

The Colonial Master Gardener



PUBLICATION OF JCC/WBG MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION & VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

August 2007

FROM THE EXTENSION OFFICE LEANNE DUBOIS, EXTENSION AGENT, HORTICULTURE

Insect Report from the frontlines of Landscape Love: Wheel Bugs: Assassins of the Insect World

Carol Fryer brought in a strange insect from a Landscape Love visit. It was sent to Virginia Tech



and identified as a wheel bug. The wheel bug (*Arilus cristatus*) is a "monster" of the insect world. With its bizarre appearance and deadly beak, it is a dreaded foe of other insects. The wheel bug spears its unfortunate host with its sharp beak and sucks up the victim's body fluids. Wheel bugs are beneficial insects and should be considered valuable allies. Do not handle them, however, as they can inflict a painful and lasting "bite" with their beak. The wheel bug is one of the largest members of the family of insects known as assassin bugs. They feed voraciously on caterpillars, such as the fall webworms and cabbageworm. Wheel bugs have been reported to feed on Japanese beetles, spotted cucumber beetles, leafmining beetle larvae inside the leaf and other insects and wheel bug nymphs feed on aphids and other small insects. Another beneficial to know and encourage in the landscape.

Clippings from Extension....



(half watermelon and half cantaloupe) was

found at Farm Fresh and opened for tasting at Garrett's Grocery store in beautiful downtown Croaker. (At first glance it appeared to be an urban myth not unlike the jackalope or big foot.) The seeds were brought to my office this spring and are being grown in my garden as well as others in the Incredible Edible program. We'll have a "Waterlope" harvesting report later in the season.

Fire Blight has been seen lately in the landscape on Bradford Pears. Blossoms and leaves wilt suddenly, turn dark brown to black, shrivel, and die, but usually remain attached to the plant. Fire blight is worse on succulent tissue so avoid excessive use of nitrogenous fertilizers and excessive pruning, both of which promote succulent growth and also remove water sprouts as they appear. Water sprouts are very susceptible to infection and can provide direct access of the bacteria to the trunk. Chemical control is not generally recommended. During the late summer when bacterial growth slows, all infected twigs and branches should be pruned out and burned or buried. See Publication for photos and more information: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/plantdiseases/450-610/450-610.html>

The Extension office frequently receives special notes or phone calls expressing gratitude for the assistance you have given our citizens. One homeowner recently wrote, "I want to thank the Master Gardeners for the great information and help with my little piece of Virginia earth, I learned so much and will put their advice to good use."

Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, August 2,
Williamsburg Regional
Library, *Heirloom Seeds*,
Leanne DuBois, Extension Agent, Horticulture



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Internal Education News Jean Winters

The very act of planting a seed in the earth has in it to me something beautiful. I always do it with a joy that is largely mixed with awe...Yes, the sowing of a seed seems a very simple matter; but I always feel as if it were a sacred thing among the mysteries of God. Standing by that space of blank and motionless ground, I think of all it holds for me of beauty and delight, and I am filled with joy...Celia Thaxter

Yes, the planting of seeds is such a special part of gardening...the wonder of what is to grow from such small parts of Mother Nature's bounty. So it is that we look forward to learning about "heirloom seeds", the topic that Leanne DuBois will share with us at our August 2nd meeting. As the season moves on and cooler

weather, hopefully, will begin to encourage changes in our landscapes, we will learn more about our backyards at the September meeting, when Carol Heiser from the Game and Inland Fisheries Department will address us. Much to anticipate!

I hope your gardening is going well. That tomato plant I mentioned last month has provided several nice veggies for our salads thus far...the herbs are doing well also, though they have needed daily watering! I guess we're all having to help with the thirst challenge...keep the bird baths filled too!

Super Turf Saturday Bob Winters

It's that time again! Hopefully August 18th will be bigger and better than ever! There will be some improvements in content as well as logistics. Content for these sessions include adding a PM session on Soil Enhancements and enlarging the Trade Show and Displays. Logistically, we start earlier (8:00 AM) and finish later (4:00 PM) to allow time for all attendees to attend all classes and panel discussions.

As usual we will need volunteers in the following areas:

- Refreshments (4)
- Registration (4)
- Class Facilitators (AM) (3)
- Class Facilitators (PM) (3)
- First Panel Discussion Leaders (3)
- Second Panel Discussion Leaders (3)
- Trade Show Set-up Team (4)
- Trade Show Knock-down Team (4)
- Prize Team (2)
- Roving MG Ambassadors (2)

Sign-up Sheets will be available at the August meeting. Or, you can call Bob and Jean at 564-1662 or e-mail at rowinter@vt.edu All assistance will be gratefully appreciated!

