

The Tipton county Master Gardeners Mobile trip

What a wonderful trip to Alabama's gulf coast September 29 through October 2, 2011. We stayed in Fairhope Alabama. This small town was beautiful and a perfect place to retire. The streets were lined with flowers in autumn colors. Hanging baskets of petunias graced light poles. Every building was decorated for the Tipton County Master Gardeners...well maybe not just for us but we'd like to think so. The restaurants were fabulous and we walked all over the town. I was most impressed by the walk to the pier. Every house and business appeared to be landscaped or decorated for visitors. The shops in town even had reasonable prices on everything from shoes and clothing to jewelry. The folks in Fairhope were so pleasant and friendly. You just didn't meet a stranger. All in all, we got to know more about each other if not make new friends.

Friday, at the Mobile Botanical Gardens we experienced guided tours of the gardens and the pine grove and treated to lunch by the Mobile Master Gardeners. These folks are an energetic group who alone take care of the Mobile Botanical Gardens. They volunteer their time with love for their Botanical Gardens and their funding is almost non-existing except for their annual plant sales (The next of which we were a week too early for). Later that afternoon and after a half a day, many of our own Master Gardeners went shopping in Foley Alabama at the outlet mall and then dinner at Lamberts (Home of the thrown rolls). A few of us walked down to the pier for a seafood dinner on the water where we watched the sunset.

Saturday, we went to Bellingrath Gardens, took a short river boat tour of the Fowl River, toured the house full of antiques and heard the story about the couple who had owned the place. We had lunch at the Bellingrath Gardens Café. Some of us walked the gardens before lunch the rest of us did so after lunch. We learned so much about the history of the area, the native wildlife, and a loving husband who wanted nothing more than to please his wife's love of gardening and collecting.

Finally, Saturday afternoon we loaded the bus for Dauphin Island where we visited the beach for some wading and photo ops. Next we took off to the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the Estuarium public aquarium, walked about at historical Fort Gains. Lastly, we went to the Bird Sanctuary only to find out over half of it caught fire two weeks before and we were not allowed in that area. Some of us did trek through the area that was open to the public only to witness firsthand what should have been the island's mascot...the mosquito. What a day. We had a terrific time and for some of us the night went on after dinner. I know our neighbors had a real good time! I can't wait until next year's trip.

Please be sure to see Roxi Phillip's video presentation on our trip to the Mobile area on our website under Garden Videos.