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# The Scoop



2020

## The challenges

### President's letter

December 2020

Gertrude Jekyll once said, "The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies" Many seeds have been sown in 2019 and 2020 because of this love that the GMGA has for gardening. The past two years have been full of excitement, adventure, and challenges. GMGA has sought to expand opportunities and provide research based horticultural information to gardening pros and novices alike. In doing so, the organization has reached new audiences and reinvigorated unofficial mentors and gardening enthusiasts as well.

As we reflect on the last two years, we can see the seeds that we've sown coming into fruition. The GMGA has been able to expand its grant program by awarding more than \$5,000.00 annually to Master Gardeners who have applied for and received funding to support local beautification programs for their communities. The GMGA has also funded local and school gardens, established demonstration gardens and provided funds and expertise to help restore heirloom gardens around the state. In addition to those seeds, the GMGA has also awarded a deserving student in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences with an annual scholarship. GMGA has tilled some new soil by creating the ANR Award of Excellence which recognized an agent for his/her contributions leading to the professional and personal growth of Master Gardener Extension Volunteers by enhancing the ability of the extension service to deliver services to the horticulture consuming public.

Working closely with the State Program Director for extension services, GMGA has sponsored the annual new agents' luncheon as a way to help them identify resources that will help them be successful as agents. GMGA also provides free admission at its conferences for agents and program assistants. This year we were more innovative in our outreach and extended that opportunity to the YUF (Young Urban Farmers) a program of the Athens Land Trust. The program, local to Clarke County High School Students between 14 and 18, provides participants

with sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurial education, work experience and personal development. They complete a full year at the Athens Land Trust's two urban farms.

Clearly, with the intent to plant for the future, GMGA is sowing seeds for the love of gardening. Another venture was to co-sponsor a new documentary "Heart of Glass." The documentary follows the creation and story of Vertical Harvest, a hydroponic multi-million-dollar greenhouse, that teaches skills and hires individuals with disabilities giving them work and life skills. GMGA receives worldwide exposure as this documentary is presented to audiences around the world. It will also be used as an educational resource in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

GMGA has made significant progress in developing added value to being a member of GMGA. We have identified a select group of vendors that will give discounts to GMGA members for purchases made thru e-commerce sales. Thru the operational changes brought on by Covid-19, GMGA held its first virtual conference "Planting for the Future" on November 13th and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Working with the Clarke-Athens MGO (local sponsors) we ushered into the limitless world of virtual communication from the safety and comfort of our individual homes. We had attendees from all over the nation and it gave us exposure that we could have never imagined. Thru it all we never took our eyes off the prize, advocating for Master Gardeners statewide, providing new opportunities for learning and sharing research-based knowledge with the public and grow the Master Gardener Program by providing opportunities to sow seeds that will never die.

I thank all of you for your support the last two years. It was a learning experience of a lifetime. I consider it a life achievement to be associated in a leadership role with an organization whose focus is to help people enjoy helping themselves and others thru gardening. Looking ahead, the future is bright for GMGA, and as we transition into new leadership, the President-elect Phillip Williams, will find an organization that is equipped, ready and willing to take on the challenges of post Covid-19. The biggest challenge and the greatest opportunity are how do we as an organization meet the needs of all of the individuals that discovered gardening out of necessity or because of its therapeutic value to relieve stress. The possibilities are endless whether it's a community garden, home garden or just playing in the dirt. Go out and sow some seeds, for once sown, they will never die. Love life, Love Gardening, Love each other.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your leader,

George Jeburk  
GMGA President  
2019-2020

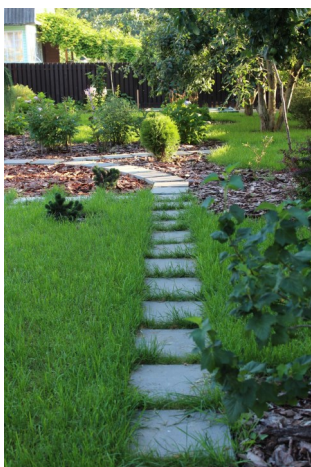


# Spotlight on Extension Agents

## Timothy Daly

I have been an Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent for the University of Georgia Extension in Gwinnett County since 2006. The position has been the most rewarding and enjoyable job I have ever had. It offers many opportunities to serve the community.

I grew up in the Decatur, Ga area and attended St. Pius X Catholic High School. I then attended the University of Georgia, receiving a Bachelor's of Science in Horticulture in 1987. For several years I worked in the commercial landscape industry in the Atlanta area. I returned to the University of Georgia and received a Master of Science in Entomology in 2003. While there, I completed the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer training in Athens-Clarke County. Afterward, I worked for a large home builder, where I helped develop an erosion and sediment control program to reduce pollution to water bodies from construction activities. For a year, I was an environmental landscape development inspector for Dekalb County Government. In 2006 I took the position of County Extension Agent in Gwinnett.