If you plan to attend for Continuing Education credits, please register using the forms provided on line at jccwmg.org or using forms to be found at the Extension Office or the Recreation Center on Longhill Road, including your check for \$12.00. Worker Bees do not need to register and can audit as many sessions as seating will allow. Lunches for volunteers will be provided.

We look forward to a great day...a wonderful way to serve our community and further expand the Turf Love knowledge!

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- August 18 Sixth Annual Super Turf Saturday, see above for details
- Sept 6 monthly MG meeting, Carol Heiser, [Habitat at Home](#)
- Oct 4 monthly MG meeting, Charlie Staton, [Robert Beverly Looks Back, 1607-1707](#)
- Oct 22-28 Operation Rejuvenation Swarm, see page 5 of this newsletter

We're on the web
at
www.jccwmg.org

America's Anniversary Garden News Leanne DuBois, Extension Agent, Horticulture

To kick off the America's Anniversary Weekend in Williamsburg marking the peak of the 18 month commemoration activities for the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, an America's Anniversary Garden was planted on the grounds of the Virginia State Capital in Richmond. On May 9th volunteers and Anniversary Garden partnering organizations designed and planted a 1500 square foot red, white and blue garden at the northwest corner of Capital Square near the entrance to the General Assembly Building. Governor Tim Kaine, who planted the first America's Anniversary Garden across from the Jamestown Settlement during part of his Inauguration events in January of 2006, recently signed a Certificate of Recognition celebrating America's Anniversary Garden Week in Virginia.



America's Anniversary Garden Project Gardeners Awards

The America's Anniversary Garden Project team, Joyce Latimer, Bonnie Appleton, Leanne DuBois and Dave Close, has been awarded the CALS College Award for Outreach Excellence. The awards, made possible through funding from Virginia Tech's Outreach and International Affairs, recognize the efforts of faculty who have made outstanding contributions in "putting knowledge to work" for the benefit of constituencies outside the university. The award was presented at the annual Faculty/Staff Awards Luncheon.

The AAG publication, "America's Anniversary Garden: Bulbs for a Red White and Blue Spring Garden" won the 2007 American Society for Horticultural Science Extension Materials Award in the category of leaflets. The award was presented at the annual conference in Arizona in July.

Photo (left to right) Front Row: Leanne DuBois, Joyce Latimer, Kathy Duncan. Back Row: Sylvia Miller, Jo-Ann Santos (Henrico County Master Gardeners) Joel Koci and Dianna Nolan (JCC/W Master Gardener)

IS DIRT THE NEW PROZAC? SUBMITTED BY MARY LIZ SADLER, FROM ODE MAGAZINE

If you're feeling down, consider digging in the dirt. British researchers have shown that "friendly" bacteria common in soil can cause brain cells to produce serotonin, a hormone that helps regulate mood. Low serotonin levels are linked to depression.

A team led by Chris Lowry of Bristol University recently reported in *Neuroscience* that administering *Mycobacterium vaccae* (*M. vaccae*) to mice triggered an immune response that led to the release of serotonin in their brains. Higher serotonin levels, in turn, can reduce stress. The mice injected with the bacteria behaved as though they had received antidepressants.

Although it's a leap from mice to men, the rodent studies were actually inspired by research on humans. Mary O'Brien, an oncologist at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London, observed surprising side effects when she gave a small group of lung cancer patients receiving chemotherapy a dose of heat killed *M. vaccae*. Not only did the lung cancer patients have fewer symptoms, but their emotional and mental well being also improved.

More research is needed to determine whether *M. vaccae* could lead to more effective antidepressants. In the meantime, it certainly wouldn't hurt to spend a little more time in the garden.

2007-2008 MG Board

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258-8632

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564-1888

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564-2170

EDITORS NOTE: The deadline for submission of material for the September Newsletter is August 15. Please send to Lise Kline, newsletter editor, at legskline@cox.net or call 757-259-9477. Comments and questions about the newsletter are also welcome. Thank you.

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MG Program Updates (and other info)

Melissa's Meadow:

will not meet formally in August but we will in September. Weeding and enjoying the meadow on ones own is encouraged.

