

# The Colonial Master Gardener



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June 2005

## MERRIMAC DETENTION CENTER GRADUATION Leanne DuBois

The nine week Horticulture Skills course at the Merrimac Detention Center graduated 12 students this month. This was the first time this course was offered at the center. Ellen Powell, 4H Extension agent, and I worked together to create a curriculum incorporating basic horticulture skills with the practical teachings of business management. Conveying graduating certificates to these young citizens was a proud moment for us. We hope in some small way we made an impact in their lives. Maybe when they identify a beneficial insect, know what fescue is or talk to their friends about the difference between an annual and perennial, we can feel good about the role we played in furthering their education. I'd like to thank Bob Winters, Ailene Bartlett, Sue Liddell and Tree Steward Wendy Mooring for sharing their time and expertise in reaching out to these students.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER BARBARA SCHROEDER GUSTAFSON

Our spring projects are now going strong. We have more than ever before, but all seem well-staffed and well-attended. The first Farmers' Market was a successful display of Incredible Edibles, Helpline and Turf Love. We discovered that by handing out maps showing the way to the Reid Garden, lots of visitors wandered down to admire the vegetables growing there. We plan to do the same for herbs and perennials. The new addition to the Reid of "Meet the Gardener" tours every Thursday is also doing quite well. Landscape Love had some initial problems with the intricacies of cyberspace, but now all seems to be running smoothly.

Every year the Virginia Master Gardener Association gives out Hours Awards to those who have compiled a designated number of volunteer hours as a Master Gardener. This year the following from our group will receive Volunteer Hours Awards: 3000 Hours-Sue Liddell, 2000 Hours-Barbara S. Gustafson, 1000 Hours-Eleanor Brennan, Susan Voigt, 500 Hours-Deanna Albright, Richard Bunger, Mary Ann Carlson, Charles Clapper, Dale Firestone, Lynn Flood, Arthur Gustafson, Genrose Lashinger, Margaret Mondul, Ruth Ann Penberthy, Marilyn Riddle, 250 Hours-David Banks, Irene Francis, Linda Lucas, Susan Morrison, Mary Sheedy, Bob Winters. We put 7020 volunteer hours into projects and 2652 volunteer hours into administration in 2004. Beginning in October, the contacts counted in 2004 were 5770. These figures just prove as we already know we are a very active group.

Master Gardener College will be held at Virginia Tech from June 20-25. There are discounts for those receiving Volunteer Hours Awards. These are listed on the VMGA website <http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener>. You can also register and choose your sessions on-line. Ann DeForest and I are organizing a Brag Night display for JCC/Williamsburg. We decided to brag about our new projects and are including The How, When, Why, and Where of an Apple Tree, Junior Master Gardening, Landscape Love, and the newest additions to Mathey's Garden. If any of you would like to attend MG College, but dread the drive both Ann and Ailene Bartlett have room in their vans for four passengers. Art and I could fit two extra in our car. All you need to do is ask. Leadership Development Training is on June 21-22 and MG Coordinator Update is the morning of the 23rd. If you would like to join members from our group attending either of these, please let either Leanne or me know.

### PRESIDENT

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

## NEXT MONTHLY MEETING

June 2 Field Trip to 4-H Center. We will meet at the 4-H Center at 9:00 for the regular business meeting followed by a tour of the Camp. From Route 5, take Greensprings Road south (toward Jamestown Road); turn right on to 4-H Road. From Jamestown Road, go almost to the ferry; after Jamestown 1607, turn right on to 4-H Road. It will cross Greensprings Road. Continue on to the 4-H Camp.

## WATERWISE GARDEN SUE VOIGT

The Water Wise Low Maintenance Demonstration Garden, established several years ago by JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardener volunteers, has been relocated from its Toano site on Forge Road to the front entrance of the JCC Human Services Center on Olde Town Road. Over 30 varieties of plants were moved from the Toano site to the new location in 4 days by a team of Master Gardener volunteers led by Susan Voigt and Judy Hansen.

The garden relocation was necessary to preserve the plantings during the construction of additions to the Emergency Operations Center and Toano Firehouse. A remnant of the original Water Wise Garden remains in a small section of the original garden. The Toano garden was first established when a Xeriscape garden planted by Master Gardeners was moved from the site of expansion at the JCC Recreation Center in the 1990s.

The garden features a wide variety of perennial plants and shrubs to demonstrate use of native and drought tolerant plants in the home landscape. The plants range from daffodils and columbine to sedum and viburnum. The garden is designed to provide color and interest throughout multiple seasons. Once established, the plants require little care, and seldom need extra water, an added bonus for water conservation. The James City Service Authority has sponsored the signs for the garden through the "Let's be Water Smart" program. Several of the plants have identification labels and additional labels and plants will be added in future.

The move was a welcome surprise to those who work at the Human Services Center. "We have been getting fan mail and rave reviews from those who pass the garden everyday on their way in to work" said Leanne DuBois, Extension Agent with Virginia Cooperative Extension.



Visit the JCCWVG Master Gardeners Association website at <http://jccwvg.org>

## INCREDIBLE EDIBLES AILENE BARTLETT

How does your garden grow?

The Incredible Edibles team has scoped out some possible sites for demonstration, test, or community gardens as we go through this learning process. In the meantime, on the home front...

After a very slow start, lettuce is ready to eat. Try "Cimarron" – it is burgundy red, and really lights up a salad, and the garden. Tomato and pepper seeds failed miserably, so five commercially started tomatoes are in ground and lookin' good. The marigolds at the corners of the bed look pretty nice, too.

