

The Colonial Master Gardener

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



January 2008

AN AMBITIOUS EFFORT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE GOAL

All Master Gardeners received an e-mail on December 12 announcing a "Water Workshop" to be offered to the general public on May 10.

In the announcement we included the Goal of the workshop as follows:

To describe to the homeowners and citizens of JCC/Williamsburg the issues facing the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed tributaries, the CBA regulations while focusing the workshop on providing practical solutions they can use to help alleviate the problem. In addition, also describe the issues facing our community concerning water usage from the irrigation systems during the summer months and provide some practical solutions toward helping alleviate those issues.

This is an ambitious undertaking by our organization because for the first time the two most critical environmental issues facing our community will be addressed in one workshop setting. The workshop will discuss the water quality of our watershed, how it impacts the Chesapeake Bay and the need for water conservation. We are focusing our efforts on showing the public simple hands-on ways they can make a positive impact in both areas.

The workshop team also has another goal not mentioned above; that is to make the workshop "all Master Gardener". By developing the workshop subject matter into small (15-20 min-

ute) topic presentations we can accomplish the following:

- Add a significant new list of 15-20 minute water related subjects to our existing speaker's bureau. This will allow us to take 1, 2 or as many topics as we need into our communities for presentation to HOA's or garden clubs or whomever.
- Doing the workshop as "all Master Gardener" will also provide a vehicle to educate and enrich ourselves about these two critical environmental issues.
- In the future we hope to offer this workshop annually and as part of a series of environmental workshops along with the turf programs that currently exist.

This is an excellent way to help educate the public on the two most important environmental issues we face. We invite you to become part of the solution by volunteering some of your time.

To pull all this off we need your help in two areas...working to develop the presentations and/or help with the administrative aspects.

Please let us know if you are interested in supporting this effort. We will be sending around a sign up sheet at the January monthly meeting or you can reply to the December 12 e-mail. Thanks.

Rich Strenkowski
strenkowski@cox.net
345-2882

of the association but their guests will pay \$12.00. No checks will be accepted for this occasion after January 3rd.

Please pay your 2008 dues of \$15.00 by January's meeting also. Graduates of the Class of 2007 are expected to pay dues for 2008.

MG BANQUET AND MG DUES SARAH DOUGHERTY, TREASURER

The deadline for signing up for the annual dinner on January 10th is approaching. Checks made out to JCC/W MGA will be accepted at our next general membership meeting on January 3rd or they can be mailed to Sarah Dougherty; 144 Tolers Road; Williamsburg, VA 23185. Cost for the dinner is \$12.00 per person. Graduates of the Class of 2007 are guests

Next Monthly Meeting

January 3, 9:00 am,
Williamsburg Regional
Library, Bill Garlette,
Newport News
Cooperative Extension
Master Gardener
*The Good, the Bad, and
the Bugly*



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Internal Education News Jean Winters

"We must learn to look on plants not as mere points of colour, but as old friends on whose coming we can rely, and who, returning with the recurring seasons, bring back with them pleasant memories of past years."

Henry Bright

As the winter days surround us for a while, we have fond memories of the beautiful reds and greens of the Christmas season just past, and we look forward to those first signs of spring when a new set of colors will come about. We'll also be thinking about the "bugs" in our gardens, those we

know need to be there and those we wish would stay away. Bill Garlette will let us know what he thinks about them when he comes just after the New Year celebrations to share..."The Good, the Bad and the Bugly". Please put the 3rd of January on your new calendar...I'll be looking for you!

February is the month for Charlie Staton. He will present "Robert Beverly Looks Back, 1607 to 1707", a history lesson about life and gardening so very many years ago!

Our Educational Committee will meet on the 21st of this month and we look forward to firming up some plans for this new year...all for your continuing educational opportunities! We wish you a Happy Gardening New Year!

EDITORS NOTE: The deadline for submission of material for the February Newsletter is January 21. 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.

FROM THE EXTENSION OFFICE LEANNE DUBOIS, EXTENSION AGENT, HORTICULTURE

MGS BEAUTIFY GODSPEED FESTIVAL IN NEW KENT

The Rockahock Campground in New Kent County welcomed the Godspeed last month for a weekend of educational and family activities featuring a final farewell to Jamestown 2007 events. The campground was beautified using natural arrangements thanks to the efforts of Master Gardeners, Nancy Harris, Ruth Schultz, Roger Staskil, Debbie Secrist, Mary Mills. (See Photo)



NEW EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS:

Two new Publications recently became available regarding right tree, right place. The titles are "Problem-free Trees for Virginia Landscapes" <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/plantdiseasefs/450-236/450-236.html>) and "Problem-free Shrubs for

Virginia Landscapes"

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/plantdiseasefs/450-237/450-237.html>).

