



The Colonial Master Gardener

Publication of JCC/WBG Master Gardener Association & Virginia Cooperative Extension

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SUSTAINABLE GARDENING: ARE WE GOOD STEWARDS?

Why is stewardship important? Past heroic efforts to maintain a delicate or demanding garden were based on frequent use of chemicals, abundant water supplies and massive soil amending. Given today's fragile and already depleted environment these practices can no longer be justified. We must:

- Select plants compatible to our growing conditions.
- Reassess our gardening practices and take advantage of horticultural tools, technology and knowledge. Attend workshops taught by local gardening professionals, read and apply information from online gardening sites and local publications.
- Measure every gardening decision against its environmental impact. Recognize our stewardship of the Earth.

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NEWSLETTER

Charlie Clapper '02

The purpose of the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener is to learn, educate and communicate environmentally sound horticultural practices to the community. Trained by the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Master Gardener volunteers are committed to offering information to the public through sustainable landscape management educational programs.

Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream. Barbara Winkler

DID YOU SAY PRUNING?

Is winter over yet? I know that we're all getting itchy with those seed and flower catalogs in our laps. But -- and I don't mean to be preaching to the choir -- February is here and we should be directing our attention to the pruning needs of our deciduous trees and shrubs. This is the perfect time to assess their overall form, bad or crossing branches, and the need for thinning some material. You might even be able to identify storm damage not noted earlier. Additionally, it's time to cut back butterfly bushes and vitex, and thin nandina stalks. Don't become too complacent -- March will be the time to prune your hollies, liriopse and mondo grass (and probably other things that don't immediately come to mind). If your pruning techniques need refreshing, dig out your Virginia Tech publications to get back up to speed. Finally, HELP STAMP OUT GRAPE MURDER!! **George Anderson**

Kudos to Minouche Robinson for organizing a successful graduation dinner and to Ed Overton for contributing to educational programming in memory of recently deceased friends and relatives.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Art Gustafson and I thank all of you [they're engaged Ed.] for your good wishes. As one of our fellow master gardeners commented, it is indeed amazing what gardening can lead us into!

Our third Graduation Dinner was well attended and enjoyed by all. From the delicious variety of entrees, salads and desserts, being a Master Gardener must be nearly synonymous with being a good cook. The lovely centerpieces that Minouche made for the occasion are being donated for our spring plant sale. The 2003 Graduating Class received well-deserved applause, along with their hardworking teachers Sally, Rudy and Sue. The talk by Lisa Zeigler proved so interesting that I'm hoping to get a MG trip organized for her workshop.

Generally the first three months of the year have little going on in our group. 2004 seems to be an exception. Our 2004 MG Training has begun with a record 35 attending. On February 21 Master Gardeners will begin the Tree Steward Class. Extension, JCC/W and York Master Gardeners, and Peninsula Tree Stewards along with other community groups are organizing a Community Reforestation Project for March 13th. We are also in the process of developing a daylong Master Gardener Seminar for March 20 with the recognized title of Spring Into Gardening. Gardening with Children with Charlene Talcott as chair will be presented on April 3. Last, but not least, Cathy Ripley is busily organizing our annual plant sale for April 24. All of these endeavors need volunteers. A call or e-mail is all it takes if you'd like to become involved. Remember, it is amazing what gardening can lead us into.

Barbara Schroeder

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TIP

By now you're probably on the brink of breaking your resolutions if you haven't already... May I suggest a practical approach with far reaching results and guaranteed success? How about keeping your MG Reporting Hours up to date this year? Your time sheets and records have greater importance than many realize. The reporting system provides information critical for recognition and acknowledgement not only for you, but for our organization, the state and the nation. Your contributions justify support from funding and granting agencies. Regarding recertification hours, Dianne Relf, retired Virginia Tech Horticulture Specialist, told me that, "if the program will enhance you being a better Master Gardener, then it counts." So don't be too modest about your contributions! This avoids other MG's from bugging you-- when you'd rather be gardening. **Leanne DuBois**

FRIENDLY HERBS

Last month featured strong herbs, those weight lifting powerful ones – basil, oregano, and bay -- that work wonders in spaghetti sauce but overwhelm other foods. Friendly herbs work much more quietly, even daintily. Friendly herbs – dill, thyme, rosemary and tarragon -- work wonders with poultry, fish and milder veggies. Rosemary (for remembrance) grows here quite well. Like thyme, once established it flourishes and spreads quite happily. Try rosemary with chicken or pork loin; thyme with chicken breasts or Brussels sprouts. Dill, much beloved in Scandinavia, works well with carrots, green beans or cucumbers. Tarragon, one of the most elegant of all herbs, flavors such French classics as chicken tarragon and sauce béarnaise.

Try friendly herbs in salads. They're especially good when freshly picked and added just as the salad dressing goes on! (For a kick, add a tad of fresh curry powder to your vinaigrette).

