

The Colonial Master Gardener

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



February 2008

JAMES CITY COUNTY CITIZENS' COALITION BARBARA GUSTAFSON

The J4C (James City County Citizens' Coalition) has asked our Master Gardener Association to join their organization as a community interest group. Our purpose is to provide research-based knowledge on the environment and horticultural matters. After obtaining the approval of Leanne and our Master Gardener board, I agreed to serve as the Master Gardener representative on their board of directors.

J4C is an umbrella community liaison and action group formed to coordinate the activities of existing groups working to protect and preserve the historic, cultural and environmental resources and quality of life within our community and surrounding area. Any individual or group interested in the mission of this group is welcome to attend. There is no membership fee, but donations are accepted.

Currently J4C is comprised of 102 individual members, seven HOA's representing 4,300 members, and seven community groups representing 1200 members. Along with us, the community groups are the Alliance for Responsible Land Use (ARLU), the Friends of Forge Road and Toano (FORT), the Friends of Powhatan Creek Watershed (FOPCW), Ford's Colony Citizens for Controlled Growth (FCCCG), Historic Route 5 Association (HR5A), and Stonehouse District Association. The board of directors consists of representatives of each HOA and community group, a number of well-informed community members including three from W & M, and the executive board (a chair, past chair, secretary and treasurer selected from the total membership).

Under this structure, the group receives, defines and addresses issues of common concern, such as traffic, development, water, infrastructure, schools, or emergency services and develops and presents positions on issues to the County Boards and Commissions. Its vision reads "The J4C's is a recognized, effective

communicator, educator and liaison for the citizens of the County dedicated to protecting and preserving the history, culture, and environment that contributes to the health of our community for all residents. The J4C's efforts on development, traffic, water resources, schools and infrastructure ensure their adequacy for future generations."

As part of the dissemination of information in these areas, J4C has urged informational discourse when appropriate at the Board of Supervisors meetings, written a number of informative articles in our local newspaper and developed several educational forums for our community this past year. A number of our members have attended these and some have participated in the presentations. The tentative schedule for forums this year are Green Development (January), Reclaimed Water (February), Energy Conservation (February/March), Traffic/Transportation (March), Economic Development (March/April), Wetlands (April) and Conservation Fair (May). Knowledgeable members of our association could assist in a number of these areas. I also hope to use our new project, The Mobile Master Gardener, to assist in educating the public. I will be happy to discuss with you how you may be of assistance.

Another area where we may wish to participate is in the study groups focusing on the areas of concern to be addressed in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. These study areas are: Cumulative Impact/Population Goal, Protecting the Environment, Public Process, Land Use, Workforce Housing, Traffic, Economic Development, and Water Supply Management. The results from these study groups will be reported in the Citizen Participation Team (CPT) meeting monthly with members of JCC, of which J4C has a member. If any of you would like to participate in one of these groups, you may contact Terry Elkins, tjelkins@cox.net, attend the next J4C meeting February 7, or speak with me.

Next Monthly Meeting

February 7, 9:00 am,
Williamsburg Regional
Library, Charlie Staton,
*"Robert Beverly Looks
Back, 1607-1707"*

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Internal Education News Jean Winters

*Oh, love is to the human
What sunshine is to flowers;
And friendship is the fairest thing
In this cold world of ours...*

Anonymous
Happy Valentine's Day!

In keeping with the "Mother Nature friendly choices" we heard about when Bill Garlette visited in early January, I would like to share the following recipe for a homemade fungicide/insecticide combination given to me by my neighbor...

3 T of baking soda
2 T each Murphy's oil soap
canola oil
white vinegar
2 gallons of warm water.

Mix and put in sprayer for misting plants until it runs off the ends of leaves. Spray in the early morning or on a cloudy day. It is nontoxic and won't harm pets, insects, wildlife or children.

We won't need this just now, but when we do, it

might help!

As we look to February's meeting, I invite you to hear Charlie Staton. He loves history, though he works in Communications with the Police Department. He has been working on a republication of a book about Robert Beverly who lived several centuries ago. It sounds like an interesting topic...especially with Charlie in costume!

As of this writing some of our bulbs are peeking up out of the ground! Are yours? Let's hope they will bloom at the "right time"!

