MEETING SCHEDULE

It’s Not Just About the Hat - The Unlikely Journey of a Plantsman

Join us on August 18th for an entertaining evening with our speaker, Dr. Allan Armitage. Author of over a dozen books and one of the most respected plant authorities in the green industry, Dr. A has penned his memoirs. His stories depict his unlikely trajectory as a shy boy from a quiet neighborhood in Montreal to a world-renown plantsman. This book exemplifies everything you have come to expect from one of the most engaging storytellers today. From digging graves to braving North Atlantic storms, Dr. A’s adventurous life is revealed like an unfurling bloom – each petal just a little wilder than the one before.

There will be a book sale and signing after the talk.

“Life is good when you can dig in the dirt!” – Dr. Allan Armitage

Mike Sikes
Vice President & Program Chair

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

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DID YOU KNOW?

Honey bees are responsible for 1 in every 3 bites of food we eat.

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: Kay Petroff
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:

TREASURER’S REPORT
Jun 17 to JUL 21, 2015

Beginning Balance 21,105.93

Deposit-Member Dues 20.00
Deposit-Bulb Sales 372.86
Deposit-Raffle Sales 0.00
Total Deposits 392.86

Expenses:
Colorblend Bulb Order 1,786.92
HOPE Garden Exp 130.67
Oconee PAR 19.79
Clarke PAR 19.80
Speak Gift 25.00
Total Expenses: 1,982.18

Ending Balance: 19,516.61

Shirley Baker, Treasurer
ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com

AAMGA Projects

Projects: Brenda Beckham, Chair
BBeckha2@bellsouth.net
Members: Gary Wade and Dortha Jackson
Clarke PAR: Merry Anderson & Pam Bracken, Co-Chairs
Merry: merry.anderson@att.net
Pam: pam824@aol.com
Winter Garden: Gary Wade gwade@uga.edu
Flower Garden at Clarke PAR: Jill Hyche, Chair
jillhyche@gmail.com

Flower Bulb Project: Andrea Woodall & Jean Colquett, Co-Chairs
Andrea: awoodall58@gmail.com  Jean: green39@yahoo.com

Oconee PAR : Gary Wade & Frank Johnson, Co-Chairs
Gary: gwade@uga.edu  Frank: frankandcheryl1@bellsouth.net

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

AAMGA Plant Sale: Heather Gray Jordan & Donna McPipkin, Co-Chairs
Heather: hgrayheather29@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, Betty Thomas
ShirleyBaker555@gmail.com  BettyThomas@gmail.com

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

Athena Gardens Retirement Community Vegetable Garden
Chairman: Gary Wade  GWade@uga.edu

Fall Vegetable Gardening Workshop

Athens-Clarke County Extension is holding a free Fall Vegetable Gardening Workshop on Wednesday, August 19 from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Athens-Clarke County Library (2025 Baxter Street, Athens, GA 30606). Beets, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, garlic, Swiss chard, turnips and more...fall is the ideal season for growing many vegetables! Attend this free workshop to learn your fall gardening basics. Led by UGA professor emeritus Gary Wade, the workshop will include tips for soil preparation, what crops to plant, planting tips and maintenance. Gardeners of all levels are welcome. Please register by August 18 by calling (706) 613-3640 or email atedrow@uga.edu. For more information, visit www.ugaextension.com/clarke/anr.Fall Vegetable Gardening Workshop
MINUTES FOR JULY 21, 2015 MEETING
Kay Petroff, Secretary

AAMGA Meeting Minutes – July 21, 2015

The July Meeting was held at 6:30 pm in the Gardenside Room at SBG with President Anne Walker presiding. In the absence of Program Chairman Mike Sikes, Andrea Fischer introduced Judy Glenn who worked with the SBG staff to create the Hummingbird Trail. Judy shared images she had taken of hummingbirds and some of their favorite plants. The program ended with a question and answer period.

