

# The Colonial Master Gardener



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

July 2005

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER** BARBARA SCHROEDER GUSTAFSON

Before beginning

this, my last President's Corner, I went back and read the first one I wrote after accepting this position for the July 2003 newsletter. No, that is not a typo--that was two very full years ago!

At that time Mary Sheedy had just accepted the position to head publicity, Sally Sissel and Sue Liddell had offered to again co-chair the training class; Genrose Lashinger and Merle Powell had agreed to co-chair the monthly meetings; Charlie Clapper began as newsletter editor; and Cathy Ripley took on the responsibility of chairing the plant sale. Such a group to help begin my year! As most of you know, Mary did a superb job of energizing our whole approach with publicity. Sally and Sue brought many innovations to our training program, making it much more effective for training our new master gardeners. Genrose and Merle initiated many new types of programs as well as adding tours of our members' gardens and instigating other educational trips. Charlie started a new approach with the newsletter along with adding his special ability in advancing new brainstorming in resolving difficult situations. And Cathy certainly expanded the techniques used in organizing a successful plant sale.

Add to that the people on my 2003-2004 board. These were Anne Haltiner as VP-Projects; Minouche Robinson as VP-Internal Ed; Charlene Talcott as VP-Youth; Art Gustafson as Secretary; Debbie Maddox as Treasurer; Angela Cingale and Dale Firestone as State Representatives; Sally Sissel as Past President; and Leanne DuBois as our new Associate at Extension. The support these people gave me was tremendous. In my second term many of these great people continued-a few wearing different hats (such as Charlie becoming VP-Projects and Art becoming a special support beyond measure). And Mary Ann Kimminau as Secretary, Ann DeForest as State Rep and Dave Banks adding his expertise as Treasurer were welcome additions. So, as I look back over the past two years, my initial reaction is amazement at all the talent I have been permitted to work with. Space allows me to only mention the few people who were most visible. Certainly the versatile mix of our members makes it a constant challenge to stay in the lead.

When Sally stepped down as president, she listed some challenges her board had met. This caused me to list privately some things I hoped to leave as my legacy. Among these items was to create a closer relationship between project chairs and I believe we have begun to accomplish this with our Project Chair quarterly meetings. The fact that we did not record contacts bothered me greatly. We now do this most effectively and by doing so are able to obtain a more accurate picture of our accomplishments. Communicating more effectively with both our members and our community was another concern that was most effectively resolved with the new publicity techniques developed by Mary Sheedy and Leanne and with our own Master Gardener Website initiated first by Rudy Roberts and carried to soaring heights by Dave Banks. Ironically another of my original goals was to develop a successful Junior Master Gardener Project. From some magical spot there appeared Kari Abbot who has succeeded with this beyond anyone's dreams. And I had another dream of our association developing our own logo and mission statement. Minouche agreed to head a committee which developed the logo and mission statement we now identify as our own.

We could not ask for better leadership that we will receive from Charlie Clapper as our incoming president. With the incoming board and committee members, this group is bound to lead us on to even bigger and better accomplishments. I thank all of you for the privilege of being your president. Your talent and support have made this a unique and rewarding experience.

### **PRESIDENT**

Charlie Clapper, '02  
564-6191

### **PAST PRESIDENT**

Barbara Schroeder Gustafson  
'99  
564-1888

### **HORTICULTURAL PROJECTS ASSOCIATE**

Leanne DuBois, '96  
JCC Coop. Extension Agent  
564-2170

### **WEBMASTER**

David Banks '03  
258-8632

### **NEWSLETTER**

Lise Kline '04  
259-9477

*The purpose of the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener is to learn, educate, and communicate environmentally sound horticultural practices to the community.*

## **NEXT MEETING**

### **July 7, Williamsburg Regional Library:**

Nicole Schermerhorn - A Thyme To Plant Herb Farm/Lavender Fields, "Planning and using your herb garden"

Nicole will not be charging her normal speaking fee, but in exchange, she will be bringing her truck loaded with plants to the meeting and we will have the opportunity to purchase plants directly from the truck. Please help welcome President Charlie Clapper and his board by enjoying refreshments after the meeting in the lobby of the library.

