take a field trip to Cornerstone Gardens in Mobile. Fifteen lucky garden aficionados were given a guided tour of Mr. Vaughn Drinkard Jr.'s enchanting garden at the corner of Government Street and Hallet Street in Mobile. It is quite a "secret garden" because you barely notice it from the street. Cornerstone Gardens is part of the "American Camellia Trail" as designated by the American Camellia Society. As we were escorted along the garden paths, we noticed Bible scriptures on signs along the way. These had been carefully placed so as to bring tranquility to the moment. The garden has been specially purposed, along with the guesthouse, to be a place of peace and respite for ministers who need a tiny break from their schedules.

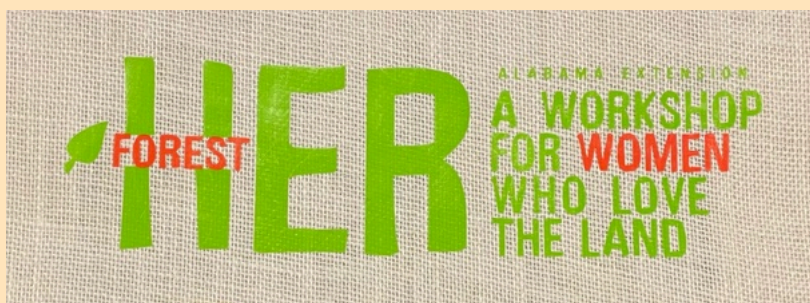
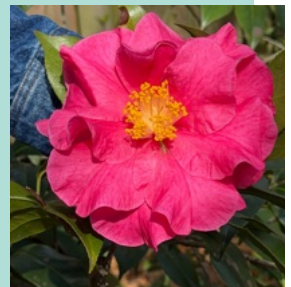
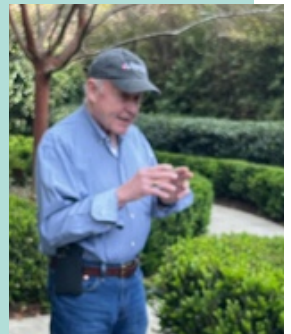
It is an English formal garden and features the largest koi pond in the Mobile area. There is also a potting shed where Mr. Drinkard teaches classes on camellia grafting. As you proceed to the rear of the garden you quickly notice many colorful teapots hanging from a large tree. This whimsy was the idea of Mr. Drinkard's wife. The purpose is to invite birds to build nests; but so far, none have done so! At the extreme rear of the property you'll find a small woodland Japanese garden. It is quite calming to the senses.

I would be remiss not to mention the camellias of all colors, shapes and sizes blooming in the garden. Many are special cultivars named after family members of the Drinkard clan. There is also a "Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth" camellia found there.

We ended the tour in the inviting shade garden. Under the sheltering arms of a live oak we found a plethora of swings and benches beckoning us to stay and visit a while. There was also an unexpected water feature—a horse bath!

Cornerstone Gardens is open to the public Friday through Sunday. Slow down and take a stroll through this captivating space and just see if you don't feel inspired!

Submitted by Lynn Barnes



- Kerry Steedley, Extension Agent, Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resource Management
- Olivia Sciandra, Wildlife Health Program Coordinator, Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries
- Andrea Robards from Forestry, Wildlife & Natural Resources in SW AL

On March 20th, these ladies taught the latest Forest Her Workshop to a full house in Perdido, AL. We learned about map resources, landowner laws, forestry management, wildlife diseases, invasive plants, herbicide application techniques and the basics of prescribed burn management. We ended our day at Splinter Hill Bog to observe the recent effects of the latest prescribed burn.

Submitted by Kimberly Musson

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Spanish Fort Presbyterian Preschool Project

Thanks to all of the volunteers that showed up to trim, prune and cleanup the preschool grounds.

Project Lead, Julian Walthall



Ruff Wilson Garden Gurus harvesting their fall/winter produce



Coastal AL Farmers & Fishermen's Market

Interns: Laura Kramer, Lawanna Sharpless, Linda Kitchens, Dawn McKinney, Lorie O'Neill and our fearless leader: Sueann Barnwell

Picture by Dawn McKinney

A TRULY GREAT
Volunteer
IS HARD TO FIND,
DIFFICULT TO
PART WITH &
IMPOSSIBLE
TO FORGET!



