Annual AAMGA Green-up Ceremony, January 20th
The January 20th, 2015 AAMGA meeting at 6:00 pm in the Garden-side Room at the State Botanical Garden will include the annual Green-up Ceremony recognizing new Master Gardeners from the 2014 class who have completed their 50 hours of volunteer service and earned their Master Gardener badges. Also at that meeting AAMGA will award two $1,000 scholarships to two deserving students pursuing a career in horticulture at UGA. All Master Gardeners are urged to attend this important meeting to honor these deserving persons and welcome our new Master Gardeners to their new careers of volunteer service.

Unless otherwise notified, our meetings will take place at 6:00 pm on the third Tuesday of each month and in the Gardenside Room downstairs below the Conservatory level.

Executive Board
President - Jackie Williams jkwill82@hotmail.com
Vice President - Gary Wade GWade@uga.edu
Secretary - Carol Wolf carolwolf@charter.net
Treasurer - Shirley Baker ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com
Athens-Clarke County Extension Agent: Amanda Tedrow atedrow@uga.edu

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AAMGA Committees

Audit: Ruth Smith, Chair
Members: Jackie Williams, Susan Drinkard

Budget: Doug Lair, Chair
Members: David Hoechst, Merry Anderson

By Laws: George Watson
Members: Bob & Carol Wolf

Historian: Kay Petroff
Hospitality: Heather Gray-Jordan
Cheryl & Frank Johnson

Membership: Jean Ryan, Chair
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Nominating: Jean Colquett, Chair
Programs: Gary Wade, Chair
Members: Mike Sikes and Jean Colquett

Photography: Andrea Fischer
Publicity:

AAMGA Projects

Projects: Brenda Beckham, Chair
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Members: Gary Wade and Dortha Jackson

Clarke PAR: Merry Anderson & Pam Bracken, Co-Chairs
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Pam: pamb824@aol.com
Winter Garden: Gary Wade Gwade@uga.edu
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Oconee PAR: Helen Wenner, Chair
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Oconee Senior Center Project: Karen Radde, Chair
kndarde@bellsouth.net

Junior Master Gardener Classes:
Gaines School Elementary - Brenda Beckham, Chair
706.549.0981 BBeckha2@bellsouth.net
Dortha Jacobson: dorthajacobs@gmail.com

AAMGA Plant Sale: Heather Gray Jordan & Donna McPipkin, Co-Chairs
Heather: hgheather29@gmail.com
Donna: DYates01@yahoo.com

Horticultural Therapy Project: Brenda Beckham, Chair
BBeckha2@bellsouth.net

Backyard Pollinator Garden at SBG
Co-Chairmen: Jackie Williams, Shirley Baker
Jackie: jkwill82@hotmail.com Shirley: ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com

Barnyard Demonstration Garden at U Garden
Co-Chairmen: Shirley Baker, Petty Thomas
ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com PettyThomas@gmail.com

Salvation Army Vegetable Garden

Plant three rows of peas:
Peace of mind
Peace of heart
Peace of soul

Plant three rows of squash:
Squash indifference
Squash selfishness
Squash hate

Plant three rows of lettuce:
Lettuce be kind
Lettuce love one another
Lettuce grow our own food

Water freely with patience and
cultivate with love.
There is so much fruit in your garden
because you reap what you sow.

TREASURER’S REPORT

November 19 - December 16,

Beginning Balance 18,335.86

Deposit- 0.00

Expenses:
Hostess Supplies 218.86
Speaker Gift 25.00
O.P.A.R. Expense 122.15
Salvation Army Proj Exp 29.70

Total Expenses: 395.71

Ending Balance: 17,940.15

Submitted by
Shirley Baker, Treasurer
Shirleybaker555@gmail.com
MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 16TH MEETING

Annual Christmas Party

The annual AAMGA Christmas party was held in the Garden-side room at the State Botanical Gardens at 6:00 on December 16, 2014 with President Jackie Williams presiding.

Everyone in attendance enjoyed the buffet style dinner.