Over the years as an agent, I have conducted many educational programs. Examples include trainings and certifications for those employed in the green industry, such as landscapers, lawn care companies, nurseries, tree care companies, and related industries. My county has over 150 Master Gardeners. I, along with my two program assistants, Kim Fritz and Lisa Klein, supervise and train them to conduct educational outreach programs in the community.

Some of my goals include increasing Master Gardener Extension Volunteer participation in the community. With COVID-19, that has been a challenge. As the situation improves, the Gwinnett MGEVs will be conducting more programs and providing volunteer services in serving community gardens, farmers markets, increasing the number of plant clinics, and a greater outreach with school educational activities, among others. Another

goal is to implement a Master Naturalist Program in Gwinnett. It consists of 48 hours of training in natural resource subjects, including field trips and hands-on activities.

Over the years, I have had many opportunities and situations that confirmed being a County Extension Agent is meant for me. The green industry professionals praise my educational programs for them and consistently seek my expertise on a variety of subjects critical to their success. Since Gwinnett has many residential units, homeowners seek my advice and knowledge on items of concern to them, such as lawns, tree care, pests, and vegetable gardens, to name a few. Many contact me continually for assistance.



## Spotlight on Extension Agents (continued)



Our Master Gardener Extension Volunteers are engaged in numerous endeavors. In the past few years, at four county farmers' markets, they have coordinated and staffed Extension educational exhibits. In 2019 they had 20 exhibits giving 242 volunteer hours and making 810 contacts with market attendees. McDaniel Farm Park is a 134-acre park in Gwinnett County with an interpretive farm park highlighting the years from 1918-1942 through agriculture. The Master Gardeners, under the direction of the Extension office, have planted and maintained a vegetable garden at McDaniel Farm Park. The public frequently asks gardening questions when volunteers are present. In 2019 they contributed 925 volunteer hours with 552 contacts with people visiting the park with 1,000 pounds of produce being donated to local food banks.

Many factors come into play for anyone seeking employment as an ANR County Extension Agent with UGA Extension. Most notably are good people skills since, as agents, we continually interact with people from all walks of life. Communicating the information they seek, and answering their questions in a timely, informative manner is essential. Agents need to continually seek knowledge to improve their skills and know-how to do their jobs successfully. Many training opportunities are available, and agents need to take advantage of them to improve their ability to serve the community.

Receiving the Master Gardener Association Leadership Excellence Award is a great honor to me. I applied for it so I could recognize all of the volunteer services the Master Gardeners in my county provide, in addition to the hard work of my program assistants. I was honored when I learned about receiving this distinguished award. It is just not for me, but for all who make the Gwinnett County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer program such a success.

I seek to be a role model for other ANR Agents. Many times they call upon me to be a speaker for their programs or assist in planning them. Recently Sheri Dorn, State Master Gardener Coordinator, called upon me to serve on the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Strategic Plan. The group's purpose is to create a strategic plan that will guide program development for the next five years. We are currently well underway in the process with the ultimate goal of improving the effectiveness and impact of the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program statewide.

Being an ANR County Extension Agent is a challenging but rewarding position. I find the job the most enjoyable and satisfying one that I have ever had and plan to continue serving the people in Gwinnett County and the whole state for many years to come.



# POLLINATOR GARDENS AT NEWBERN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND S.L. MASON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Written by Annie Barbas, Lowndes County

When we received the grant money to develop a pollinator garden at Newbern Middle School and S.L. Mason Elementary School, a community partner came alongside and supplemented the initial grant. We were then able to install pollinator gardens in not only the initial two schools but also four more elementary schools. Much of materials to augment the garden such as stepping stones and observation benches, as well as equipment to prep the garden, was provided by the community partner. We were thus able to purchase seeds and plants and host plants for the two initial gardens. As we moved to the elementary schools, we downsized from  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre to smaller plots to accommodate the skill level.

The first garden at the middle school was completed in time for Ag Week and a visit by Georgia's first lady, Mrs. Kemp. The visit and press were a great encouragement to the young people, who were able to see the flowers of their labor before the end of school.