Gulf State Park Project

Aletza Boucher, Brian Boucher, Beth Murray Submitted by Sueann Barnwell



Coastal College Greenhouse and Garden

Thanks to the many volunteers who have worked at the Coastal College greenhouse this year including eleven interns. Contact Mary Calvin, 847-269-1594 or mscalvin@aol.com for more information. Submitted by Mary Calvin

PLANT SALE UPDATE

Trash to Treasure Table - Lynn Barnes, contact if you have household or garden items.

Raffle Table- Fran Posey-Eversole, contact if you have a raffle item.

April 6,7,8th. Volunteers meet at 9 AM. (bring your lunch, beverages)

April 9,10,11th. Volunteers meet at 8 AM. (lunch provided)

Call Dolores @ 985-969-0579 if you have questions.

Things to bring: chairs to sit on, wagons & carts for use during the sale.

Please remember to label carts with your name.

On sale days, please wear your MG shirts, hats, aprons & badges.

Purchases may be made with cash, check, credit cards, and Venmo.

[BCMG Website Plant Sale List Link](#)

PLANT SALE
 April 9, 10 & 11 (Thu-Sat)
 9AM – 4PM • NO EARLY ADMISSION
 Across from Weeks Bay Reserve
 11401 Hwy 98 · Fairhope
 Contact: 985-969-0579

APRIL EVENTS

EARTH DAY FEST
WEDNESDAY APRIL 22 2026
MO'S LANDING

6AM SUNRISE YOGA ROOT AND RISE WITH SABLE

7:30AM NATURE PADDLE PADDLE, MEET UP & CLEAN UP! BRING YOUR KAYAK OR PADDLE BOARD!

3:30PM FESTIVAL ECO FRIENDLY VENDORS, LIVE MUSIC, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, FOOD!

6:30PM SUNSET YOGA GROUNDING SLOW FLOW WITH DELANEY & SOUND BOWLS BY JANE

BOOK/PLANT/SEED EXCHANGE!
 RECYCLE YOUR GROCERY BAGS!

GULF SHORES ALABAMA

[GS Earth Day Link](#)



OPEN TO THE PUBLIC-FREE EVENT
 Saturday, April 25, 2026
 9 am - 3 pm

[Delta Woods & Water Expo Link](#)

GOOD NEWS



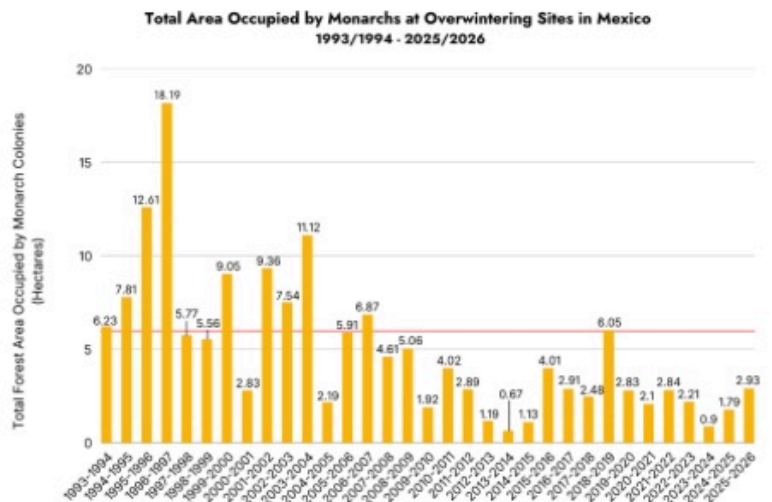
Mar 17, 2026 | Important Monarch News | Monarchs in Mexico | Population Trends

Photo Credit: © Wendy Caldwell

Media Contact: Wendy Caldwell, Executive Director, wccaldwell@monarchjointventure.org

The eastern monarch butterfly population overwintering in Mexico's oyamel fir forests occupied **2.93 hectares** during the 2025-2026 overwintering season, according to the latest survey released by Mexico's National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). This represents about a 64% increase compared to last year's estimate of 1.79 hectares.