After the meal President Jackie Williams turned the meeting over to Jean Colquett who then presided over the Christmas gift exchange.

Following the gift exchange Jackie thanked everyone for bringing food to share and gave thanks to the decorating committee; Frank and Cheryl Johnson, Heather Gray-Jordan and her girls.

We were reminded to attend the Green-Up ceremony in January.

The party terminated at approximately 8:00P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Wolf, Secretary

MASTER COMPOSTER INFORMATION

Would you like to enhance your composting skills? Athens-Clarke County Extension and the Solid Waste Department are accepting applications for the 2015 Georgia Master Composter Program. Part adult education course and part Extension volunteer program, the Georgia Master Composter Program is a nine-week course that teaches participants the chemistry and microbiology of compost as well as composting methods for gardeners and small farmers. Classes meet each Wednesday morning from Feb. 4-April 1 plus two Saturday morning field trips. Instructors are a blend of UGA faculty, small and commercial business owners, and U.S. Forest Service and Athens-Clarke County staff. As Extension volunteers, Master Composters then use this information to share composting basics with their family, friends and community. Program cost is $150. For more information and to receive an application, contact 706-613-3640 or visit www.ugaextension.com/clarke/anr. Participants must register by January 26, 2015.

Lis Lohmueller
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4 Tips Banish Garden Weeds—Permanently!

Encourage healthy crops and boot weeds to the curb with these cultivation tips for small-scale gardens.

Whether blown in by wind, transported by birds or buried in topsoil, all weed seeds need to do is wait for the ideal conditions to germinate, grow, go to seed and propagate themselves. Unfortunately, our gardens tend to provide those ideal conditions.

However, weeds are only an issue if we give them the chance to thrive. With a little preemptive work—work that can be done standing up, no less—we can protect our plants and soil from nutrient-hungry weeds. So dig out that hoe (or hand cultivator if you're using taller raised beds) and let's get to, ahem, nipping some weeds in the bud.

1. Break the Soil Crust

Between, above, below: That's the basic recipe for good cultivation. Take your hoe or hand tool (preferably a collinear hoe if you have one) and lightly scrape the soil between each plant, then come back above them, and return below, making certain to fluff all the soil both in and between the rows (once you're done walking on them, of course).

For thickly sown plants, such as beets and carrots, cultivate either side and hand-pick any young weeds as soon as you see them.

2. Weed After Every Rain

We all know that no garden work is more time-consuming than hand-pulling weeds, so keep that in mind when I say you should go to your garden with a hoe after every rain and watering. If you drag a hoe through your garden a couple days after every rain, you will allow the weeds to germinate, but not to grow, thus eliminating thousands of weed seeds every time you cultivate.

If you're still reeling from the idea of having to cultivate after every rain, think about this: What if it doesn't rain again for 30 days? Or conversely, what if you could skip a week of watering and conserve water. By cultivating after every rain, you're in effect fluffing the soil and creating a "dirt mulch," which is a handy way to preserve the soil moisture. When the soil crusts over, the water wicks out and evaporates with surprising efficiency. By breaking that crust, however, you cut that proverbial wick and the soil will not dry out as rapidly. It's a pretty nifty trick to be able to keep your soil moisture and kill your weeds in one fell swoop!

3. Let the Plants Participate

Once your plants get large enough, they'll provide some of their own weed protection and shade, crowding out the majority of weeds—but you must get them to that point first. Cultivate regularly and your garden will thrive. Neglect cultivation, and your weeds will thank you for all the freshly tilled soil they can party in.

Furthermore, tomatoes, which grow roots from their stems, love having some of the cultivated soil pulled up against them. Sweet potatoes and potatoes almost love a little "hilling up," as they say. We've all had rot on the bottom of our lettuce, but cultivation helps to prevent that. Cucurbits, however—melons, cucumbers, squash, et cetera—like cultivation but do not like their roots messed with, so be mindful as you cultivate around them.