The gardens faced great challenges during the summer due to extended drought, but the coverage in the garden for spring perennials or self-seeding annuals at the middle school is about 95%, with very few weeds. Seeds are even creeping out in to the lawn. With the new class of seventh grade students, we have continued interest and involvement. The elementary school included in the grant has pathways through the garden of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre with trees, shrubs and bananas. It is a little more challenging because of shade issues, but new shade tolerant plants are being propagated to fill in as quickly as possible. Whole classes have become visitors to the garden to observe, and many children have harvested seed and held a bee in a flower in their hand for the first time. We look forward to more involvement, seeds, children, flowers and pollinators!



Lowndes Co Pollinator Plants



Blanket Flowers



Black-eyed Susans



Bee Balm

# HARVESTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, DOUGLAS COUNTY

by Marjorie Stansel, Douglas County MGEV

Harvester Christian Academy wanted to supplement the education of its students by building eight 4x4 raised beds on its campus and by burying a drainage pipe to aid in moving water around the beds. The raised beds will be used to teach students about growing plants from seeds, planting, soil content, maintenance of garden beds and weed and insect control.

By having raised beds on campus, Harvester hopes the students will pass along the interest to their parents and others in the community who visit the campus. In addition to having the students use the beds, we are going to have the Master Gardeners come teach the MG Sprouts curriculum to us.

To help build the beds, we have recruited a boy scout to use the raised beds as his Eagle project. Master Gardeners will supervise the project. All the goals and objectives for the beds will be jointly handled by the school and Master Gardeners. Two Master Gardeners who are members of the school's PTSO and teachers are involved in teaching using the garden. Because the raised beds will be finished in early May, the school will plant sweet potatoes to grow over the summer months. A faucet is located close to the garden for watering when the rains do not provide sufficient water.

Without these funds, the raised beds could not be built, and it might be several years before the school can collect sufficient funds to build the beds. The earlier we can teach our children about the world of plants, the sooner we can introduce adults to the tasks and joys of gardening.

We anticipate that this project will make a difference to the Douglas County community by encouraging other schools to build raised beds and include horticulture in their curriculum. There is a movement in our community now to accomplish this.

The students, acting under teacher supervision, will maintain the raised beds, with additional lessons from Master Gardeners. Harvester Christian is grateful to the Georgia Master Gardeners Association for the grant to support this project.



## GRANT REPORT ON HYDE FARM COMMUNITY GARDEN

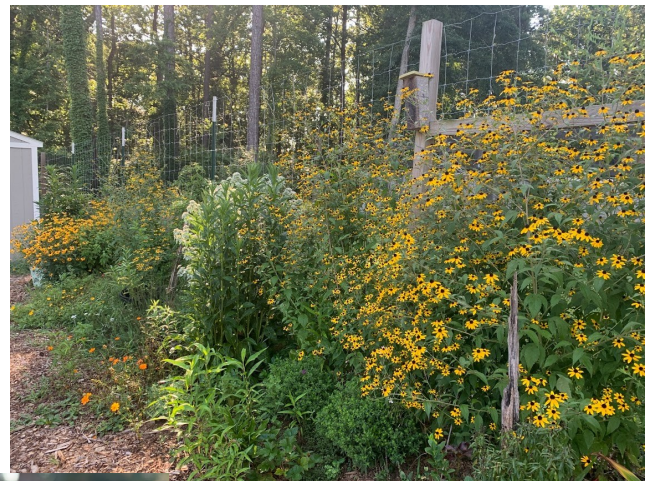
by Cary Bradley, MGEV

The 2018 initiative was to establish a perimeter of pollinator-attractive plants inside the garden fence of our Community Garden was started by Randy Threatte. When I assumed leadership of the garden project, I was fortunate to have several of my Master Gardener class mates step forward to help with taking the pollinator project to the next level. They brought an expanded vision that added more plants to the beds and expanded them to include the outside perimeter of the fence. It's still, and will always be, a work in progress.

With a frugal mindset, we've been able to acquire significant plant donations from the local MG community and nearby community gardens. Since I've assumed leadership, we've augmented these donations with approximately \$250 of expenditures for seeds, bulbs, vines, plants and supplies. Along with that we've had countless hours of manual labor from Master Gardeners and community gardeners.

We're grateful for the 2018 grant, which has turned out to play a significant role in the success of our pollinator project. We recently had the opportunity to show off our garden during a visit from Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary Black. Our pollinator beds attract tremendous numbers of bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinators. They also greatly enhance the beauty of the property and our enjoyment of it.