## WATER STEWARDS, ADVANCED MASTER GARDENER TRAINING: A CASE IN POINT

LEANNE DUBOIS

Conservation practices are critical to the future trend of water use and quality. National and local awareness-raising campaigns need

to educate the public on water as a valuable and limited resource. Raising the knowledge level is a critical approach towards understanding the value of water quality and promoting efficient use. According to the 1999 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fact sheet, *Water Facts*, outdoor water uses such as watering lawns and gardens and washing cars accounts for 50 – 70% of total household water usage.

Landscaping design, construction and maintenance face particular challenges in relation to the environment. If not well managed, landscaping projects can cause serious water pollution from runoff and overuse of pesticides. Disturbing soil, applying fertilizers, managing wastes and water use all have an impact on environmental health. A VCE publication entitled, *The Chesapeake Bay Residential Water Quality Management Program*, states that a significant portion of pollutants that affect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are from residential areas.

By the early 1990's state officials and citizens called for better management of residential lawn and landscaping practices and programs emerged to educate the public, setting the foundations for environmentally sustainable and minimal impact landscapes. Urban nutrient management programs like our Turf Love, Water Wise Gardening and Landscape Love programs have been the cause of positive changes such as recycling grass clippings, testing soils to determine proper applications of fertilizers, and utilizing plant and turf varieties that conserve water.

The water quality issue in Virginia is at a critical status. A press release issued by the Virginia House of Delegates dated January 31, 2005 announced a major financial commitment of \$50 million annually for the next 10 years directed to the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) as a commitment to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and improve Virginia's waters. The state has identified that economic prosperity is essential to environmental progress.

Many of our programs already relate to sustainable landscape management and water quality improvement. Even the Reforestation Project ultimately was a water quality program because trees help to replenish the aquifers. We are fortunate to have healthy partnerships with JCSA, Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District and other environmental groups. These agencies have all been instrumental in overseeing the development of the Water Stewards Advanced Master Gardener Training that will be offered in September. The program will raise awareness and train Master Gardeners not only in water quality, conservation and practical applications to assist homeowners, businesses and county agencies but also in promoting the importance of our water resources.

Applications are being taken for the Advanced Water Steward Training that will run from September through November, Tuesdays from 9 am – noon with rotating locations in the region. The cost is \$40.00 and will require a volunteer time commitment. For an application and/or more information check out our website at [www.jccwmq.org](http://www.jccwmq.org) or contact the Extension Office. Many thanks to the efficient Water Stewards Planning Committee headed by Wayne Moyer for their time and commitment!



*The newly relocated WaterWise Garden at JCC Human Services Center on Olde Town Road.*

## INCREDIBLE EDIBLES AILENE BARTLETT

Rich Strenkowski is starting in style, with ARTICHOKES! However, the proof of his labors will not be evident until next

year, so they have to be pampered and petted this year, protected from the elements over the winter, and with luck he'll be able to indulge next summer!

Pat Crowe is reporting success with her pansies and lettuce in a pot, and also with her little herb garden. Her herb butter with chives and parsley went over big with a therapeutic gardening group at Patriot's Colony.

Bill Hopkins is sharing my gardening space, and he's already into "one-upmanship"! We planted beans on June 5, and by June 10, his were coming up before mine! There's a baby bunny around, so we have to look out for damage. My lettuce is getting strong, but still looks nice in the pots, so I am going to let it go to seed and harvest the seed. All 5 tomatoes have green fruit, most herbs are blooming, newly seeded carrots are up, squash is coming along well, and I have high hopes for the beans!

Over the winter I kept a pair of sweet potatoes on the counter too long, and they sprouted vigorously. I'd forgotten about them, but now that I've remembered, young shoots are going into the garden and a couple of the deeper containers to see what happens.