Business Meeting:
Secretary’s Report – June minutes filed as printed in the newsletter.
Treasurer’s Report – June report filed as printed in the newsletter.
Unfinished Business - Per the last meeting, a collection basket was available for member donations in memory of Ed Novak. Ed’s presence at SBG is sorely missed.
New Business - Brenda Beckham has resigned as Project Chair. Someone is needed to fill this position.

Project Reports:
Clarke PAR – Merry Anderson reported the garden is doing well with 700 pounds of produce so far and that the volunteers are fantastic. The garden is designed to be a learning project and volunteers have been identifying, researching and solving problems. Volunteers are needed for the week of August 16. Contact Pam Bracken.
Oconee PAR – Frank Johnson and Gary Wade reported a total of 822 pounds of produce gathered - 316 pounds of squash and 272 pounds of cucumbers. About 10-12 volunteers work on Tuesday and additional pickers on Thursday and also on Saturday /Sunday. The websiteSignUpGenius is available for Thursday and weekend volunteers or call Frank to sign up. Since Action is closed on Friday, Thursday pickers should get produce to them by 9:30 or 10:00am.
Athena Gardens - Gary Wade reported that Master Gardeners are not needed until planning and planting the fall garden. Residents can handle gathering and watering tasks for the rest of the summer.
UGArden - Petty Thomas reported that the garden is in maintenance stage – weeding. There is an overabundance of gourds.
Pollinator Garden – Shirley Baker reported that the perennials have finished flowering for the year and that more annuals will be planted next year to provide a longer bloom period.
Salvation Army Garden - Anne reminded everyone of the email calling for volunteers for the upcoming workday on Saturday, July 25. The garden is located on Hawthorne Ave.

Announcements:
- Amanda Tedrow said applications for the 2016 Master Gardener Program will be released soon. Classes will be in the morning on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- ACC Water Conservation Office is holding a class on WaterSmart Lawn Care, July 22.
- Andrea Fischer said Mike Sikes will undergo another medical procedure. He enjoys texts and emails so members are encouraged to contact him.
- Anne apologized for this month’s mix-up in meeting reminder emails. Next month’s meeting will be held at SBG Gardenside Room with the speaker scheduled to be Dr. Allen Armitage. Watch for more details in emails. The program on Japanese Maples is currently scheduled for September.

The meeting was adjourned about 8:00 with a drawing for plants. Members wanting to see the hummingbird nest followed Judy Glenn outside.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kay Petroff
Secretary
Those Temperamental Tomatillos

Gary L. Wade, AAMGA member and retired UGA horticulturist

I am puzzled why my tomatillo plants are not setting fruit this year. They have an abundance of bloom, but I have not seen a single fruit. I have two plants adjacent to one another, just as the literature suggests, since apparently the plant requires cross-pollination from insects and/or wind in order to set fruit. At the Oconee Plant-a-Row garden we have two plants in adjacent rows. One is loaded with fruit and the other is barren. I’ve done an extensive web search on tomatillo problems and have come up with several possible explanations for such erratic fruit set, but no real answers.

Some references suggest tomatillos don’t like hot humid weather and stop setting fruit. Apparently when the temperature is above 90 degrees combined with high humidity levels (which describes most of the past month in Athens) the pollen becomes denatured and is not effective, even when there is bee activity. Other references say the pollen clumps at high humidity levels and is harder to transfer from plant to plant by insects or wind. Since tomatillos are grown commercially during the summer in Guatemala and Mexico, I can’t imagine the temperatures there are much lower than ours, but if tomatillos are grown in coastal regions, sea breezes may help reduce humidity level and enhance pollen transfer. So maybe we should put a box fan in the garden directed toward the plants? Just an idea….but I’m eccentric enough to test this theory if I don’t see signs of fruit soon.

Still another reference suggests tomatillos set fruit best when the days become shorter in August and September, suggesting they are a short-day (long night) plant. But I question this theory since some local tomatillos started setting fruit during the long days of June. Perhaps the shorter days are also accompanied by cooler night, which may be more of a factor in fruit set than day length.