Master Gardener Volunteers of Cobb County  
Hyde Farm Community Garden Project Chair



## CREATING THE ROADSIDE BED AND SCATTER GARDEN AT EBENEZER CEMETERY in MILTON, GEORGIA, SPRING 2020

By Shirley Lowe

Recap of history: Ebenezer Cemetery is a 167-year-old cemetery located adjacent to the intersection of Arnold Mill Road (SR 140) and Cox Road in Milton, GA. It was created in 1853 via a land grant, concurrently with an additional parcel for Ebenezer Methodist Church. During the ensuing years as church membership dwindled and resources became scarce, the cemetery was taken over and managed by the Dangar family for several generations. Due to the lack of capable family to carry on, in 2018 the cemetery was deeded back to the church. A Cemetery Committee began work to clean up and restore it. A lawn crew was hired, new fencing was installed, headstones were cleaned and replaced, sunken graves were filled, a water meter was installed, excess dirt mounds were removed, plants were donated, ground penetrating radar was performed, and genealogical and historical documentation is ongoing!



Church members were delighted with the award of the GMGA \$500 grant for the Roadside Bed and Scatter Garden! In February 2020, 4 church members met, and with the help of two tillers, they tilled and prepared the soil for the new plantings. Zoysia grass and weeds were dug out. Mulch and soil conditioner were tilled into the soil. One was dubbed “the roadside bed,” with the goal of creating an eye-catching bed using three Nandinas as foundation shrubs, and the addition of bulbs and colorful seasonal perennials. An old 20-foot-long concrete retaining wall, about two feet tall, established the foundation for the 20 ft. x 3 ft. bed. Creeping Fig (rooted by Shirley Lowe from plants at her home) is now beginning to inch up the wall, serving as a more attractive

backdrop for the Roadside Bed. Church members donated some beautiful and healthy bronze day lilies, which were placed in the bed, and bloomed almost immediately. Daffodils rescued from another piece of church property were added to the bed, and they also graced us with blooms the first year! Siberian Iris and Blush Pink Nandinas were purchased and planted, and with the addition of Black Kow and plenty of mulch, have thrived.

The Scatter Bed was created to “make lemonade from lemons.” In 2018, a church member purchased the plot from the Dangar family. A short brick wall was placed around the 12x20 ft. plot. Ground penetrating radar, performed in May 2019, surprisingly revealed two unknown burials (a child and an adult) were already in the plot! To solve the problem for the plot owners, the space was traded out for another plot. Meanwhile, it



Before Photo of Scatter Garden



## Ebenezer Cemetery (Continued)



The above photo shows outline of the unknown adult burial in the Scatter Garden. Both graves are marked with a numbered disk, as are the other 93 unknown graves.

to maintain the cemetery during this time, and made the purchase of the needed plants, and one by one, planted the beds. This proved challenging as some of the plants that were researched and planned for, were unavailable during the pandemic slowdown. Anticipating the warming temperature of spring, it was desired to go ahead and plant, especially as there were a good many spring showers to encourage the new plantings! Most of the planting was completed in March and April.

As time went by, the plants did well, but the weeds thrived equally! To our surprise, we learned that new beds literally “eat up” mulch as they are weeded. While designing the beds, the proposed 21 bags (2 ft.) of mulch seemed overzealous, but it was thought to be accurate based on the size of the beds (12x20 and 3x20). Initially, the mulch DID cover the space. With the flush of reseeded weeds, and the weekly weeding by volunteers (who came back in June) it became necessary to make a fill-in application of 5 more bags of brown mulch. When considering the labor of repeated weeding, the addition of mulch with its weed-inhibiting advantage is worth the price and effort!

A special beauty in the Scatter Garden is the ‘Miss Violet’ Buddleia, which, immediately after planting, began to bloom and attract butterflies and bees! Another pleasing choice has been the beautifully rounded ‘Chef’s Choice’ Rosemary, chosen for its symbolism of remembrance. Next spring we will add perennials that will offer summer and early fall color for the viewing pleasure of cemetery visitors and passing commuters.

was decided that the plot, being nearly in the middle of the cemetery, would provide a perfect area for a garden, and that it would be possible to do it in a manner respectful of the two residents. It is visible from the road and could also serve as an area for the scattering of cremains. To prep the bed, it was tilled and cleaned at the same time and in the same manner as the Roadside Bed. It was fortunate that this most labor-intensive part of the establishment of the beds was done when we were able to gather and work together. Little did we know that just a few weeks later, we would be in a “shelter in place” pandemic situation! Gathering in groups was banned, and we were urged by the governor to stay home. As Cemetery Chairman, Shirley Lowe continued



The lovely ‘Miss Violet’ Buddleia in the Scatter Garden.

## Ebenezer Cemetery (Continued)



Shirley's pandemic shutdown selfie during planting of Scatter Garden!

Roadside Bed "Before" and "After." Eventually, edging will be placed around it.