The gourds are going to take over the world! They are about to bloom, and are growing by leaps and bounds. Send me e-mails, or call me, and we'll put your IEs in print, too! Good gardening!

## **JUNIOR MASTER GARDENING** KARI ABBOTT

As summer rolls in, things are stirring, sweltering, stewing in the JMG Project. Our school classes are done, all ended on a very nice note, and certificates, 4-H green bands, and ribbons were treasured and enjoyed. On the horizon, in a shimmering sort of way, is the bugs and books class.

The librarians at James City County are getting excited, and I am too. Seven weeks (each Wednesday, 10:00-11:00am, at JCCL, starting June 29) of BUGS and BOOKS! The librarians seem to think the class will fill up on the first day of registration, June 20. That would be exciting.

The first week is insects, in the true form, what is an insect, what defines an insect. The second week will look at creatures that are not insects, but people think they are. This group includes spiders, ticks, sow bugs, pill bugs, as many of these critters are beneficial creatures to have in your garden. In addition to guest speakers, bug bingo, the smell game, and such, the children will learn a bit here and there.

If any of you have great bug pictures, or bug exoskeletons, nests, hives (empty) you have found in your yard, and do not want, give me a call I will come get them, (564-4539) the more interactive materials the better!! I found two gall wasp casings in my front yard and was delighted. I do not know where the wasps are, but the casings are in the freezer waiting for class to start. I have pressed some leaves that a leaf miner enjoyed to share with the children.

While the summer moseys along, I will work out the details with Matthew Whaley Elementary School for an ongoing after school club for Junior Master Gardeners. The potential for great things to happen is there. JMG has been asked to return to Williamsburg Christian Academy. Two nice compliments for our fledgling project; "Please come back."

Books arrive daily. Thank you for the other donations of pots and pinecones. Things are coming together nicely, for a strong Junior Master Gardener course in Williamsburg.

If you have any questions about JMG, want to join in the fun, call or email ([bearsbaskets@cox.net](mailto:bearsbaskets@cox.net)) Everyone is welcome.



*Matthew Whaley's Junior Master Gardener class graduates.*

## **HISTORIC TRIANGLE 2007 BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE** MINOUCHE ROBINSON

As a representative master gardener on two committees for beautification efforts in the historic triangle - Williamsburg, Yorktown, and Jamestown - my role is to act as a liaison to these committees for the VA Cooperative Extension Office and master gardeners. For the past few months, I have been keeping the master gardeners updated on the work being done to enhance the road corridors coming into the historic triangle with beautiful and inviting entrances, in time for the Jamestown 2007 Anniversary Celebration. For those of you who may have missed our general meetings or would like a brief history of how these committees evolved, the following will hopefully clarify.

The Historic Triangle Beautification 2007 Committee was formed in 2003 at the initiative of the Williamsburg Land Conservancy to work with the communities in the area to enhance the major entrance corridors. It is a public/private partnership made up of governmental jurisdictions and community organizations in the area. The public side is represented by City of Williamsburg, James City County, York County and VDOT. On the private side, there are six community organizations represented: The Williamsburg Land Conservancy, the Williamsburg Area Chamber of Commerce, The Williamsburg Area Association of Realtors, the Williamsburg Areas Council of Garden Clubs, the VA Cooperative Extension/Master Gardeners, and the Friends of Powhatan Creek.

The first endeavor is a demonstration project on Jamestown Road from Lake Powell to Jamestown Ferry. Four priority projects were determined: public right of way projects, a private project funding program, cable burying (entrance to Williamsburg), tree plantings and vine maintenance. One can see the various improvements already in progress along Jamestown Road. (Plantings along Lake Powell Bridge, plantings across from Settlers Mill Landing, cable burying along Jamestown Rd.) The first business to participate in enhancing his property will be Cooke's Nursery. A variance was needed and has been approved for a new building and plantings.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, a "kick off" meeting occurred, inviting governmental officials, business owners, neighborhood association members, individual homeowners along the demonstration project area, and steering committee partners. The JCC/W master gardeners provided information on our Turf Love, Landscape Love, and Tree Steward projects and offered future horticultural education to those business and property owners attending.