MG College highlight:

We are the winners of the Search For Excellence Brag Board competition for youth education activity. Kari Abbot's display was showcased thru Carol Fryer's help. Congratulations and gratitude to all those who played a part!



Grace Raymond (on the left), MG, and Cynthia Long, member of the Native Plant Society, at Melissa's Meadow.

HRAREC'S TOP TEN FROM 2006 FLOWER TRIALS

Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center (HRAREC) selections from their 2006 trials – top performers and most popular. (left to right)



- Ψ 'Celosia Fresh Look Mix'
- Ψ Digitalis 'Camelot Series'
- Ψ Gaillardia 'Arizona Sun'
- Ψ Double Impatiens 'Silhouette Series'
- Ψ Gaillardia 'Sundance Bicolor'



- Ψ Impatiens 'Mini Firefly Series'
- Ψ Melampodium 'Golden Globe'
- Ψ Rudbeckia 'Prairie Sun'
- Ψ Ornamental Pepper 'Black Pearl'
- Ψ Zinnia 'Magellan Series'

www.vaes.org.vt.edu/HRAREC/Trial%20Gardens/TopTen2006.htm

GARDEN GATE READER'S TOP ANNUALS PICKS

For pictures and details, see May/June 2007 issue.

- Ψ Marigold *Tagetes* spp.
- Ψ Petunia *Petunia* hybrid
- Ψ Zinnia *Zinnia* hybrid
- Ψ Snapdragon *Antirrhinum* hybrid
- Ψ Spider flower *Cleome hassleriana*
- Ψ Nicotiana *Nicotiana* hybrid
- Ψ Impatiens *Impatiens walleriana*
- Ψ Cosmos *Cosmos* spp.
- Ψ Globe amaranth *Gomphrena* spp.
- Ψ Lantana *Lantana camara*
- Ψ Tall verbena *Verbena bonariensis*



Ann DeForest (on the right), Tree Steward and MG, is working on grafting a prized Japanese Maple for a homeowner.

MG Contact Update

Ruth Ann Penberthy

email address:

RAPenberthyW@aol.com

(Please note correction from July MG newsletter)

Roger Meyer

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rlmeyer1@cox.net

Operation Rejuvenation:

During our 20th Annual MG College, special guests from the Mississippi MG program shared more details about the devastation created in coastal Mississippi by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and upcoming work projects in October. Two charter buses from Virginia will be going to participate in the restoration of public and/or teaching gardens. A \$100 deposit (per person) is due by July 31st in order to hold a slot for the trip. The remaining balance (yet to be determined) will be due September 14th. Checks should be payable to the VT Foundation and reference account number 873993 in the memo line of the check. Mail to Dave Close, VCE State Master Gardener Coordinator, Virginia Tech, DP of Horticulture, 407 Saunders (0327), Blacksburg VA 24061. We must have at least 35 people per bus in order to make the transportation affordable. You may find details at

<http://msmastergardener.org/Operation%20Rejuvenation%20S%20warm.htm>



Laura Hill, MG intern, is at work at the Helpdesk.



Dirt from Matthey's Garden:

Matthey's Garden has never looked better in spite of the dry weather! A wonderful group of interns and seasoned MG's have worked throughout the spring and into the summer. We also have families signed up to help from June 17 until September 1.

Classes have continued into the summer for the Summer School students. At our first lesson we learned about composting and began the process in our wonderful wooden compost bin. Intern Pat Janot has taken on this as her project. We plan to have compost by the end of July when Summer School is over.

The students have also planted vegetables and are beginning to harvest those.

With the help of Cheri White, former Matthew Whaley secretary, we now have a beautiful color brochure giving information about the garden as well as a revised map of the garden. Signage for plants will be going in soon and two new benches were given in honor of Peggy Mylum, long-time staff member who retired in June.

Matthey's Garden will be the program at the September meeting of the Williamsburg Garden Club. Also at that meeting there will be a silent auction. Funds from that auction will benefit the garden. We are looking at purchasing an additional umbrella and stand so that two full classes can sit in the shade (we are blessed with FULL sun) as well as new tools, a garden flag and perhaps a bird bath. T-shirts have been designed with the Matthey logo and will be for sale in August or September.

Please take a minute and come by and see this garden!

In Memory of

*Janet Klane
MG Class of 2007*

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Memorials may be sent to the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, 119 S. Witchduck Rd., Suite 85, VA Beach, VA 23462.