Photo of Child's Burial found using Ground Penetrating Radar



Adult grave found using ground penetrating radar

## Ebenezer Cemetery (Continued)

Two plantings of six Creeping Fig, rooted by Shirley Lowe, have been nestled against the “not so attractive” two-foot-tall concrete foundation wall at the front of the cemetery. It is now taking hold and climbing up the wall. It was discovered that it made a difference when the underside of the Creeping Fig was planted snugly up against the wall, as it is the “clingy” side. Isn’t it great to continually learn?! Shirley has been a fan of Creeping Fig since a trip to historic areas of Charleston, SC, and seeing it carefully clipped and maintained on retaining walls and step risers. That was the inspiration for the usage of it on the concrete block walls, some of which are crumbling, at historic Ebenezer Cemetery. As cemetery renovation has progressed, it was decided that the many short retaining walls in the old cemetery did not have to be restored to “brand new,” but needed to have a “cared for” look. Small plants have been nestled into many of the nooks and crannies. As of now, more Creeping Fig is being rooted, and will be added to some of the lesser attractive and/or crumbling walls. Experimentation involved planting sprigs of Creeping Fig in a pot, versus rooting the sprigs in clear jars of water. Both methods work, but the favored method is water, as it allows the viewing of the progression of the root growth.

Through the designing and planting of these two beds, we have learned some interesting things, and hope that others will as well, even if they are not owners of a cemetery! Some issues we have faced could apply in other situations with old structures or public gardens. Questions, especially regarding cemetery maintenance and upkeep, are welcomed.

Compiled by Shirley Lowe, Ebenezer Chairman & Historian, Aug. 7, 2020



“After” photo of Scatter Garden when volunteers, Dick and Nancy Lee returned to weed the garden with Shirley Lowe (left).

## THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS, COBB COUNTY

The 1.5 acre gardens at The Center for Children & Young Adults ([www.ccyakids.org](http://www.ccyakids.org)) consists of several types of gardens that include: a berry patch of blueberries, blackberries and raspberries, a hoop house for planting year round, an open field fenced Veggie Patch, Melon Hill for vine vegetables, an herb garden, a native plant garden and a flower garden. All produce grown on the CCYA campus goes to provide food for the 40 youth ages 12-20 who live at CCYA because they are homeless due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. The Center is a 24/7/365 day a year campus. The kitchen staff at CCYA is delighted to have fresh fruits and vegetables to use in meal preparation.



Beginning in January 2020, The MG Team ordered 5 bags of Super Sod so as to prepare soil in all gardens for planting. We planted the hoop house with lettuce, kale, cabbage, and collards. Work continued to make garden rows in the Veggie Patch area that is double fenced with a picket fence and rabbit fencing on the interior. Rabbits are sneaky critters and want very much to get into our greens.

When the Corona Virus hit in March and the state of Georgia went into lockdown, the CCYA Master Gardener Team voted to become essential workers and continue volunteering in the garden on a voluntary basis. We were given travel passes by the CCYA administration. Working outside, social distancing, and washing hands frequently became routine. Everyone on the Team of MG is a senior with the exception of our Garden Assistant who is young. She is paid through a grant and provided continuity of care to the garden throughout the week when MGEVs were not there. Feeding the kids at CCYA became more important than ever as food costs at The Center rose because kids were on campus 24/7.

Spring planting was done from seed, a large undertaking. This year, one of our Master Gardeners, Linda Petk, undertook the task of propagating all of our plants from seed at home and bringing baby plants to campus for planting. She transformed her house into a greenhouse. We planted approximately 20 tomato plants of different varieties, a hoop house full of several varieties of peppers- bell peppers, poblano peppers, banana peppers, jalapeno peppers, serrano peppers and cayenne peppers to name a few. We also planted okra, cucumbers, green beans, yellow beans, carrots, melons and squashes along with a variety of herbs and companion flowers. For the first time ever, we planted corn and it was a huge hit with everyone. We harvested over 100



## THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS, COBB COUNTY (Continued)

beautiful ears of corn bringing smiles to many faces.

Because many other MG projects were not up and running, we recruited several master gardeners from other projects to foster squash, peppers and, tomato plants that we had an abundance of due to the success of our propagation program we initiated. Those volunteers took our plants and fostered them in their own gardens, giving us the produce at harvest time.



Harvest time was phenomenal. Peppers were amazing, tomatoes abundant. The blueberry crop was amazing, the blackberries delicious. Raspberries were weak this year, leading us to trash some older plants and replace with new plants. Our figs were not hugely successful, but think staff and kids might have been eating the figs before they could be harvested. Our chickens (flock of one dozen) laid eggs throughout winter, spring and summer giving us about 75 eggs a week for scrambled

eggs, baking, and various egg dishes.