Friendly herbs: good friends, seldom seeking the spotlight, always improving flavor.

Helene Kraige

THE BOOK CORNER

What is your favorite gardening book? Of the many that I have, Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening is THE ONE. It's the jumping-off spot for further research; it's the quick-fix when I need just a little bit of information. It's in a handy spot in the bookcase, and its binding shows its age. Unfortunately, Taylor's is, I think, now out of print, and like so many of its ilk, the information in some areas has changed through the years. Some plants are re-identified and located in different families as a result of on-going research; zone maps are periodically re-done on the basis of changing weather patterns, etc. However, it still works as a spring-board. If you're an aficionado of book sales and used book shops as I am, I recommend that you look for a copy of Taylor's!

On the other hand, you probably have your favorite resource, too. Why don't you e-mail me at bartpear@widomaker.com and let me know what it is? Give me author, title, place, publisher, and date, and a short paragraph on why you think it's good, what its shortcomings might be, and so on. We'll continue this train of thought for a time of year when we should be hitting the books in preparation for the spring breakout. **Ailene Bartlett.**

OFF AND RUNNING -- 2004 CLASS

By now, you are all aware that the 2004 class is our largest ever. There are 34 potential Master Gardeners enrolled, plus one county employee, plus Ann Odle, a transfer member from GA, who is auditing the class. We also have a growing waiting list for next year.

The new facility seems to be working out with just a few minor (so far) quirks. Certainly its size is an asset even if it is harder to make coffee! The class is very enthusiastic and I find its make-up very interesting. The students come with a variety of gardening experience and knowledge: two are home schooling their children and show interest in becoming involved with the Jr. Master Gardener program, 9 are men, two of whom are taking the class with their wives, and I sense that a few students could probably teach some of the classes themselves! The majority of the students are as they always are: self-taught gardeners who love to garden and want to learn more in order to give back to the community. I am always impressed with the backgrounds and knowledge they bring and with the questions they have for the instructors. **Sally Sissel**

COMMUNITY REFORESTATION PROJECT

March 13, 2004

JCC/Williamsburg Community Center

Longhill Road, Williamsburg

Responding to the need for low cost replacement trees lost during Hurricane Isabel, a Community Reforestation Project has been organized by area Conservation and Community partners. On March 13, 2004 from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. a selection of native bare root hardwood and pine varieties will be available to the public. The trees come from the Virginia Department of Forestry and are native species selected by the Peninsula Tree Stewards. The event will also feature education resources and materials, tree care and maintenance clinics, an *ask the Experts* forum and more. For further information please call James City County Cooperative Extension at 564-2170. "Good Gardening" Symposium

THE FORGOTTEN SEASON[s]

13 March, 2004, 9:30-3:00

Extension Pavilion, Randolph Farm, VSU in Ettrick, VA [20 miles south of Richmond]

Call 804-861-8055 for required preregistration forms

Eligible for continuing education hours. Cost \$10

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING
FEBRUARY 6, 2004, 9:00 a.m.
Bruton Heights
CAMELLIAS!
Bob Goodhart
University Landscape Advisor
Christopher Newport University

PRUNING STORM-DAMAGED TREES AND SHRUBS

February 16, 7-9 pm

Williamsburg Regional Library Theatre

Wondering what to do for your hurricane-damaged trees and shrubs? Attend a free clinic. Lynn Trott, Master Gardener of James City County, and a representative of the Peninsula Tree Stewards will discuss, demonstrate and answer your questions about pruning methods and storm damage effects on trees and shrubs. Tools and sharpening techniques will also be covered. You will also receive handouts from Virginia Tech for reference and further information.

SPRING INTO GARDENING

March 13, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

JCC/Williamsburg Community Center

Event is in the planning stages. Seminar will discuss turf alternatives, pruning, drought tolerant plants, turf management and changing from a shade to a sun garden.

GARDENING WITH CHILDREN

April 3

JCC/Williamsburg Community Center

Look for more information soon on this event being chaired by Charlene Talcott

PLANT SALE –APRIL 24th – MARK YOUR CALENDARS

JCC/Williamsburg Community Center

Help Prepare 1:00 pm Friday April 23

To increase our profit, please bring at least 12 seedlings and 12 transplants. If you need help potting or have extra pots, e-mail me at cathysbri@aol.com. No bake sale this year. Please sign up to help at the February meeting. Put on those “potting thinking caps.” **Cathy Ripley**

Visit the Master Gardeners Association website at <http://jccwmg.org> for a complete listing of upcoming events and educational opportunities. Use of the county van may be possible for out of town events. Call Ann Odle if interested.

Editors Note: Monthly meeting minutes will be available at the meetings. Let me know what you think! Your participation, interest and support are important to maintaining a quality newsletter. I'll try to make each issue timely and relevant but I depend upon the membership for accurate information and timely submission of articles. Thanks to this month's contributors.

Charlie Clapper