These fact sheets should help you to provide advice for new plantings. They are available in both html and pdf versions. It's all about prevention and right plant, right place.

VOLUNTEER HOURS ALERT ART GUSTAFSON

We are approaching the end of the year at warp speed! Most of you are up to date with your hours, but some of you need counseling! In particular, those of you who volunteer at the Reid/Shields need to remember that those hours are turned in to CW on a monthly basis. That is CW's requirement not ours. I send my report to Becky Sutton on those hours at 8 pm on the 8th of each month so please send your hours to me by 6 pm on the 8th.

All other projects do not have a specific deadline for hours submission. Having said that, it is important to submit your hours on a timely basis. As you

know, unless we submit our hours we are not covered by the State insurance program for volunteers. Also, funding for MG programs and support is greatly influenced by making local and state legislators aware of our efforts in the community. Additionally, the MG awards program for volunteer hours is only effective if you keep your hours up to date. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

I will be out of town over Xmas and New Years but will return on the 4th or 5th of January.

Happy New Year to all!

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.

2007-2008 MG Board

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REID/SHIELDS GARDENS VOLUNTEER POSITIONS LAURA VIANCOUR, GARDEN PROGRAMS COORDINATOR, COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION

Happy Holidays!

Thank you to all team leaders and volunteers for a successful year in the Reid and Shields gardens. This was an exciting year with a few items of note:

- The Queen's carriage ride past the Reid garden (Queen Elizabeth nudged Prince Phillip and pointed to the garden!)
- The veggie team tackling the shade and drainage problems in Shields
- The flower team planting additional beds at Shields to enhance the outside dining area for our guests
- The herb team diligently pruning the herbs for improved performance
- The orchard team getting NEW fruit trees to plant
- Nearly 1800 guests attending 62 'Meet the Gardener' programs.



Despite concern among some, most everyone met the 30 hour minimum annual requirement, with several volunteers contributing twice as much time. The limited number of volunteers (40) has allowed the team leaders to better schedule work and the volunteers to actively contribute to the garden. A manageable number of volunteers have also allowed me to get to know the volunteers (starting with everyone's name!) and schedule more training opportunities in appreciation of everyone's contributions to Colonial Williamsburg's gardens.

As expected, people's priorities change and some volunteers have chosen to contribute their time to other Master Gardener projects. Therefore, the Colonial Williamsburg Landscape department will be accepting applications

for volunteer positions at the Reid and Shields gardens through January 18, 2008. Volunteer positions in the Reid and Shields gardens are limited to Master Gardeners in support of a mutually beneficial partnership between the Virginia Cooperative Extension James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener Association and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Roles and functions of volunteers, including supervisory relationships, have been defined. Any Master Gardener who wants to volunteer in the Reid or Shields gardens must commit to volunteering a minimum of 30 hours annually (20 hours of garden work plus 4 hours of training plus 6 hours of miscellaneous work).

The work of all volunteers is meaningful and significant. While we are unable to offer volunteer positions to all who apply, we expect that anyone entering into the application process is serious in his or her commitment to Colonial Williamsburg. When offered a position, volunteers are required to comply with the volunteer policies and procedures outlined in the Volunteer Manual. In determining suitable volunteer placements, attention is given to the interests, talents, skills, and experience of the volunteer, while also making a match that fits the needs of the JCC/W Master Gardener Association and Colonial Williamsburg.

Volunteer applications are available at the Human Resources reception desk in the Franklin Street Office Building (located on the same street as the Fife & Drum Building and the stables), or the Volunteer Programs office in the same building, room 123. Also, an application can be mailed to you by calling Ginger Bryan, Volunteer Services, 757/220-7181. Completed applications should be returned to

Ginger Bryan by January 18, 2008. The team leaders of the Reid and Shield's gardens will review all applications. Based on the applicant's participation and commitment, as previously demonstrated as an intern or volunteer, the team leaders will recommend those individuals to be interviewed by Colonial Williamsburg landscape staff and a team leader.