In addition to many other efforts to improve the looks of our corridor entrances, the steering committee, with the help of area horticulturalists, will decide on a signature tree and a red, white, and blue theme for plantings to encourage homeowners, businesses, and institutions to participate in the beautification effort leading up to and beyond 2007. Extension agents statewide are working on an Anniversary Garden, to make plantings readily available through local nurseries, indigenous to our regions, and water smart, all relating to the Jamestown 2007 Anniversary Celebration.

## HARRISON GAY SALLY SISSEL

*Harrison Gay is a MG from the class of 2004. He was savagely attacked on Dec. 22, 2004, was in a coma for weeks, then in the hospital and rehab until April.*

Harrison is now at home and doing remarkably well. When I visited, only his daughter, Elizabeth was home with him. She will be ten and has a twin sister and an older brother--all of whom are very mature for their ages. Elizabeth used to come often to the Market with Harrison. She told me Harrison has had a few seizures lately which is worrying the doctors but hopefully they can be treated. Harrison was resting and was obviously tired but the great news is that he had been to the pool earlier in the day--and is walking totally on his own! He is looking great and we had a good conversation--remembering his trips to the market every other Saturday last summer. He, and usually Elizabeth, got up at 5:00am to get to Eastern State by 7:00am to pick up the tents. Robert Warren (also of class of 2004) had been to visit earlier the same day I had, and we both agree Harrison is progressing well and hopefully soon he can drop in on a Saturday morning to say hello!!

Blake, his wife, is still teaching in Newport News and she takes him to a respite center every morning and picks him up on her way home. School is out soon so I'm sure Blake is looking forward to not making that trip every day. She had told Robert how much she has appreciated all the help and support she has received all the Master Gardeners. She really thanks all of you.

## JULY GARDENING TIPS HELEN HAMILTON

Following are some useful gardening tips gleaned from periodicals, and from the Helpline FAQs – use and enjoy!

From [Garden Gate](#):

**Tomato watering/staking:** Install a 5-foot length of 2-inch PVC pipe a few inches from tomato seedlings, leaving 4 feet above ground. The water/fertilizer reaches the roots of the tomatoes; as they grow, old pantyhose can secure the branches to the pipe. In the fall, throw an old sheet over the pipe and tomato plants to protect from frost. (June 2005, p 4)

**Bags** of mulch, topsoil, compost are easier to empty when you cut a slit across the middle, roll the bag over, and lift from both ends (April 2005, p 5)

**Free Plants:** from [www.freetreesandplants.com](http://www.freetreesandplants.com). Disabled persons collect and sell unsold plants from nurseries – you pay only \$6.95 S/H per plant. (April 2005, p 45)

**Heavy containers** can be half-filled with foam peanuts, easier if handfuls are placed in old nylon stockings (June 2004, p 4)



*Debbie Patterson, '05, tends the Reid vegetable garden.*

**Label** your plantings with disposable plastic knives. Use a permanent marker on the handle and the serrated edge makes them easy to stick into the ground. (no date, p 4)

We're on the web at  
[www.jccwmng.org](http://www.jccwmng.org).

**Algae in your birdbath?** Clean the container thoroughly, then add several stems of lavender with a daylily leaf into the water. One bundle of lavender will keep water algae-free 2-3 weeks. (no date, p 4)

**Clogs by the doorway:** Hang them toes-up on 1-inch dowel rods. (no date, p 4)

From Horticulture:

**Deadhead** low-growing perennials, removing one-half their height, of spent flowers, stems and leaves with a pair of hedge shears. This drastic deadheading improves their appearance, encourages the production of attractive new growth, and prevents them from thinning out in the center. Included among this group of early-flowering perennials are phlox, maiden pinks, many Geranium species, catmint, evergreen candytuft, deadnettle, blue-eyed grass and Hungarian speedwell. (May/June 2003, p 14)

From FAQs, 2003-4:

**Crepe myrtle:** fine white powder on leaves – caused by powdery mildew; use a fungicide, following directions on the label. Sooty mold can be controlled with a detergent spray, 1 part detergent:4 parts water; respray with water after 5 minutes.

