MEETING SCHEDULE for NOVEMBER 17th

Who doesn't love Japanese Maples - beautiful, soft spring foliage, outstanding summer specimens in the landscape, and brilliant foliage in the fall? What more can you ask from a tree?

Hear all you've wanted to know about Japanese maples from expert David Freed. He is the owner of Garden Design Nursery in Danielsville, specializing in unique and unusual Japanese maples.

Don't forget your money - David will have some trees for sale.

Unless otherwise notified, our meetings will take place at 6:00 pm for a potluck supper and at 6:30 pm for the meeting. They are held on the third Tuesday of each month and in the Garden-side Room downstairs below the Conservatory level.

Executive Board

President - Anne Walker
Vice President - Mike Sikes
Secretary - Kay Petroff
Treasurer - Shirley Baker
Athens-Clarke County Extension Agent: Amanda Tedrow

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BE KIND
Be thoughtful
BE GENUINE
But most of all
BE THANKFUL

Elizabeth Thurmond
Newsletter Publisher & Listserv
AAMGAlistserv@gmail.com
**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: Betty Rice
- Hospitality: Heather Gray-Jordan  
  Cheryl & Frank Johnson
- Membership: Jean Ryan, Chair  
  Members: John Aitkens
- Nominating: Jean Colquett, Chair
- Programs: Mike Sikes, Chair  
  Members: Gary Wade and Jean Colquett
- Photography: Andrea Fischer
- Publicity:

**AAMGA Projects**

- **Projects:** Barbara Turner, Chair  
  BarbaraTurner@mac.com
  - Co-Chairs: Gary Wade and Dortha Jackson
- **Clarke PAR:** Merry Anderson & Pam Bracken, Co-Chairs  
  Merry: merry.anderson@att.net  
  Pam: pambrack@aol.com
  - Winter Garden: Gary Wade Gwade@uga.edu
- **Flower Garden at Clarke PAR:** Jill Hyche, Chair  
  jillhyche@gmail.com
  - Co-Chairs: Gary Wade and Dortha Jackson
- **Flower Bulb Project:** Andrea Woodall & Jean Colquett, Co-Chairs  
  Andrea: aawoodall58@gmail.com  
  Jean: greent39@yahoo.com
- **Oconee PAR:** Gary Wade & Frank Johnson, Co-Chairs  
  Gary: Gwade@uga.edu  
  Frank: frankandcherylj@bellsouth.net
- **Junior Master Gardener Classes:**  
  Gaines School Elementary - Brenda Beckham, Chair  
  BBeckha2@bellsouth.net  
  Dortha Jacobson: dorthafjacobson@yahoo.com
- **AAMGA Plant Sale:** Heather Gray Jordan & Donna McPipkin, Co-Chairs  
  Heather: hgray95@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**  
  Chairman: David Hagaman  
  dchagaman@gmail.com
- **Athena Gardens Retirement Community Vegetable Garden**  
  Chairman: Gary Wade  
  GWade@uga.edu

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Sept 16 - Oct 23, 2015**

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Submitted by  
Shirley Baker, Treasurer  
Shirleybaker555@gmail.com
October 20th, 2015 Meeting Minutes
Kay Petroff, Secretary

President Anne Walker officiated at the October meeting in the Gardenside Room of SBG. She welcomed everyone - especially Vice-President Mike Sikes. Mike said that he was glad to be present and hopes to be walking soon. Then he introduced botanical illustrator Linda Fraser who shared her beautiful prints of native plants from the southeast. Her enthusiastic program had information about the plants and the critters that also enjoy them.

Business Meeting:

Secretary’s Report—Meeting Minutes were filed as reported in the September newsletter.

Treasurer’s Report—No corrections, so the report was filed as it appeared in the newsletter.

Project Reports:

Clarke PAR—Merry Anderson reported that the fall garden has been planted with the help of Clarke Middle School students. Andrea Woodall coordinated the work with the teachers and students. The garden got publicity in a recent article in The Flagpole and another ‘Lifestyle’ piece is planned with a UGA student reporter. To date the garden has produced 1200 pounds of produce.