4. Mulch

When you've accomplished a few cultivations, it is nice to then mulch the crops—like tomatoes and peppers—that will be in your garden for several months. This will keep the weeds down and preserve moisture. Make sure, however, if using straw or hay as mulch, that it is not sprayed with broad leaf herbicide. Some conventional herbicides will remain on the mulch and could potentially kill the plants you worked so hard to cultivate. Double check the quality with your source. Maybe triple check.

About the Author: Jesse Frost is a Kentucky farmer, blogger and author. He and his wife run a small, off-the-grid farm in southern Kentucky called Rough Draft Farmstead, where they raise vegetables and livestock naturally.

Originally published on UrbanFarmingOnline.com.
JANUARY GARDENING CHORES

- Prepare beds for bare-root roses that will soon arrive in nurseries. Dig an area four feet wide and twelve inches deep for each plant, adding plenty of soil conditioner to the soil.
- Water poinsettias only as needed - when the top inch of the soil becomes dry to the touch. Keep them in bright light but cool temperatures. Do not fertilize until March.
- Now is a great time to drain and replace the oil in your mower and to have the blade sharpened or to replace it completely.
- It is easy to see the limb structure of trees now. Tie ribbon around the ones you think should be removed then step back for another look before cutting them off.
- On a sunny day fertilize pansies and ornamental cabbage with a product that contains “nitrate nitrogen”. This nutrient is best for plants growing in cold soil.
- Small, leafless shrubs and trees can be transplanted easily now. Wait for a warm day when the ground is not frozen.
- Chop unwanted kudzu, English ivy and bamboo to the ground. Follow with weed killer on the leaves in April.
- Water pansies and ornamental kale after a hard freeze so they can re-hydrate their wilted leaves. Remember to regularly water window boxes and other outside plant containers.
- Give houseplants a half turn every month so they don’t lean too much in one direction.
- Check indoor plants for insects like spider mites, scale, and mealy bugs. Remember to spray insecticidal soap or indoor houseplant insecticide on the undersides of leaves to get good pest control.
- Amaryllis flower stems and their faded blooms can be removed now. Treat it like a houseplant for the rest of the winter then plant outdoors in a sunny bed in May.
- Use calcium chloride or potassium chloride instead of salt on icy sidewalks. Too much rock salt (sodium chloride) can burn nearby plant roots.
- If temperatures drop below 20 degrees after a week-long warm spell, cover gardenias and camellias nightly with black plastic anchored to the ground on all sides.
- Call or email for your yearly supply of garden plant and seed catalogs. Buy an issue of a gardening magazine for phone numbers or websites.
- Plant pansies and English daisies in a sunny bed when the weather is mild. Use plants in three inch or larger pots to make an immediate impact in your landscape.
- Look out for poison ivy when working outdoors. Even the leafless vine and branches can cause a powerful skin reaction if touched.

It’s Easy Being Green

Mulch Your Way to Great Soil and Happy Plants

We’ve looked at what kind of soil we’re working with, how to improve and feed the soil, transplanting young seedlings and watering.

The next thing to consider is how to keep the water in the soil, right where the plants need it.

The best way to prevent moisture loss is to mulch. There are so many materials that we can use as mulch, because essentially any material placed over the soil can be called a mulch.

But because we are gardening organically, it’s important to make sure that the mulching material we choose is organic and if possible that it has been produced organically.

Use a combination of a layer of compost on the soil, covered with a layer of pea straw.

Some of the benefits of using an organic mulch such as pea straw are:

- that it slows down evaporation from the soil
- need to water less often
- it prevents soil erosion
- as it breaks down, it feeds the soil
- it helps prevent weeds
- keeps your plants cleaner

So you can see it really is worth the effort of mulching. Without much effort. It kind of tidies up the vegetable garden as it’s laid down.

Hardy Ice Plant

*Delosperma cooperi*

This exotic-looking evergreen succulent plant is actually hardy to at least zone 5 or 6, even though it is native to the much warmer climate of South Africa.