I hope everyone has a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

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

PART II: Extending the Growing Season of Incredible Edibles Dale Firestone

Note: PART I is in the Dec issue of the newsletter

Current gardening literature reveals that other home gardeners are growing small tomatoes nearly all year. All agree on the following essentials for success: a) 5 gallon or larger containers of good soil, b) heat modification, c) light (southern exposure), d) moisture, e) fertilizer, f) insect and predator control and g) pollination (my pre-bee magic was hand pollination with a cue tip, and the bees came later on). For fertilizer, I used 2 parts fish emulsion and 1 part Miracle Grow per gallon of water and a half gallon of this solution poured around each plant as needed. For disease and pest control, I used Schultz 3-in-1 Fungicide because it can be used up to the day of harvest. In Virginia the big challenge is heat generation. In my location, the problem was compounded by too many hours of shade, because the trees were too tall and the sun was too low.

As this experiment developed, several useful additions and repairs were made to my temporary enclosure.

1. Three or four layers of newspapers were taped together with duct tape to form an insulation blanket, and this was hung on the rear side.

2. At the same time, we added an extra tarp layer to top and back of enclosure. As in part I, this was rolled onto the same original pole.

3. Installed was an attachment head board with hex bolts, wing nuts and washers. To this head board was hung the access and heat-conserving curtain shown in the captioned picture.

4. We elevated the hot water bins off the cold 40 degree ground, using plastic crates. This also placed the hot water bins closer to the fruit clusters.

Basically, this experiment has taught me twice as much as I thought I knew.

1. Shelf life of the Sungold is

great. These tomatoes have been on the kitchen counter for 3 weeks, and are still going great.

2. The hot water in Bin Temperature Modification worked much better than expected.

3. If soil gets too much water, Sungolds crack easily.

4. To accelerate the ripening of the fruit on the vine, I covered the tomato cluster with a Ziplock plastic bag, cutting off the bottom two corners to provide aeration. This discouraged the birds brave enough to venture into the enclosure.

5. Injured, broken off, or deliberately pruned stems send out new laterals quite easily.

6. Late in October it became apparent that there were many clusters of very small fruit and some bloom that could never mature. The whole growing process had slowed down drastically. Since I wanted the remaining energy to go into useful fruit, I pruned away the fruit and bloom that couldn't mature by my December first deadline.

If I were doing this project again, I'd give major consideration to the following:

1. Start the seeds 2 to 3 weeks earlier.

2. Try substituting soil heating cables for the hot water bins. The cables are Underwriter Approved and though I haven't tried this, I believe the cables should work and should be quite safe.

3. Use infra-red plastic to cover the soil which would increase the infra-red absorption of energy.

4. Use more 6mil clear plastic to increase the amount of light available to the plants.

5. Start vigorous pruning sooner to minimize height and energy requirements of the plants.

6. Change orientation of enclosure so that front faces south. I was so late getting started that I had to use my existing summer trellis which faces east.

To summarize, my wife, daughter and I say the Sungold Project was a success, though it ended with an unexpected hard freeze on November 30th. We

can't stop eating the profits, although the tomatoes that were produced in the warmer weather were even better. The new seed catalogs are confirming our approval of the Sungold tomato by featuring the original Sungold Hybrid or its "knockoffs". We've had fresh picked salads since October 13th. It looks like the tomatoes ripening on the kitchen counter may find their way to our Christmas table. I call that Extending The Season of Incredible Edibles! You can do it too; just follow the suggestions in the paragraph above. Your four plants could produce even double what mine did.



Two layers of tarp, rolled up on top, represent 2 layers on top and back sides of the enclosure and one layer in front. Left and right side panels are of clear plastic and admit light. The entire front admits light. Overlapping-heat conserving-access panels are of 6mil clear plastic and are drawn aside to reveal plants, ripening fruit, and bins. The bins were filled with very hot tap water which moderated freezing temperatures up to 50 degrees F. for 16 hrs.

The Colonial Master Gardener January 2008

E2 KARI ABBOTT, CHAIRPERSON

Greetings to You All,

November was a busy month, teaching the children about deciduous and evergreen trees. The children made leaf art, creating animals, people, mythical creatures and more out of leaves. This fabulous art work was saved and taken to Norfolk, for the 2007 North American Association for Environmental Education Conference November 14th-17th. As people walked up to register, or amble through the convention hall, leaf art, poems and pictures from the E2 program delighted the attendees. So many people stopped, "I used to do leaf art, I should again." "How wonderful, I never thought of using leaves in art!" All sorts of wonderful comments were heard. The E2 curriculum was asked for by people from North Carolina, Florida, California, and Georgia.

This conference came on the heels of a very successful presentation of the E2 curriculum at the Virginia Association of Science Teachers Professional Development Institute November 8th-10th. Teachers from all over the state came to Williamsburg to share ideas. Attendees to the E2 session included professors from William and Mary, other public schools, magnet schools, and student teachers all who were delighted at the books, activities and information presented.