Eastern monarch overwintering population increases from last year





Welcome Back Monarchs



We're celebrating the monarch butterfly's migration with our first ever Welcome Back Monarchs event!

Join us for a morning of education about monarch migration and native pollinator gardens. Take home a native milkweed plant or seed for your garden at home! Together we can protect monarch butterflies and essential native plant species.

The event will begin in the Foley Civic Center with a presentation from Carmen Flammini, Alabama Cooperative Extension System Agent. Following the presentation, we'll *migrate* to the Riviera Utilities Native Pollinator Garden next door for guided tours and a milkweed plant giveaway. Foley Public Library will host crafts and activities for kids at the Civic Center and outside at the Garden. Water and snacks will be provided. See you there!

Saturday, May 9, 2026
9 - 10 A.M.

Foley Civic Center
407 E Laurel Ave Foley, AL

Riviera Utilities Native Pollinator Garden
413 E Laurel Ave Foley, AL



The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator, employer, and provider. If you need a reasonable accommodation or free language access services, contact Carmen Flammini at 251-395-0249 by April 20, 2026



STORM READY

Saturday, May 16
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Gulf Coast Eco Center
1650 Eco Trail, Gulf Shores

- Preparing Gardens
- Chainsaws and Generators
- Tree Risk & Selection
- Storm Supplies
- Food, Water, Sanitation



**REGISTER
HERE!**

<https://www.aces.edu/go/5923>

Day long workshop covering hurricane preparedness for homeowners and property managers.

Cost: \$10

Lunch will be provided.



The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator, employer, and provider. If you need a reasonable accommodation or free language access services, contact Carmen Flammini at 251-395-0249 by May 5, 2026.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



CEU Opportunities - Access more information at aces.edu/calendar

Online Classes

VCLLI Spr '26: The Home & Garden Series

Online, AL
1:00 pm to 2:00 pm
April 16, 2026

Learn easy to understand practices for home gardening pest deterrence, and spring yard maintenance.

Back 2 Basics Gardening Series

URBAN GREEN
1st & 3rd Wednesday monthly

Upcoming topics:

Apr 15 – Houseplants for Homeowners
May 6 – Propagating Perennials
May 20 – Vegetable Garden Pests

Extension Week: Great Southeast Pollinator Census

Online, AL
April 13 at 6pm Central

Learn how to get involved in the Census this year.
Jennifer Davidson
jenniferd@auburn.edu
(334) 298-6845

Get Outside with Alabama Smart Yards Webinar Series

When: 4th Wednesday of each month, 1:00 pm
Where: Zoom
(register online for link)

Apr 22 – Alabama Drought Reach, Laura Cooley, Aquatic Resources Outreach Programs Administrator, Alabama Extension at Auburn University

Extension Week: 2026 Year of Alabama Invasive Plants

Online, AL · 4/14/2026 ·
6:00–6:45 pm
Discuss invasive plants and how to remove them.

KerrySteedley ·
kes0150@auburn.edu ·
(334)350-0485

Road Trippers - Take Note!



In case you missed the general meeting on March 11:

I introduced the possibility of our taking a road trip to Lake Martin to tour Jim Scott's private garden. By show of hands, we determined the need to rent passenger vans for the trip. We are confirmed with Mr. Scott to visit on Wednesday April 15.

The details are below.

1. We will need a couple of people to volunteer for driving the vans. We are renting 15 passenger vans. Anyone with experience driving large vehicles please volunteer.
2. A question was asked-- yes there are lots of restrooms.
3. It will be a long day. Meet at 104 at 8:00 -ish (depart as soon as vans arrive) and returning 6-7 pm. Please be at 104 by 8:00 am.
4. Wear comfortable walking shoes
5. It is lake front. It is on an incline. It is not handicap accessible. Paths may or may not be paved, gravel or dirt.