All the references on troubleshooting tomatillo problems basically conclude by suggesting the grower be patient and not give up on the plant, because by August and September, those barren plants will be covered in fruit (again a reference to shorter days and cooler temperatures). OK. I’m willing to wait, particularly since I have a few remaining jars of the green salsa I canned last year. But my jalapeno peppers are not as patient and are multiplying like rabbits, so they need a salsa dance partner sooner than later.

About Tomatillos

Tomatillos are pronounced [toh-MAH-tee-YO]
Botanical name: Physalis philadelphica. A relative of the tomato and member of the nightshade (Solanaceae) family tomatillos provide that tart flavor in a host of Mexican green sauces. In Mexico the fruit is called tomates verdes, tomatillos de cascara as well as fresadillas.

The fruits average about 1-2” wide and have a papery outer skin. The tomatillo is actually used when it is still green. If you see one that is just turning a light yellow and indicates that is ripe and past its prime for most uses. Tomatillos have a very tart flavor, not at all like a tomato.
Our Clarke Middle School Plant-A-Row volunteers are doing a fantastic job this year. Not only do they do the usual harvesting (approximately 700 pounds so far) and weeding, they are taking considerable initiative to identify and remedy problems with the vegetables and even spruce up the garden. During the week beginning July 20th, Jan and Bob Matthews worked on the irrigation system, bought and spread more pine straw on the new blackberries, and brought spare landscaping timbers from home to replace rotten ones in the octagonal flower/herb bed. Others volunteers have helped us stay on top of the mischievous insects that want to share our harvest.

Our pole bean tepee is doing a great job of providing a place for the runners . . . anyone have an idea of how to get to the top of the structure to pick the beans? (See pictures in this newsletter.) Stilts? Jolly Green Giant? Help!

We are still looking for volunteers. We are covered through August 15, but we need a few hardy souls for the week of August 16. If you can help, please let Pam Bracken know. Thanks!

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!

Athens-Clarke Plant A Row for the Hungry

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Athena Gardens Project Update
Gary L. Wade, project chair

This summer, for the first time, Master Gardeners are assisting senior residents of Athena Gardens apartments with their community garden. Our involvement has been helping them obtain plants and seeds needed and helping them plant and tend their garden. They harvest and water.

We’re taking July off since the residents said they could pick and water and did not need our assistance for those chores. We plan to meet with them in August (date not yet set) to plan the fall garden. Once we get a list of the crops they want to grow, we’ll help them obtain seeds and plants and set a date to pull up the old crops and plant new ones.

If you would like to assist with this project (so far our commitment has been 1 ½ hours per week) please send me an email at gwade@uga.edu Athena Gardens is located on the east side of Athens, behind the Publix shopping center.
Volunteer Opportunities, continued

The Monthly Newsletter of the Athens Area Master Gardener Association

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

The Oconee County Plant-a-Row garden at Thomas Orchards is in full production now. We have been averaging 100+ lbs. of produce picked each week. To date we have picked over 850 lbs. of produce. Over 300 lbs. of that total was squash (yellow and zucchini) and another 300+ lbs. was cucumbers (variety Sweet Success). The produce is taken to Action in Bishop, a federally funded agency that provides assistance to low-income seniors in Oconee county.

We have had some problem with leaf blight and fruitworm on tomatoes, but we are making a diligent effort to spray them and get them back on track. We’ve found a combo spray of Neem Oil, spinosad and Daconil applied at 7-10 day intervals along with sanitation (removing any diseased leaves) is working well. The plants are putting out new growth and appear to be on the road to recovery.

Please join us on Tuesdays at 9 am for our "pickin’ and grinnin’" work day at Thomas Orchards. We also need pickers for Thursdays and Saturdays during peak season harvest. To sign up for Thursday or Saturday picking, go to Sign-up Genius on the web at http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d4dada92cabfa7-oconee. Pick the date you would like to work and sign up. There is no sign-up needed for the Tuesday work days….just show up! How easy is that?