Throughout this time, maintenance work continued in the garden. We weeded, laid cardboard throughout rows to keep out weeds, and mulched everywhere. At the same time, we were incredibly fortunate in that a donor provided funding, materials, and labor to install an irrigation system into the hoop house, the large Veggie Patch, and a water source to the chicken coop. No more hand watering!!! Melon hill already had a drip irrigation system so now all of our vegetable gardens are irrigated.

Since removing our summer crops, we have plowed and cultivated our Veggie Patch garden and realigned the rows. We have purchased cinder blocks and will line each row to limit erosion of rows and to keep weeds to a minimum. We intend to fill cinder blocks with soil and grow companion herbs/plants alongside our major crops, hoping for more row definition.

A month ago, we removed all summer crops, turned over the soil, added supplements where needed, and have planted over 30 lettuce plants, 30 cabbage plants, and 30 collard plants in the hoop house. In the open Veggie Patch garden, we have planted more



## THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS, COBB COUNTY (Continued)

cabbage, mustard greens, more lettuce and kale. We intend to plant beets, herbs, garlic and more in coming weeks. We will be planting cover crops in other areas (Melon Hill) and mulching more as we finish the year. We have secured free mulch from numerous tree service companies and that action has reduced our expenses considerably.

As we finished the summer crops, we have grown over 1,600 pounds of fruits and vegetables. We hope to reach over 2,000 pounds by Christmas ending the year with success of most tonnage grown by our team ever. The team of MG has shown up on campus for 44 weeks consecutively and each master gardener has worked over 100 hours thus far.

Our next big step is to bring electricity to the hoop house so that we can move all of our seed propagation equipment, trays, to the hoop house and out of Linda's dining room. We want to have warming mats, lighting and such to be successful. Growing from seed has saved us approximately \$2,000 this year alone. When we requested funding from Georgia Master Gardeners, we said it would go to purchasing plants, but instead it has all gone to purchasing seeds. We have room in the hoop house to take on seed propagation and our garden assistant is eager to take on this project. We are seeking funding to pay for the electrician, materials, and all new seed propagation equipment, and with our history of how the Georgia Master Gardener \$500 funding was used by us this year, we are confident that we can demonstrate what a good investment the funding will be. Thanks to GMGA for helping us have a successful year in a time of uncertainty.

*Maureen Lok, Cobb MG CCYA Project Chair / Toni Moore, Douglas MG, CCYA Project Co-Chair / Linda Petkus, Cobb MG/ Lara Hedrick, Cobb MG/ Hubert Weiland, Cobb MG/ Zoe King, Garden Volunteer/ Hannah Beyer, CCYA Garden Assistant*



## Headwaters Master Gardeners Project Grant Report

Victory Home Greenhouse Revitalization, Tallulah Falls, Georgia, September 2019

By Kathy Booker, GMEV, Rabun County

This project is the result of a partnership with The Victory Home Inc. and Headwaters Master Gardeners. The Victory Home greenhouse is a 30ft x 100ft structure located on the property of Victory Home, Inc. located in Tallulah Falls, GA. The facility founded in 1959, is a faith-based, residential, intensive treatment program for men recovering from substance abuse. It has a favorable history in the community of providing quality vegetables and flowers for sale. Over the last several years the greenhouse has been sporadically functional due to inconsistent management and funding. It is equipped with the basic requirements for a successful plant growing environment.

This venue provides educational opportunities for master gardeners to learn new skills and to provide a service to another non-profit organization. We are mindful that this is a recovery property and the health, success and privacy of the men are the priority of the Victory Home organization.



Members of Headwaters Master Gardeners began the project in September 2019. It required total cleaning, pot washing, and general maintenance before starting. There were no funds available, so we began the task of fundraising with a very successful Wreath Making Class for the community in late November 2019, with 27 participants and a local florist who led the workshop that provided us with a financial boost. We received donations from Headwaters Master Gardeners, private individuals, and a grant from GMGA. Victory Home filled a 1000-gallon tank of propane gas for heat.

We had many donations of perennials during the fall and spring which did very well. We purchased the heating pads to help with germinating a variety of seeds. MGEV volun-



## Headwaters Master Gardeners Project Grant Report

(Continued)

teers and residents eagerly planted approximately 40 trays of 36 plants each (approximately 1,440 seed cells). We arrived one morning about a week later to find that the total effort had been destroyed by field mice – all the seeds were gone from the pots (see photo). We were surprised and disappointed by the damage. Seeds were not replanted in the greenhouse since it was getting late into the season and the mice problem had to be resolved. However, some of the volunteers did plant seed at home using our new heating pads and returned the plants to the greenhouse for maintenance.