There are steps along some paths. **Know your own limitations.**

6. Bring a bag lunch, water bottle, sunscreen, bug spray – whatever you need for a long day out.
7. Cost of the trip is \$30.00. I will be at the April meeting, and at lunch following, at Weeks Bay. Please pay in advance, to confirm our number of seats needed.
8. Contact Charlotte Hamm to be added to the list. 410-688-5117.

Submitted by Charlotte Hamm



By Andreu Riebe

How to Complete the Auburn University Youth Protection Training:

The training is online only and must be completed individually.
Be sure to complete all sections of the training.
Access the training portal here: aub.ie/ypp-portal.

Need help registering or completing the training?
Follow this step-by-step guide: bit.ly/AU-YPT-Guide -(Click here for detailed instructions!)

What to Do After Completion:

Save your Certificate of Completion as a PDF or take a screenshot.
Email a copy to Carmen Flammini at czf0054@auburn.edu.

The training takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Stay Up to Date – Subscribe!

You can subscribe to the BCMG website calendar so events automatically appear on your personal calendar (Google, Outlook, Apple, etc.).

Subscribing is one of the easiest ways to ensure you never miss a meeting or event.

Help Us Keep It Accurate

- Have an upcoming meeting or event?
- Notice something missing?
- See incorrect information?

Please contact Lydia Chan or Andreu Riebe so it can be added or corrected.

We put in significant effort to keep the calendar updated, but given the size of our county and the numerous events occurring across districts and committees, we depend on everyone's assistance.

Newsletter Committee:

Andreu Riebe, Kim Musson, Larry Musson, Linda Crowell
Article/Pictures Submissions - grassroots@baldwinmastergardeners.com
Deadline: 20th of each month



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



CALENDAR

- APR. 04 2026 BCMG Plant Sale Setup Days, APR. 4 - 9, See page 15 for more information
APR. 08 2026 BCMG Monthly Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, Speaker Kim Marsh, of Loxley, AL,
APR. 09 2026 Spring Plant Sale, April 9, 10, 11
APR. 18 2026 Fairhope Earth Day, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm at Fairhope Pier
APR. 22 2026 Gulf Shores Earth Day, see flyer and link page 16
APR. 25 2026 Delta Woods and Waters Expo, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, see flyer and link page 16
APR. 25 2026 SALT Bald Eagle Bash, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm at Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center
APR. 29 2026 BCMG MAY Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, 9:30 am - 11:30 am
APR. 30 2026 BCMG Intern Presentations, arrive 8:30 am, begins 9:00 am. **Entrance fee -salad or dessert**
MAY 06 2026 AMGA 2026 Annual State Conference, Gardening to the Moon and Back, Huntsville AL.
MAY 09 2026 Welcome Back Monarchs, 9:00 am - 10:00 am, see flyer page 17
MAY 13 2026 BCMG May Monthly Meeting (9:30 am Social, 10:00 am Meeting)
MAY 16 2026 ACES Workshop "Storm Ready", 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, see flyer page 18
JUN. 03 2026 BCMG Board Meeting, Research Station, Hwy 104, 9:30 am - 11:30 am
JUN. 09 2026 Kids Nature Day, Robertsedale Coliseum
JUN. 10 2026 BCMG June Monthly Meeting (9:30 am Social, 10:00 am Meeting)
JUN. 23 2026 Kids Nature Day, Bay Minette Holly Hills Country Club
JUN. 24 2026 The Great Southeast Pollinator Census Training, Hwy 104, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
AUG. 21 2026 The Great Southeast Pollinator Census Count, AUG 21 - 22,



END OF YEAR PICTURE SUBMISSION
Robin Newell - robin.rn@baldwinmastergardeners.com



2026 BCMG Elected Board

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

2026 Appointed Board

Monthly Program Chair: Charlotte Hamm
Intern Program Chair: Anita O'Connor
Outreach Chair: Sara Semmes
Finance Chair: Mickey Ezell
Projects Chair: Shannon Russell

Next Meeting Dates:

Wednesday April 8, 2026
9:30 am - Refreshments
10:00 am - Meeting
Hwy 104

Bring a dish to share at the General Meeting = 1 CEU Hr.
Don't forget to log in your time.

Don't
Forget!