Oconee PAR—Gary Wade reported 1969 pounds of produce have been donated to Action Agency in Bishop. The senior citizens appreciate the fresh produce. The fall crops have been planted and plans are to end harvesting by Christmas.

Athena Gardens Retirement Community Garden—Gary Wade reported that 5 retirees are gardening in 12 raised beds. All the beds have been planted. The plan is to get the fall plants established and then step back and let the residents take over.

UGArden—Shirley Baker reported that during a recent workday with students the garden had been weeded and cleaned and wildflowers have been planted.

Pollinator Garden at SBG—Shirley Baker reported that a workday will be organized soon to plant the plants that have been purchased. More information on the workday will be emailed soon.

Bulb Sale—Andrea Woodall reported that today was the last day for bulb pickup and that all orders had been distributed except 2. Plans were made to get those orders out. There were a few extra bulbs for sale at the meeting.

Horticultural Therapy—Gary Wade reported that the Highland Hills project will conclude at the end of this month. The members carrying out the project have asked for someone to take over but no one has stepped forward.

Salvation Army Garden—David Hagaman reported that the summer plants are out and during a workday a few weeks ago a church group helped to clean up and plant the fall crops. In addition, two interns from UGA will be on hand to help monitor and organize garden activities.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements:

SBG—Connie Cottingham announced several upcoming events at the Garden. Those included the Holiday Flea Market, Saturday, October 24; the Ukulele Festival, October 25; Deadline for Student Art Competition—December 3; Johnstone Lecture sponsored by Friends will be November 11 and features Jim Porter.

Extension Office—Amanda Tedrow reminded everyone that the deadline for registration for the 2016 Master Gardener class is November 1. The class is in the mornings and starts January 5.

November Program—Mike Sikes announced that David Free will give a presentation on Japanese Maples and will have trees for sale.

Anne reminded everyone that there were extra bulbs for sale and that Linda Fraser had her prints and cards for sale.

Anne thanked members for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Kay Petroff, Secretary
This year, for the first time, I have few flower buds forming on my Thanksgiving cacti, and I think I know why. I always keep the cacti outside until bud set so they can respond to the cooler temperatures and shorter days of fall. They are “short-day” plants and require an uninterrupted night period of 14 hours or more in length to initiate flower buds. As little as 10 foot-candles of light (like that emitted by a 60 watt bulb within 10 feet of the plant, for just a few minutes over several nights can interrupt flower initiation.

I always keep my Thanksgiving and Christmas cacti outside my east-facing basement door on a concrete slab where they get just a few hours of morning sun and shade the rest of the day. There they also are protected from wind that can break their foliage, and they get a little radiant heat from the concrete slab and brick siding at night, so if temperatures drop into 40’s they are safe to stay outside. But here is where I went wrong…two of our cats have started sleeping in the basement at night. Actually, we have conditioned them to sleep inside at night to keep them safe from foxes and coyotes which seem to be increasing in numbers in the wooded areas close to our home. However, one of the cats is a night owl and likes to stay outside until 10 pm when I call him inside. So to assure his safety, I turn on the porch light at the basement door until his bed-time. This night-after-night of artificial daylight has resulted in a sparse number of blooms on the cacti this year.

I’ve stopped turning on the light at night, hoping the plants might initiate a few more buds before the holiday season. I like to move them in two weeks before Thanksgiving so they are in full bloom Thanksgiving day and the official kick-off to the holiday season. Meanwhile, for the next three weeks, the cat has an earlier bed-time, and so far he has not complained about the room service. (Plants below are from Wade household in 2014.)