My best wishes and congratulations go to our new fellow Master Gardeners! May you continue to enjoy your participation in our association...your enthusiasm has shown through with all that you have accomplished thus far! And to our new "Interns", may I wish you well as you embark on a new "fork in the road"...the road to enhanced understanding of gardening as encouraged through Virginia Tech. We are behind you all the way!

EDITORS NOTE: The deadline for submission of material for the March Newsletter is February 18. 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.

2007-2008
MG Board

President:

Dave Banks '03
258-8632

VP Projects:

Judy Hansen '04
345-0958

VP Internal Ed:

Jean Winters '01
564-1662

VP Youth:

Lynn Flood '02
220-3864

Secretary:

Pat Crowe '05
645-4538

Treasurer:

Sarah Dougherty '06
565-7954

VMGA Rep:

Anne Odle '03
259-9025

Past President:

Charlie Clapper '02
564-6191

At-Large:

Barbara Gustafson '99
564-1888

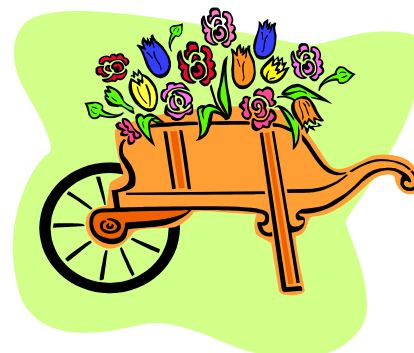
Extension Agent:

Leanne DuBois '96
564-2170

Plant Sale Workshop: Starting Plants from Seed

February 9, 2008, 9:30 am
at Becky Sutton's home
124 Swinley Forest in Ford's Colony
contact rebecca.sutton@cox.net

Earn recertification hours and help the Plant Sale!



Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Feb 9 Plant Sale Workshop, Starting Plants from Seeds, see above
- Mar 1 TURF LOVE "U" Spring Session
- Mar 6 monthly MG meeting, TBA
- Mar 8 Plant Sale Workshop, Hypertufa Containers
- Apr 26 MG Annual Plant Sale, Williamsburg Community Building, 9-12
- May 10 Water Workshop, see Page 1 Jan 2008 MG newsletter

PANSIES HELEN HAMILTON

These little guys are certainly resilient, with their bright smiling “faces” under the snow! Most gardeners, city planners, and landscape experts in North America, zones 6, 7, and 8, plant pansies in the fall to enjoy their color throughout the winter and into spring. They are a remarkable winter annual capable of surviving temperatures down to the single digits, freezing solid, then bouncing back with vigor when warm weather returns.

The European native Johnny-jump-up, *Viola tricolor* or *Viola cornuta*, thrives in alpine meadows and on rocky ledges, growing in sunny, open areas. The flowers are smaller and colors are limited to blues, violets, yellows, pinks and whites. Johnny-jump-ups flower heavily and are more heat-resistant than pansies. First blooming around February 17, they are ideal for planting around bulbs and larger flowers.

A huge genus, *Viola* spp. were known to the Greeks in the 4th Century BC who used them as medicinal herbs. However, garden pansies did not appear until the early 1800's when William Thompson, an English gardener, bred several species of *Violas* to create the larger, brightly colored flowers we know today as pansies. He is credited with developing the “face” type pansies, and the first was named ‘Medora’ in 1839. Our present-day pansy, *Viola x wittrockiana*, a complex hybrid of many *Viola* species, originated by hybridization between *V. tricolor* and other species such as *V. lutea*, selected for large and colorful flowers.



By the 1850's many pansy strains were available and breeding efforts continued in England, Scotland and Switzerland. At the turn of the 20th century, Dr. Charles Stewart, a Scottish grower, introduced pansies with clear colors or no faces. In this century, pansy breeding efforts continue in the United States, Germany, Italy and Japan. Breeders continue to introduce pansies with novel colors and color combinations, larger flower sizes and durability.

Pansy flowers are available in every color of the rainbow with three basic color patterns: the single, clear color types; the single color type with black penciling radiating from the center; and the common “face” type with the dark centers. Some varieties have crinkled or ruffled

edges, double flowers, and flowers up to 4 inches in diameter. Today there are more than 300 cultivars of pansies.