Back in school however the year marches on, also in November a very wonderful trip to the Millfarm Christmas

Tree Farm was held. The beautiful fall days provided children with an excellent opportunity to go outside and see a working farm. Thanks to Judy Hansen, Ruth Schultz and John Giffin. The children were delighted with the activities, the wildlife life, (they saw a praying mantis, and several egg cases), and trees.

December will teach the children about how plant and tree parts are used as animals prepare for winter. E2 has tons of acorns for the group of children who get to be mice to survive the winter. The children always delight in this month's activity; they love the swamp colored jello play dough, which is left in the classroom for later activities.

January will be a month devoted to water, saving water, and this year the children are going to keep track of how much water they save, to show that first graders can have a real impact, they can make a difference when it comes to water conservation.

The big field trip will be the last week/first days of April and May, more details will follow. Ask the people who went last year, it was an absolute blast! More fun will be created this year.

As always anyone is welcome to join in the classroom and field trip activities. Please contact Kari Abbott at bearbaskets@cox.net.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ONE OF OUR OWN

Williamsburg Planning Commission has appointed fellow MG Sally Sissel to the City's Beautification Advisory Committee. The purpose of this committee is to make recommendations to the Commission on ways to improve the physical appearance of the City of Williamsburg. The committee not only considers and proposes programs but works to implement such programs as may be approved by the Commission. It also acts in an advisory capacity on matters that may be referred to the committee by the Commission. One on-going program the committee sponsors is the annual City of Williamsburg beautification awards.

A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR TURF...

Did You Know?

- March is the month for crabgrass control.
- March is not the month to fertilize your cool season lawn.
- You can take the feed out of "weed and feed".
- Corn gluten is an organic crabgrass control.
- You can seed cool season lawns and still control crabgrass.
- For answers to these and many other turf questions plan to attend:
TURF LOVE "U" Spring Session
Saturday, March 1, 2008 10:00am to 12noon
JCC/Williamsburg Community Center
Longhill Road

MG Contact Update

Jim Kavitz email address:
kavitzjames@earthlink.net

AN HERB SOCIETY INVITATION SALLY SISSEL, CHAIR, HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA, COLONIAL TRIANGLE UNIT OF VIRGINIA

Master Gardeners are invited to attend the January 8 meeting of the local Herb Society. The program will feature Eileen Hammond, Colonial Williamsburg Fiber Artist, speaking on "Eighteenth Century English Dyeing". The program will begin promptly at 1:30 in the fellowship hall of Our Saviour's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Norge, followed by refreshments and then the business meeting. No reservations are necessary--just come if you're interested.

THANK YOU NOTE

Dear JCC/W Master Gardeners:

Thank you for your gift of \$300.00, deposited on 12/7/07, to the Williamsburg Regional Library. Your contribution, made thanks of library staff support, helps the Library provide resources and programs that educate, enrich, entertain and inform every member of our community. We appreciate your continued support.

Support such as your gift is an essential supplement to the government funding we receive. On behalf of all Williamsburg Library users, I thank you again for your involvement and your donation.

Sincerely, John A. Moorman, Library Director

A BIG WELCOME!

Mary Tucci is a new transfer member from Fairfax. She enjoys our monthly meeting and reports that Fairfax does not have them. She has lots of experience at Farmers Markets and was surprised we only have one. I was impressed that one of the first things she did was contact the MG's, even before finishing unpacking!

If you run into her, please welcome her and introduce yourself!

Mary Tucci
4309 Pond Street
Williamsburg, VA 23188
345-5156
bob.and.mary.tucci@cox.net

SUCCESSFUL VMGA MEETING

The December VMGA bi-monthly meeting was hosted by our unit at First Colony clubhouse. Unit representatives attended from counties throughout the state. Many thanks to all 25 of you who volunteered to make this meeting a success. We would especially like to thank Denny Mehigan and Jim Kavitz for displaying on our new project, Mobile MG, and the automated Help Desk, currently in the works. Thanks also go to Brian Noyes for presenting Community Conservation Partnership.



Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Jan 8 Herb Society Meeting, see above
- Jan 10 MG Annual Banquet, see page 1 of this newsletter
- Feb 7 monthly MG meeting, Charlie Staton, "Robert Beverly Looks Back, 1607-1707"
- Feb 9 Plant Sale Workshop, Starting Plants from Seeds
- Mar 1 TURF LOVE "U" Spring Session
- Mar 6 monthly MG meeting, TBA
- Mar 8 Plant Sale Workshop, Hypertufa Containers
- May 10 Water Workshop, see page 1