BARNYARD GARDEN UPDATE

Mother Nature is definitely at work at the UGarden bringing in plenty of pollinators for the sunflowers which are reaching for the sky and the gourd vines which are eating up the beautiful arbor Bob Wolf created at the garden. This is also a good example of what "really good dirt" does for the health of your plants! This "good dirt" is also really supportive of the weed population which we have been diligently trying to keep at bay with the help of our support team, Susan Drinkard, Brenda Beckham, and Bob and Carol Wolf.

Bob and Carol Wolf have also been very generous with their time by installing a drip irrigation system throughout all the beds. The zinnias and sunflower beds are already benefiting from this system while the others will be hooked up as soon as Prof. Berle runs an additional water line to the other beds.

The keyhole herb garden is thriving with very little maintenance. If anyone would like a little lemon balm, fennel, oregano or thyme, feel free to clip a little within reason of course. In fact, we encourage you all to stop by the garden and see how it’s progressing and enjoy those beautiful faces of the sunflowers which can’t help but make you smile and lift your spirits.

Shirley Baker and Petty Thomas
Co-Chairmen
OCONEE COUNTY PLANT A ROW FOR THE HUNGRY
AUGUST GARDENING CHORES

**Water** figs deeply now as they begin to ripen and harvest every morning, before the birds can do their damage.

The soil in outdoor clay pots dries out quickly. Poke holes in it with a pencil to make sure water saturates the soil when you tend your plants.

The best way to control snakes is to remove their habitat. Move log piles, leaf piles and rock piles to the edge of your yard, away from the house.

**Prune** tropical hibiscus plants you plan to bring indoors. Reduce them to a size that will fit in front of your sunniest window in December.

**Remove** faded crape myrtle blooms and dry seed clusters now. With a little water and fertilizer, you may get more blooms in September.

**Collect** seeds from hosta, iris and blackberry lily to save for planting next spring.

If you had tremendous numbers of Japanese beetles, you might get some control next year by using milky spore powder.

**Fertilize** roses with 1 tablespoon of 10-10-10 per foot of height now to stimulate some new growth. As the weather cools, you’ll get roses for the fall.

**Look** on the ground around your blackberry and raspberry plants. The canes snaking across the ground should be tied back on their wire arbor.

**Cut** back faded annual flowers by half, then water and lightly fertilize with liquid 20-20-20 or equivalent. A second season of blooms will begin to appear in two weeks.

**Water** big trees. Apply at least 15 gallons per inch of trunk thickness each week.

**Watch** for the red or yellow, spider-like flowers of spider lily, also called surprise lily - because the foliage is nowhere to be seen when it blooms.

**Make** a slug trap from a small board raised an inch off the ground by small stones. Check it at noon and scrape the slimy crawlers into a bucket of soapy water.

**Wrap** cheesecloth around sunflower heads to keep the birds away. The head is ready to harvest when the back has turned from green to brown.

**Pull** English ivy out of your trees. The leaves act like a sail in a thunderstorm - you don’t want that tree to navigate onto your roof!

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**It’s Easy Being Green**

**Plants That Will Suck Your Yard Dry**

**Tropical and exotic plants:**
Species such as hibiscus and banana, commonly used in landscaping, come from tropical regions that get a lot of rain. These plants tend to have fairly high water requirements. Plants with large, glossy, dark leaves tend to absorb more heat and require a lot of water, and a larger leaf surface area equals greater water loss. If hydrating is a concern, stick with hairy, smaller, and lighter-colored or silvery leaves that retain water and diffuse light, such as lambs ear, rosemary, or lavender.

Exotics in general will probably need more water than native species. Try to avoid rapidly growing tropical plants with soft, pithy, and fleshy trunks—these are usually plants with a large water content. The banana tree, for example, is 90 percent water. If you live in a drought-prone region, stick with plants from the arid southwest, parts of California, or the Mediterranean, such as the above-mentioned herbs or drought-tolerant succulents, like agave and yucca.