Pansies grow best in a location that receives morning sun and has rich, well-draining organic soil with added manure, leaf mold or compost. They require moisture, but cannot tolerate wet feet. Planting pansies on elevated beds, 6 to 10 inches above the existing grade, will not only ensure good drainage but will improve the visibility of the color display.

Seeds can be sown indoors in late summer, six to eight weeks before transplanting. The pansies can be transplanted into the garden once the summer heat has been broken and cooler weather arrives.

When air temperature drops below 25 degrees F, pansy foliage will wilt and turn a gray-green color. This is a normal defense response to cold weather. Pine straw, applied 2 to 4 inches thick, over the top of the entire bed (plants and all) during extreme cold is one of the best ways to save a pansy planting from freeze injury. Healthy plants can generally survive short periods of temperatures down to the single digits without protection.

When grown at the proper pH (below 5.8), pansies are relatively free from nutritional disorders; generally they are disease and pest free and will bloom prolifically with little care. Although in some regions of temperate climate, pansies may be perennial, our tidewater summers are usually too hot and dry for their continuous growth. While they may seed themselves, pansies often must be re-planted for next year's bloom.

There are several perennial *Viola* species (*V. labradorica*, *V. papilionacea*, *V. pedata*) that are native, woodland wildflowers in eastern U.S. *V. palmata* is mucilaginous and has been used in making soup; the roots of *V. pedata* are slightly laxative and *V. rotundifolia* was used in the early 1800's in Pennsylvania to cure all sorts of wounds and sores. The name “confederate” violet has been applied to a color variation of the common blue violet, *V. priceana* and also to the little field pansy *V. rafinesquii*.

The word “pansy” is traced back to the French word *pen-see*, meaning “thought” or “remembrance”. Shakespeare referenced violets in several plays: “I think the king is but a man, as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me.” Henry V

You know you're a Master Gardener when ...

MG Contact Update

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Toddy Voorhees
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- ☼ You rejoice in rain...even after 10 straight days of it.
- ☼ You have pride in how bad your hands look.
- ☼ You have a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.
- ☼ You can give away plants easily, but compost is another thing.
- ☼ Soil test results actually mean something.
- ☼ You'd rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothes store.
- ☼ You look for gardens open to the public whenever you go on vacation.
- ☼ Your non-gardening spouse is actually getting involved with your garden endeavors...digging ponds, building bird houses, watering, pruning, turning compost piles, planting...

And you definitely know you're a Master Gardener when...
You are surrounded by terrific people who share your passion!

author: Debra A. Aleksinas, submitted to the MG Newsletter by Joan Sage

JCC/W MG Mission Statement

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.

MOBILE MASTER GARDENER SPRING CAMPAIGN DENNY MEHIGAN

The Mobile Master Gardener (MG) Project is moving into its first spring campaign and needs your participation to ensure success. Now is the time to plan for events within your communities where it would be appropriate to include the Mobile MG display.

The Mobile MG is designed to expand our outreach efforts further into the community by participating in events where people work, play, and live. It provides a capability to participate in any community venue to educate and communicate environmentally sound horticultural practices through the use of a static display and approved literature. The display is designed to increase awareness and prompt interest to learn more about the subject matter presented. It takes the Master Gardener presence into smaller venues in the workplace or neighborhoods and larger events like a county fair.

What can you do to use the MG display? Look at upcoming community events where you live, work, or play and decide where it would be appropriate to use the MG display. Contact the organizers to see if they would welcome our participation. Remember, you will only need space for a six foot table that hopefully they will provide. If not, a table and tablecloth can be arranged by contacting Denny Mehigan, the project lead at dme-higan@cox.net or 220-8846. Also, find out

what concerns the intended audience have so the display can be modified to their needs. Denny will work with you to build the display and then demonstrate the setup and recovery. Once the display is completed, you can transport it to the event and return it upon completion.