It forms a mat of leaves that become blanketed with vivid purple or pink, daisy-like blooms in the summer. *Delosperma* is a good plant for the gritty soil and Mediterranean conditions of traditional rock gardens, or as a ground-cover for a dry slope with full sun exposure. Too much moisture will result in root rot, so be sure the soil dries out completely between watering.
Cottingham: Yaupon holly comes in many different shapes and sizes

My parents had a yaupon holly growing at the corner of their house for more than 30 years, pruning it into a small evergreen tree by removing the lower branches and cutting back the many little suckers that would come up below the plant. In the wild, it can form thickets from root sprouts.

The three yaupons at the end of their long driveway would be trees at times and would be cut to the ground at times (coming back with renewed vigor). But they always wanted to be big green shrubs and constantly worked toward that goal.

To their credit, they never needed extra water, never had any disease problems and female plants were covered in shiny red berries in winter.

The birds loved yaupon holly, which provided dense twiggy growth to protect them and berries for food. There was a nest every spring.

Yaupon hollies can reach 25 feet and are native to the coastal plains of Georgia, up into Virginia and around the Gulf Coast into Texas. Yaupon hollies do very well in the South, thriving in drought or swamps and laughing at Texas heat.

Although too massive for most home landscapes and a maintenance chore to keep tree formed (this may be one case where I would use landscape fabric: to discourage root sprouts), other yaupon hollies easily found in nurseries are very useful.

It provided an important caffeinated beverage for the Native Americans and colonists.

There are several cultivars of dwarf yaupon holly, including 'Nana,' which matures at about 5 feet tall and 8 feet wide. 'Schillings' or 'Stokes' is a slower grower, maturing at about 4 feet tall and wide. These are your basic small leaf evergreen foundation plants, along with the many other types of hollies available for this use.

Weeping yaupon holly is a graceful form, 15 to 20 feet tall and 4 to 8 feet wide. It is a great landscape plant to incorporate into narrow spaces, with a very dense, sculptural weeping form and red berries in October and November. I have seen many mature specimens thriving in Athens.

Yaupon holly, in all of its forms, is one tough plant.

Originally published in the Athens Banner-Herald in February of 2005. Written by AAMGA member Connie Cottingham. Sign up for her free weekly garden tips: Love Notes from the Garden at conniecottingham@gmail.com. Connie is a landscape architect, registered in Georgia, who lives and gardens in Athens.
Master Gardener School Garden Brigade Training, January 26th 9 to 11 AM

What makes the difference between an unused garden bed and a thriving school garden? Garden Champions! All of our local schools have garden beds and teachers and students that would love to get outside; they just need someone to help organize and give them some direction. Master Gardeners are perfectly trained with the expertise to make this happen. If cultivating a love of gardening and education is important to you, the ACC Extension Office and Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful have the session for you! Join us at the extension office on January 26th from 9 to 11 AM to learn more about school garden opportunities. We’ll cover the background of what is going on in local school gardens, the basics of working with a school, resources available to Garden Mentors, and lessons for planting and harvesting with a wide range of grade levels. This is a rewarding way to fulfill master gardener hours on a schedule that is flexible. We also welcome Master Gardeners with school garden experience to contact us with their experiences and teaching techniques. Contact Stacy.Smith@athensclarkecounty.com or 706-613-3501 x309.

Master Gardener Mentor Program

The deadline for Master Gardeners to apply is January 15.

Are you looking for an exciting and new Master Gardener experience? Be a mentor with the 2015 Master Gardener Mentor Program! This is an excellent opportunity to introduce a trainee to volunteer projects in the Athens area and share what it means to be a Master Gardener. Mentors and trainees will be paired together based on gardening and volunteer interests as well as schedules. For more information and to receive an application, please email Amanda Tedrow, Athens-Clarke County Extension agent at atedrow@uga.edu or call 706-613-3640. Applications must be received by Thursday, January 15, 2015.

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December 16th Holiday Party

Here is a picture of my winter vegetable garden in Winterville. Residents can rent a plot already built, filled with dirt, irrigation hose, well water, fenced in for just $25/year!

Cheryl LaValley
celavally@bellsouth.net