**Dogwood:** Small freckles on leaves, leaves curled – caused by spot anthracnose, a spring disease more severe in wet springs. Disease can be controlled with 4 sprays of fungicide; refer to PMG, p. 84 for details.

**Juniper:** Plants turn yellow-green, then brown along the base of the plant, then die – caused by phytophthora root rot, a disease favored by wet soil conditions. Correct the drainage problem, plant on raised beds, cut back on watering.

**Leyland cypress:** bark shows sunken, swollen or cracked areas with resin droplets on the bark surface – caused by the fungal canker, *Seiridium*. The only controls are pruning out affected branches back to healthy wood. This disease is so common on Leyland cypress that it is not recommended for new plantings.

**Photinia:** black spots and turning red at tips – caused by Entosporium leaf spotThe fungus overwinters fallen infected leaves from the previous year. In the spring the fungus produces spores that are dispersed by splashing water to healthy tissue. Because the fungus preferentially infects tender, new growth, summer pruning or frequent pruning or fertilization, favor disease. See VT publication #450-609 for chemical control.

**Poison Ivy in Ground Cover:** spray with glyphosphate, attaching a funnel to end of sprayer to direct spray area away from desirable ground cover.

**Redbud:** Leaf discoloration occurs under cool, wet conditions, and is commonly caused by a fungus Botrytis blight which affects many ornamental plants, vegetables and fruits. Inspect and removed affected plant parts, avoid overhead watering; a fungicide spray may help.

## ADDRESS CHANGE

Anne Odle:

117 Augusta, Williamsburg,  
23188, and email change to  
[anneodle@cox.net](mailto:anneodle@cox.net)

## VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION ANGELA CINGALE

Please renew or become a member of our Virginia Master Gardener Association. The VMGA is a state-wide association of Master Gardeners and VCE employees whose mission is to foster communication, education, and fellowship among Master Gardeners, and to give support and input to the state leaders of our Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) program at Virginia Tech. VMGA, a non-profit organization, is guided by elected individuals who have an interest in the issues concerning the Master Gardener volunteer at the state level. While a Master Gardener does not have to belong to VMGA or a local association to be an active Master Gardener, membership in the state association, VMGA, is an important way to give direct input to VCE in the issues concerning Master Gardeners in Virginia. Dues are \$12.00. Please renew or become a member by going to the website at [www.VMGA.net](http://www.VMGA.net) or contact Ann DeForest or myself for application. VMGA is our voice for horticultural and environmental issues.

## ALIEN ALERT!!! HELEN HAMILTON

The highly invasive Asian stiltgrass *Microstegium vimineum* is rapidly invading the Williamsburg area, growing along roadsides, in parks, and on homeowners' properties. This is a harmless-looking grass, not more than a foot tall, but straggly. It furnishes no nutritive value to wildlife and rapidly outcompetes all natives. Deer won't eat it -- does that tell us something?

Stiltgrass is an annual. In the fall, each plant releases up to 1,000 seeds which remain viable for SEVEN YEARS in the soil. The only control is to destroy the plant before seedset. Handpulling is the best method, as the roots are shallow and it comes up easily. Other possibilities are mowing or using Roundup – neither is practical when there are large quantities, as along roadside ditches.



*KILL THIS GRASS WHEREVER YOU SEE IT!*

### UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- June 26 Taken Root Tour, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Visit six diverse farm and garden businesses in New Kent County.
- August 4 Master Gardener Monthly Meeting: Lance Gardner - Master Gardener (Gloucester), "How To Grow Clean Water and Happy Critters"

**EDITORS NOTE:** The deadline for submission of material for the August Newsletter is July 15. Please send to Lise Kline at [legskline@cox.net](mailto:legskline@cox.net) or call 757-259-9477. Thank you.