Using this tool as part of our outreach efforts depends upon the full participation of Master Gardeners to identify venue opportunities, refine information needs, and support the display during development and actual presentation. The key aspect to the success of this project is to encourage all MGs to make a commitment to raise awareness within their respective communities. Awareness can be raised by submitting articles of horticultural and environmental interest to monthly community newsletters/bulletins

Give Denny a call today to see if the MG display is the tool for you to build your community awareness effort.

Our thoughts and prayers are with fellow MGs:

Jean Ripley, whose sister, Ruth Stewart, passed away

Duane McSmith, whose wife, Iva McSmith, passed away



The Colonial Master Gardener February 2008

E2 KARI ABBOTT, CHAIRPERSON

There is excitement brewing in your Environmental Education program.

There is a "plot" of trees between the bus circle and driveway at DJ Montague Elementary School. There are 17 different types of trees in this little acreage in front of the school. It really is a quite amazing space. Dr. Jeff Kirwin from VA Tech walked through the trees with me this summer and commented that it was definitely a space that should be a classroom. On Friday, January 18, 2008, funding to make the tree lot into a classroom was awarded to the E² program, through competing in a national grant program, *Greenworks!*. The grant is a community service, education, learning grant that is distributed through the National Project Learning Tree offices. There will be many things to do to convert this space into a functional learning space called the "Conservation Classroom." It will make for a very exciting year!

Already a Boy Scout has agreed to do his Eagle Scout Project, building picnic tables, making tree signs, and creating safe, environmentally friendly pathways into the "Conservation Classroom." Other scouts will be asked to help clean up the area. There will be classes for all grade levels at DJ Montague, utilizing the Project Learning Tree curriculum, to provide curriculum that works in conjunction with the Conservation Classroom.

Upcoming Events at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden's Monthly Walk and Talk Educational Series, Saturday, February 2nd from 10:00-11:00 AM "How to Prune Your Trees and Shrubs" hosted by Art Gustafson, JCC Master Gardener and Peninsula Tree Steward. Learn how to select and maintain the proper pruning tools, then learn how to use them to create healthy and beautiful plants. Bring your own pruning tools (if available) and wear warm clothes and comfortable shoes. The WBG is located at Freedom Park, 5535 Centerville Rd in Williamsburg. For more information 229-1995 or log onto www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org.

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden Evening Educational Program, Tuesday, February 12th at 7:00 PM "Even the Dead Can Grow Roses" presented by Joy Long, President ('07) of the Virginia Peninsula Rose Society and Colo-

There will be more student classes held in the outdoor space, though the E² program has been outside already this year.

January was spent with the children learning how animals use parts of plants to prepare for winter. The Master Gardeners brought in seedpods, moss, bark, twigs, acorns, and other materials so the children could themselves make winter nests, dens, or other habitats. The children had a good time, and were very creative in using the materials to create neat habitats.

The first grade teachers also provided the E² program with the reports from the Tree Farm Field Trip. The words and pictures are great. The children loved seeing the praying mantis, its egg case, the rows of trees, and all the Master Gardener friends who helped them have a great day. The reports have been laminated and ready to share.

Planning for the future: the spring York River State Park Field Trip, which is a blast, will be April 29, 30 and May 1st. Mark your calendars, get out your hiking boots, and get ready for another great time. Last year a pink lady slipper was out for the children to see, among other treasures.

As always, if you want to join in the fun, you are welcome. Please contact me at bearbas-kets@cox.net.

nial District Consulting Rosarian. Find out how to grow beautiful roses without a lot of work by choosing varieties that are "dead easy." The lecture will be held at Chambrel of Williamsburg, 3800 Treyburn Drive in the Main Living Room. Admission is free to WBG members, all others are \$5. For more information call 229-1995 or log onto

www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org.

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden's Monthly Walk and Talk Educational Series, Saturday, March 1st from 10:00-11:00 AM "Foolproof Trees and Shrubs" hosted by Sue Liddell, JCC Master Gardener and Peninsula Tree Steward. Find out how to have a great looking landscape without breaking your back or your budget. The WBG is located at Freedom Park, 5535 Centerville Rd in Williamsburg. For more information 229-1995 or log onto www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org.

Your help is Needed: Master Gardeners who can make grape vine wreaths for April Plant Sale. We have the vines. Contact Becky Sutton or Barbara Gustafson.

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