**Thanksgiving and Christmas Cacti**

Thanksgiving cacti (Schlumbergera truncata) and Christmas Cacti (Schlumbergera bridgesii) are native to Brazil. They can be distinguished mainly by the shape of their stem segments. Thanksgiving cacti have 2 to 4 saw-toothed projections along the margins of their stem segments, while the stem segments of Christmas Cacti have smooth margins. Christmas cacti generally bloom about 2 to 4 weeks later than Thanksgiving cacti, but they can be forced to bloom earlier or later by adjusting temperature. Once flower buds are initiated, the plants can be brought inside and will begin blooming in just a few days and will be in full bloom in about 10 to 14 days, but leaving them outside during the cooler days and nights of fall will delay bloom. So you can time their peak bloom according to your holiday schedule. However, avoid leaving the plants outside when temperatures drop below 45°F, because bud-drop may occur at cold temperatures, and the plants can be killed by temperatures below 40°F.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Hope Garden
Salvation Army Vegetable Garden
Chairman: David Hagaman  dchagaman@gmail.com

The Salvation Army Hope garden had a very successful spring and summer planting season, and we are looking forward to fall/winter crops. On September 19 we had about 15 young adult volunteers from the Classic City Church for a workday pulling up summer crops and preparing beds for fall planting. We’re also blessed to have two, regular student volunteers this school year, and they are keeping the garden in tip top shape with regular weeding and plant maintenance. We were contacted by UGA’s Reuse Materials program, and they are planning a work day to put in steps from the lower area to the garden, planting drought resistant plants on the hillside leading up to the garden, terracing the hillside, and installing a path for wheelbarrows up the hill. Our next scheduled workday is set for Saturday November 14. If you want to volunteer please contact Dave Hagaman.

Athens-Clarke Plant A Row for the Hungry

Merry Anderson reported that the fall garden has been planted with the help of Clarke Middle School students. Andrea Woodall coordinated the work with the teachers and students. The garden got publicity in a recent article in The Flagpole and another ‘Lifestyle’ piece is planned with a UGA student reporter. (See page 7 of this newsletter.) To date the garden has produced 1200 pounds of produce.

Please let Pam Bracken know if you can help! Just zap Pam Bracken an e-mail at pam.bracken@georgiacenter.uga.edu and she will add you to the schedule!

Merry Anderson

Athena Gardens Project Update
Gary L. Wade, project chair
Cathy Roth and Lamara Martin, Volunteer Participants

Athena Gardens is a retirement apartment complex on the east side of Athens. The community garden consists of 12 raised beds inside a chain link fence. In late September, the summer crops were pulled up and composted. Two weeks later a fresh topdressing of compost, provided by David Berle from UGA Horticulture, was applied to all the beds and tilled in. A week after that, the fall crops were planted.

Each resident chose one or more beds for his/her crops. As expected, each person had a different list of crops, and some lists were quite long and diverse. Among the crops planted were collards, kale, cabbage, spinach, mustard, radishes, beets, Swiss chard, rutabagas, Bok Choi, parsnips, onions, carrots, leeks, arugula and lettuce. A week after planting, we gave all crops liquid feed, then a week after that applied a light side-dressing of granular fertilizer. To date, the crops are growing like gangbusters. Mustard greens and kale are already being harvested.

Now that the crops are well-established, we are taking a two-week break and will return on November 6 to check on things.

Several of the twelve raised beds have deteriorated and are falling apart. They will need to be re-built if the seniors are to continue their no-stoop gardens next spring. Some of the gardeners have arthritis and back problems and would be unable to garden in ground-level beds. We’re hoping for a benefactor, preferably one with construction skills, to step forward to help re-build the beds this winter. Meanwhile we are working on generating a cost per bed estimate to use for soliciting funds. The original donor was Athens Land Trust.
Volunteer Opportunities, continued

Oconee Plant-a-Row Update
Gary Wade and Frank Johnson, co-chairs

Since our last report, the Oconee garden has been transitioning from summer to fall crops. Tomatoes are gone, but peppers are still going strong. The okra slowed down during the recent cool snap. Cucumbers, pole beans and southern peas have been replace by turnips, mustard, cabbage, collards, lettuce, and a kale/collard hybrid grown from seed donated by Anna Yellin, one of the MG interns from the 2015 class. We also planted beets and parsnips (a first time crop for us).

To date, 1,969 lbs. of produce have been donated to the Action Agency in Bishop for low-income seniors in Oconee county who can no longer garden on their own. They are most grateful for what we provide, although they should be getting pretty tired of peppers (330 lbs. and counting) and okra (230 lbs. to date). The Family and Consumer Science Agent in the Oconee did two cooking workshops this summer for the seniors using the produce we provided in nutritional dishes and showing them how to safely preserve some of the produce.