**Annuals:** Generally sighted all around town during summer, short-lived annual plants, such as impatiens, often need a lot of water. Many annuals have a shorter growing season with intense blooms, and a corresponding shallow root system. It is plants that have time to grow extensive and deep roots that will be able to tap water deep within the soil and live longer in drought-prone regions. It may seem counterintuitive, since large plants take more water to establish, but once they have found their footing, these hardy species don’t require as much watering, and can provide shade, and relief from the heat, for much of your garden.

**A traditional lawn:** Americans are moving away from the idea of the perfectly trimmed emerald green lawn, People are starting to realize that if you have to put up warning flags [about pesticides], that contradicts the idea of something beautiful to play on.

Most grass and turf species are on the list of thirsty plants to avoid. If you are still attached to the American dream, and are facing water shortages, consider drought-tolerant varieties such as buffalo grass, or consider replacing at least some of your lawn with a garden of native species that attract wildlife and pollinators.

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AAMGA:  [www.ugaextension.com/clarke/anr/aamga.html](http://www.ugaextension.com/clarke/anr/aamga.html)

GMGA:  [www.georgiamastergardeners.com](http://www.georgiamastergardeners.com)
Cottingham: Aphids are a flower’s worst enemy

Aphids are soft-bodied, pear-shaped insects about 1/6 inch long and one of the most common garden pests. They appear as clusters of green dots (sometimes yellow, brown or red) under the leaves or along the stems, favoring new growth. They seem to have a special affection for rosebuds.

These sap sucking insects can weaken a plant, encourage sooty mold growth and carry viruses. The infested leaves turn yellow and become crinkled or distorted.

Aphids are able to reproduce without mating a week after birth. There are live births and eggs deposited by aphids. Some species give birth to pregnant live young. Techniques used to control aphids should be repeated weekly for several weeks, since aphids reproduce rapidly.

Aphids suck on the juices of leaves, fruits and flowers, and the sugar they cannot digest is excreted as a sugary sap called "honeydew." Honeydew sap can foster sooty mold growth, a fungus that interferes with photosynthesis by covering plant leaves with what looks like black soot.

Ants are attracted to this honeydew sap and are often a sign of aphid infestation. A marching column of ants traveling up a plant usually is a sign of a sap-sucking insect, such as aphids, whiteflies or mealybugs. Ants tend to these insects as a farmer tends to his livestock. Ants carry aphids throughout the garden, and diseases with them. Some ants actually carry the aphid eggs underground for safe winter storage and bring them back out in spring.

A few aphids aren’t really a problem, but since they multiply very rapidly, they need to be dealt quickly. Stay away from chemicals unless the problem gets out of control. Chemicals, even organic pesticides, can kill the aphids' natural predators and other beneficial insects.

If water plants are infested, hold the plant underwater or spray with a forceful jet spray, which should knock the aphids off the plant and into the water.

Before resorting to chemicals, try first to wash off the plant with a stream of water. Keep an eye on any plant you are treating for aphids, checking every few days.

Insecticidal soaps are less harmful to beneficial insects, bees and birds. It kills on contact, so drench both the top and underside of leaves with spray and repeat every seven to 10 days. You also can use a little cooking oil added to an insecticidal spray.

Dormant oil spray, found in nurseries and garden centers, suffocates aphids, scale, thrips and whiteflies and stops eggs from hatching. Sticky insect traps also may be used, just check the label to make sure the traps lure aphids.

Ladybugs are a natural predator for aphids and should be encouraged in the garden. Plants that encourage beneficial insects in the garden include dill and butterfly weed. Companion plants that seem to repel aphids include chives and petunias.

Aphids, also known as plant lice and in Britain and the Commonwealth as greenflies, blackflies, or whiteflies, are small sap-sucking insects, and members of the superfamily Aphidoidea.

Scientific name: Aphidoidea Lower classifications: Aphididae Rank: Superfamily
Higher classification: Sternorrhyncha

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.
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
cell: 404.852.8910
home: 706.342.9471
gardenanne1@gmail.com

“The act of putting into your mouth what the earth has grown is perhaps your most direct interaction with the earth.”

Frances Moore Lappe

cornucopia.org