Amid last year's weeds, slowly diminishing, I found a nest of carrots, re-seeded from last year's leftovers, and doing well! Some are even big enough to eat! What a surprise!

Herbs are doing well; first gourd seeds in containers are coming up; I'm about to plant a bunch of other stuff, then get the seed boxes off the kitchen table!

Let us hear from more of you on how your edibles are doing!

**Deer Resistant Plant Website to Check Out::**  
<http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/deerresistance/default.asp>

## PENINSULA TREE STEWARDS BARBARA SCHROEDER GUSTAFSON

One of the new Peninsula Tree Steward projects this year is a Tree and Native Plant ID of a new nature walk through the wetland area of the Jamestown 4H Center. Jackie Lohr, York Master Gardener, and Barbara Gustafson are the co-chairs. A crew of Tree Stewards from many areas of the peninsula is helping, as is Cynthia Long of the Native Plant Society. We have found it quite a challenge as many of the trees, shrubs, plants, and vines are somewhat different from the species we are much better acquainted with growing on the dry land. High boots and sure footing is needed to get down close for examining details. But the location is lovely and the learning is exciting. Sue Vezeau, Program Director of the Jamestown 4H Center, hopes to have the nature walk open to the public in the near future. It will also be used in educating youngsters at the camp. Please go look at the site during our next general meeting

## JUNIOR MASTER GARDENING KARI ABBOTT

The **Landscape Horticulture** class at Matthew Whaley continues to be a wonderful challenge. The children are designing their garden, site maps complete, and colors, balance, texture, annuals, perennials, and biannuals understood. After sorting through and planning gardens with the wonderful catalogs you all donated, the children realized how hard it is to plan a space. For their garden entrance, the children are going with a red, white, and blue theme. The arrangement is still under review, but the Palace Gardens field trip they took helped them think about many horticulture issues. They have studied trees in landscape. The last two classes they dig in, planting their garden. It has been a blast for Susan Powell, Ann Davis, and I to be with the children every week.



The **Junior Master Gardener Class** at Williamsburg Christian Academy is winding down as the year comes to a close. The current chapter the children are pondering is vegetables. They planted peas and beans. I read them *The Pea Blossom*, a lovely book about peas in a pod. It is a rewrite of a Hans Christian Anderson story, and the peas all have a different destiny. We will have one more class on fruits (and nuts). The children will all be back in the fall, and will be ready to learn more.

The **Tree Class** for the first grade class at Matthew Whaley was a great success, according to the children. They learned about trees as habitats; how animals use trees for camouflage; and how trees are a renewable resource. The children made paper from recycled paper. In the last class we had, the children were given saplings from the Reforestation sale and the Junior League. The course will end with a field trip to York River State Park, and a tree identification outing.

And last but not least, the **Bugs and Books, Insects and Plants** class offered at the Williamsburg Regional Library will start having signups the beginning of May. The seven-week course looks to be a lot of insect fun, with bugs, and plants, and books, and ...whew, it will be a blast. Thanks to those who donated the Birds and Blooms, I have a great collection of butterfly and insect pictures to start the class.

I close again saying thank you to all of those who are volunteering with the Junior Master Gardeners, in the classrooms, and for those of you supporting this project in quiet ways, cataloging books, finding books for JMG at the library, and donating magazines, seeds, pinecones, gourds, and pots to use for the children to plant seeds. It is a fun project, so if you would like to help you are more than welcome! The more the merrier!

## THE SECRET MESSAGES OF WEEDS Leanne DuBois

It is so intriguing to see the interest of our local citizens in the natural environment of their yards. Often they come in just inquiring about the identity of a weed, especially when it comes to lawns. Certain weeds are indicators of some other issues. Take, for instance, moss: lawn areas with sparse grass and moss growing on the soil surface may indicate several environmental problems. Heavy shade in the area may be weakening the grass and providing a more desirable situation for the moss growth. If shade is not the problem, moss often is a first indicator that the soil is infertile and too acidic for the grass species. Poor drainage, possibly due to soil compaction, also favors the moss. Chickweed, ground ivy, and violets are other plants that tolerate areas too shady for good grass growth. Without the heavy shade, nutsedge (a grass-like plant but with triangular stem) indicates a high moisture level. Black Medic, an annual weed and member of the clover family, is almost a beneficial due to its ability to draw nitrogen from the air and put it in the soil. This plant is a sign of low nitrogen. If you have fertile soil you will never see many of these weeds. The best weed control for a lawn is to keep the grass healthy. This means to maintain an environment that favors turf competition against the weed plants.

### ADDRESS CHANGE

Lynn Trott has a new e-mail: [bltrott@verizon.net](mailto:bltrott@verizon.net)

### UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- June 20 Norfolk Zoo – meet at the back gate at 10:00 for an approximately 2 hour tour. Please e-mail Genrose ([glashing@cox.net](mailto:glashing@cox.net)) if you plan to go.
- June 26 Taken Root Tour, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Visit six diverse farm and garden businesses in New Kent County.
- July 7 Master Gardener Monthly Meeting: Nicole Schermerhorn - A Thyme To Plant Herb Farm/Lavender Fields, "Planning and using your herb garden" (Nicole will not be charging her normal fee to speak to the James City County Master Gardeners, 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)
- August 4 Master Gardener Monthly Meeting: Lance Gardner - Master Gardener (Gloucester), "How To Grow Clean Water and Happy Critters"

Editors Note: Please send all material for the July Newsletter by June 15 to Lise Kline at [legskline@cox.net](mailto:legskline@cox.net) or call 757-259-9477. Thank you.