Master Gardeners convene each Tuesday morning at 9 am at Thomas Orchards, Hwy. 441 south in Watkinsville. Volunteers are always welcome. It’s a great way to meet new people, earn credit hours, and learn about gardening.

Gary Wade
GWade@uga.edu

Frank Johnson
frankandcherylj@bellsouth.net

NOVEMBER GARDENING CHORES

This is the best time to plant spring-flowering bulbs now that the soil is cooler. Add fertilizer as you dig the bed. 
Dig caladium, elephant ear and dahlia bulbs now while you can still find them. Store in boxes of peat moss. 
Enjoy sasanqua camellia blooms. Cut a few to bring indoors and float in a crystal saucer for a dining table centerpiece. 
Shear chrysanthemums and asters down to four inches once the flowers fade. 
Rake out fallen leaves and replace the mulch under crabapples and dogwoods to prevent disease next year. 
Neaten perennial flower beds. Remove dry stems and dead leaves. Put fresh mulch under shrubs, trees and perennials. 
Fill bird feeders with black oil sunflower seeds. Birds will find and eat each seed and you won't accidentally feed chipmunks and rats. 
Fertilize again the pansies, snapdragons, cabbage and dianthus you planted a few weeks ago. Use a powdered, water-soluble fertilizer now but switch to a product containing "nitrate nitrogen" December thru March. 
Prepare your composting area for fall leaves. You can make a cheap bin from 4 foot wide fence wire 10 feet long. Bend it into a circle and join the ends together. Pile in leaves as you rake them. Spray each layer with water. 
Clean all of the old vines from tomato cages before putting them in storage. Pull up okra stalks plus squash and bean vines. 
Bring some rosemary inside to dry for winter use. Freeze basil in water-filled plastic containers. 
Divide your hanging basket of Boston fern into thirds and plant into three new baskets. Hang in a sunny window; by spring they’ll be big enough to put outside. 
Continue to plant shrubs and trees. Even though its chilly outdoors, the soil is still warm enough to encourage root growth. Remove all of the twine, wire or paper trunk cover on each one.

AAMGA: www.ugaextension.com/clarke/anr/aamga.html
GMGA: www.georgiamastergardeners.org
The Locavore
By Lauren Marie Schumacker

Clarke Middle School has a large, beautiful vegetable garden that’s easily spotted on Baxter Street. There’s another garden at the school that’s also used for learning; however, most of the students have typically left their middle school days behind them.

Nestled in an inner courtyard at Clarke Middle is the Athens Area Master Gardeners Association’s garden, filled to the brim with fruits, vegetables, flowering plants and herbs. Master gardeners use it as one of several experiential learning sites, where members can meet their requirement for volunteer hours. The Athens-Clarke County UGA extension office trains master gardeners. Brand-new master gardeners must complete 50 volunteer hours, and everyone else must complete 25 hours each year to maintain their membership.

“In a year’s time, we’ll have 35–40 different people working over here, and what we ask them to do is sign up for a week at a time,” says Merry Anderson, one of the master gardeners in charge of the garden at Clarke Middle School. “We try to have at least two people on each week, because during the summer it gets pretty hectic over here. Sometimes we’ll get 50–60 pounds of vegetables at one time, sometimes even more.”

This program, called Plant A Row, works with the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank, located at 640 Barber St. “What we do is provide emergency food to families and individuals who live in Athens-Clarke County who are having some sort of financial crisis,” says Kim Ramos, executive director of the food bank. “It can be something as simple as, ‘Hey, I really don’t have enough money to have a birthday party for my 10-year-old. If I go to the food bank and get groceries, I can now have this birthday party for my 10-year-old.’ That’s a perfectly legitimate reason to use the food bank.”

The master gardeners plant, care for and harvest the fruits and vegetables grown in the Clarke Middle School garden, then take them to the food bank. The food bank, in turn, can provide fresh fruits and vegetables to its clients rather than only canned options.