Then along came the pandemic. We continued to care for the plants following CDC guidelines because we had been accepted and committed to having a large plant sale at Celebrate Clayton, an annual county festival held each April in Clayton, Georgia. Then the event was canceled due to COVID 19. Unfortunately, this was our largest fundraiser for the project and Headwaters Master Gardeners. We decided to have a plant sale from the greenhouse to dispose of our inventory following CDC guidelines. By word of mouth and Facebook, we sold 85% of our plants providing sales over \$2,000.00. The remainder of the plants were donated and taken to the Victory Home Thrift Store – they had sales of approximately \$600.00.



After we sold our inventory, we closed the greenhouse for the season due to the virus and summer heat. Our extension agents from Habersham, Rabun and White counties had helped us plant a cover crop in the early spring for a garden area for the residents. They came back, cut the rye and



## Headwaters Master Gardeners Project Grant Report

(Continued)



clover, and planted another cover crop. They also helped plant a small area of tomatoes and peppers for the residents to maintain and enjoy during the summer.

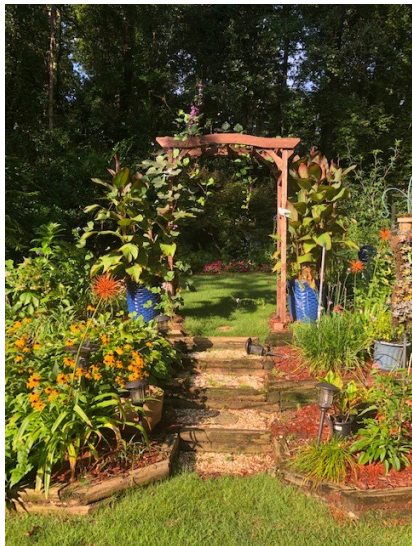
We met with the Victory Home administration to discuss our next steps in this ongoing project. This was an amazing first year effort – the group of MGEV’s are dedicated and looking forward to giving this project another attempt. We have been accepted again to participate in Celebrate Clayton, so we will work toward that event. It is reassuring to know that we have creative options for selling our plants if the pandemic is still here or if other unexpected things happen. The group is incredibly positive, and we are eager to make it a good experience for everyone.

We are very appreciative and thankful for all volunteers, our extension agents (Steven Patrick-Habersham, John Scaduto – Rabun, and Nathan Eason – White County), and Victory Home administration and residents who have made this project fun, interesting, educational, and financially worthy. Yes, there have been challenges, but we are pleased to know that our group can manage during a crisis and other unexpected turn of events. Thank you to GMGA for considering and selecting this effort for a grant.

Submitted by Kathy Booker, GMEV  
Rabun County



## The Allison Garden by Debra Allison



It all began with an engineer and an interior designer who had a mutual interest in gardening. Coming to the Augusta, GA area from the Midwest in the winter of 1990, Tom and Debra Allison had little idea of what challenges that the very hot summers and the clay soil drainage issues were to bring. They also had little idea of what their combined interest and a longer growing season were about to help them accomplish.

Drainage problems were the first issue to tackle. After discovering that the azaleas were failing due to wet roots, they proceeded to put in a lot of drains. While things were dug up, they extended the sprinkler system, and brought in load after load of top soil to mound the many areas where future gardens would be.

In 1995 the existing deck was torn off, and a sun room was added with lots of windows to look out onto the gardens that were still in the

planning stages. They then surrounded the sunroom with a new deck. The hard work paid off and emboldened them to plan for a water feature that would include 4 ponds connected by a stream and 4 waterfalls. As an engineer Tom was equipped to design and to build it. Four and a half tons of rock were brought in and after months of hard work it was finally completed. Fish and water plants were added to create a tropical paradise with the soothing sound of flowing water.

In the years that followed, gardens were carefully established that meandered and flowed into one another, creating a peaceful transition from a sunny perennial bed to a shady fern garden, connected with a curving swath of emerald zoysia grass.

Coming from the Midwest, Debra loved hostas and she started a special shade garden with a cobblestone pathway just for her growing collection. Other shade loving plants were also incorporated into the hosta garden creating a lovely and fresh variation of greens and textures. A moonlight garden which includes only white blooming plants and features a white fireplace mantel attached to the fence was a later addition.