Before they plant, master gardeners have a conversation with Ramos about what they’re planning on planting so she can provide feedback from the clients themselves about vegetables that they like more than others. The gardeners want to ensure that they are planting varieties of vegetables those who will receive them will enjoy cooking and eating. Sometimes, it doesn’t go quite as planned.

“Then there was the year that we planted radishes,” Anderson says. “And, you know, a few radishes would go nicely in a salad, and there’s actually a radish slaw that you can make. But... because they all ripened at one time, we wound up with 63 pounds of radishes. What do you do?”

Just like farmers acting as resources at farmers markets or butchers behind the counter, Ramos and her staff are sometimes able to point clients unfamiliar with a particular vegetable in the right direction and suggest dishes and techniques they may have had in the past. The gardeners can act as a resource, too. “Many people say, ‘Well, what do we do with a tomatillo?’ The Internet’s invaluable,” Anderson says.

The gardeners use the garden to experiment a little bit with growing fruits and vegetables you wouldn’t normally see in a home garden, as well as when to pick things, how to prevent pests and how to care for the different varieties.

“This is another one of our experiments that really didn’t work all that well: It was a green-bean teepee, and we used really long bamboo poles instead of trellising things like we do in some of the other beds,” Anderson says. “We thought, ‘Well, we’ll try this.’ Well, the bad news is, you can’t get to the top of it, plus, now it’s leaning. So, we’re going to have to do something else next year—go back to probably a more traditional way of doing it.”

Working in the garden also lets the gardeners educate students at Clarke Middle about where food comes from. “They can stand out here and go, ‘Oh. That’s what’s in my salad? Oh yeah!’” Anderson says. “It’s really a very satisfying project, because you know you’re doing so much good for the community.”
The photos below are from our October 2009 meeting at Shirley Baker's home garden.

The Art Garden at Chase Street Elementary School was planted on Saturday, October 24. Andrew Wahlers from Outdoor Specialty donated many of the plants on our list and the grant from the AAMGA allowed us to purchase the remainder of our needed plants. The third grade classes will install the pitcher plant bog later this year. Thank you so much for your support and assistance.

Carole Holmes
There are hundreds of Japanese maples out there, with forms that weep over the edge of a retaining wall, create a narrow, upright column, spread out into a huge tree or stay in a little container. Foliage may be green, burgundy or chartreuse, displaying a much broader spectrum in fall. But only one Japanese maple has been named a Georgia Gold Medal plant, and it is one with strong Athens roots.

So what makes Glowing Embers (Acer palmatum) stand out from such a large crowd? Well, it has many admirable qualities. Although it is a medium-sized tree, it is large by Japanese maple standards, maturing at 20 to 30 feet tall and considered one of the fastest-growing of the Japanese maples. I don’t usually consider Japanese maples to be shade trees, but this one can be.

Glowing Embers grows on its own roots, instead of being grafted onto rootstock. Perhaps that is why it can handle sun and drought better than most Japanese maples. I am sure it would benefit from afternoon shade in Georgia - most plants and people do. But if you want a Japanese maple and don’t have the perfect setting, this one can handle our heat, our sun and our droughts better than most. However, do not deprive the poor dear of water, for she will need some assistance in severe drought, especially in her first few years. What she can’t handle is poorly drained, boggy soil, so make sure there is good drainage where she is planted.

Glowing Embers should do well here - she’s an Athens native. The original seedling, a selection made by Michael Dirr in Athens, now grows in front of the Callaway building at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia on South Milledge Avenue. Each fall, the green leaves turn shades of wine, orange and yellow, creating a kaleidoscope of colors. This tree is deciduous, with fall color appearing in late November and back in full leaf now. In the winter, the branching structure is beautiful against the blue winter sky. Small red flowers appear with the new leaves. The leaves are two to three inches across, five-pointed, with distinct divisions.
Drawings at Monthly Meetings

If you want to bring something for our drawing at the next meeting, please give Anne Walker a call. She wants to be sure we don’t have more than 20 prizes at a meeting. 3 tickets for $2!

Anne Walker
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