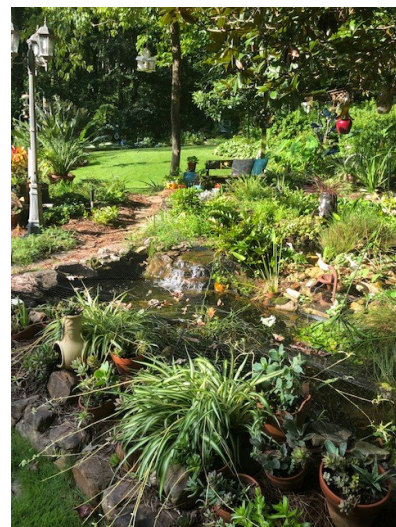
In 2012 a greenhouse equipped with heat and a watering system was built by Tom to overwinter tropical plants. The greenhouse was constructed out of



old windows and weathered fence boards, and is a focal point in the garden system. It is surrounded with colorful annuals and decorated with

old rusty tools. Tom also built a clever potting station incorporating a large old window and the rest of the weathered fence boards. Debra's mother's old turquoise ironing board is next to it covered with plants.

As an interior designer, Debra is good with plant placement and planning the flowing transitions between the

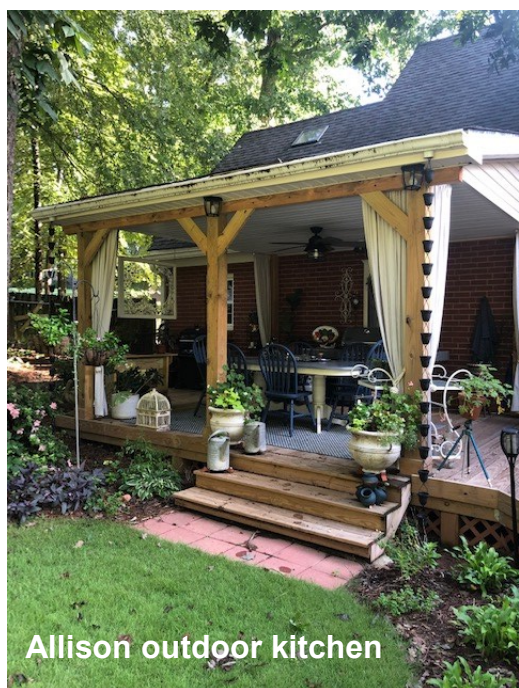


individual gardens. Debra also adds touches of whimsy that include the use of lots of blue wine bottles, blue and white plates, old crockery and pots as containers, several old plant-filled wheelbarrows, a succulent covered dress form, old wooden ladders and countless other thrift store finds that surprise and intrigue as you walk through. The gardens are continuously being filled in with new, gifted and propagated plants. Whimsical elements are also continuously added as they are found at garage sales and thrift shops.

Since the hobby had grown into a shared passion, Debra became a master gardener in 2011. Tom, upon his retirement, became a master gardener in 2019. Tom took a special interest in composting during his training and has a large and heathy compost pile that is used to add nutrients to the soil and to make plants healthy and large.

In the spring of 2019, the Allison's were asked to showcase their gardens in the Peekaboo Garden Tour scheduled for October of that year. In preparation for that, they decided to add the last structure that they had been planning. The deck was extended and a roofed space was added to house, which included an outdoor kitchen with a refurbished table and blue painted chairs. A ceiling fan, an area rug and tied back drapery panels made from drop cloths make it a comfortable and inviting area to entertain or just relax.

The gardens have become a place of beauty and joy way beyond Tom and Debra's original expectations, and they are always happy to give a tour to anyone interested or curious.



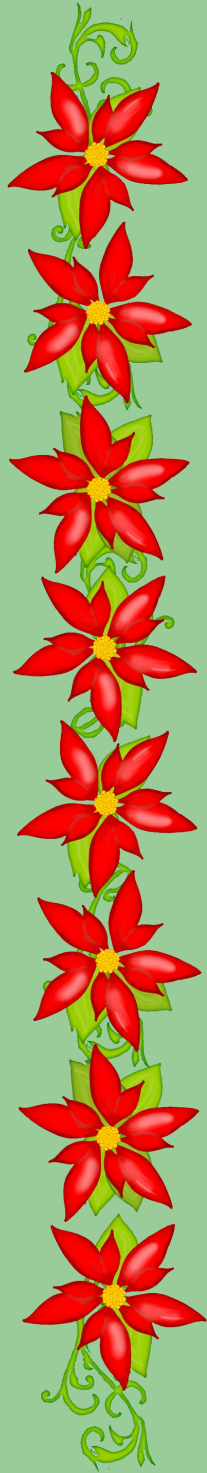
Allison outdoor kitchen



Tom & Debra Allison



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