

The Colonial Master Gardener



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

March 2006

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING

March 2, 9 am,
Williamsburg Library
Theater, **Risk Management**, a discussion of the "what if's" to better prepare you for issues that can arise while volunteering as a VCE Master Gardener. The program will be conducted by Fred Weaver, Director of Risk Management, Virginia Tech.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER CHARLIE CLAPPER, '02

Pussy Willow wakened
From her winter nap,
For the frolic spring breeze
On her door would tap.

Happy little children
Cried with laugh and shout,
"Spring is coming, coming,
Pussy Willow's out."

-- *Pussy Willow* by Kate L. Brown

Spring arrived in January this year but the threat of wintry weather remains with us for awhile. Still our thoughts turn to our gardens. The MG programs that enjoyed a winter break are on our minds. Growing up in Pennsylvania during this time of year my mother considered what to plant in our large vegetable patch that year. Clay pots filled our sunny window sills. While seed choices then were fewer than now we still spent many hours looking at catalogs. No doubt she planted the seeds of my interest in nature -- gardening and the outdoors -- then.

Are we doing all we can to instill in the young the importance of sustaining our natural environment? Are we helping them understand the intricacies and beauty of nature? Three MG projects help our youth grow in their understanding of our natural world – Seeds of Learning, Junior MGs and Matthey's Garden. If you haven't already, please contact Mary Ann Kimminau, Kari Abbott or Genrose Lashinger to learn more about these programs. And consider volunteering to help children today become gardeners and conservationists tomorrow on these projects and Special VCE youth initiatives.

One of Leanne Dubois' 2006 priorities is strengthening our existing water quality and conservation programs. Project chairs should include concerns for water quality and conservation in their projects. Consider how we can instill in children and adults the long term importance of reducing water use and mitigating watershed pollution. At the February general meeting eleven Water Stewards were graduated. Congratulations to this group of energized, energetic individuals. They will soon begin a program planning process. Virginia Cooperative Extension defines a successful Master Gardener-Water

Steward program as one "based upon a clearly defined comprehensive plan tailored to the community needs ... A water stewardship program is usually carried out by a series of activities and short-term projects that educate the community in proper water quality management ...". The programs for ensuring the long term health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed are important. Let's help reduce the increasing number of fish consumption advisories and dire reports of oxygen

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EXTENSION AGENT

Leanne DuBois, '96

EDITORS NOTE: The deadline for submission of material for the April Newsletter is March 15. Please send to Lise Kline at legskline@cox.net or call 757-259-9477. Thank you.

depletion that show its deterioration. The "2005 State of the Bay Report" states 41 % of the Bay's main stem had too little oxygen to support a healthy ecosystem.

EXTENSION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT – THE BIG PICTURE LEANNE DUBOIS, EXTENSION AGENT

The mission of Virginia Cooperative Extension is to help people improve their lives through an educational process that uses scientific knowledge focused on issues and needs. This process includes the identification of issues, the determination of how VCE might address those through educational programs, the design of the educational program, and the evaluation of outcomes/impacts of the effort. Equally important is the involvement of Master Gardener volunteers and other community resources in this process. The programs delivered through our Master Gardener programs are meeting the needs of the community. We've made contacts with close to 50% of the James City County population and this year we hope to raise the awareness about impacts our programs are having on the community. An impact is the effect a program may have on participants. Program impacts are primarily concerned with changes in awareness, knowledge and behaviors.

Last month during the regular monthly meeting we began an internal education campaign to inform the membership of all the projects we have developed through the years. There are many misconceptions as to educational value, volunteer needs, etc. With so many diverse programs it's difficult to understand them all. Mary Kimminau spoke about the Seeds of Learning and her impacts were evident in education value and of the gratitude expressed by the children. Art Gustafson also set the stage with his chart of volunteer vs. intern hours which revealed that we have an adequate volunteer base to assist the projects. It also revealed a misunderstanding and need for clarification about the Reid Garden. The Reid Garden will have their chance to dispel myths and make a presentation to the membership in April. We welcome all projects to present a program to the membership.

This process will clarify our goals and missions and bring to light the impact we are having in our community in an effort to strengthen and unify our organization. It is important to understand the role of Extension programming efforts and how it coordinates with the Master Gardener board and association. We are working together to facilitate volunteer opportunities that are meeting the needs of the community, are meaningful, rewarding, allow for growth and present new challenges in an effort to preserve and foster our foundation....the Master Gardener volunteers!

In Memory of
Kathleen McNutt
Master Gardener, Class of 2001
November 14, 1943-February 4, 2006

MEET THE GARDENER BARBARA GUSTAFSON, '99

Last year, our board initiated a new program in partnership with CW called Meet the Gardener, in an effort to further utilize our learning garden - The George Reid Garden - and to help fulfill our mission of educating the public on sound horticultural practices. Each Monday and Thursday morning, from April through October, Master Gardener Volunteers meet in the garden to answer gardening questions from our guests. (No ticket of admission is required; all are welcome!) In sun and

rain, heat and cool, groups ranging in number from around 15 to over 55 have eagerly arrived for this garden "tour," loaded with questions and ever-so-pleased to be in our lovely garden. Training for these guides is provided by Laura Viancour and her staff. Last year, about twenty MGs, under the leadership of Marilyn Riddle and Barbara Gustafson, participated in this program. If you would like to become part of this group, please e-mail Barbara Gustafson (Barbara-sg@cox.net) or Claire Gross (cdg144@cox.net), this year's co-chairs. Training begins this month and continues through March!

PLANT SALE 2006

Date: April 29

Time: 9:30 to noon

Place: WJCC Rec Center

Plant Delivery Date: Friday, April 15
Plant Delivery Place: Ailene Bartlett's house
105 Brookwood Drive

Here's how you can help:

- **Start** seeds, vegetables, herbs or flowers
- **Dig** and separate the plants you have in your own yard
- **Label** and pot plants on April 17, 19, 24, and 26 from 10 am to noon at Ailene's.
- **Grab** a partner and be a part of the Container Team! This team will create containers to be sold. There will be a little competition with a prize for the winning team! This will be done at the same as the potting and labeling at Ailene's.
- **Help** transport plants from Ailene's to the Rec Center on April 29 from 7:30 to 8:30 am.
- **Solicit** from the following businesses that have been generous to us in the past:
 - ❖ Let It Grow
 - ❖ Cooke's
 - ❖ Hill Pleasant Farm
 - ❖ Millers
 - ❖ Jamestown Feed and Seed
- **Sign up** to work at the Plant Sale.

Call Cathy at 804-829-2984 or email her at bobcathyripley@yahoo.com to let her know what part you are going to play in making this the **Most Successful Plant Sale Ever!**

Looking forward to a fun filled, successful plant sale,

Cathy, Ailene, Bruce and Becky

PROJECT UPDATES

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS MARCH ON KARI ABBOTT, '04

As March roars in like a lion, so many cool things are happening in Junior Master Gardener Project. W³ & U, Aquatic Adventures (Water, Wetlands, and Wildlife and You) is moving along at a steady pace. The classes in February center around habitats, and how every thing plants, animals, insects, microorganisms need water. The children went on a schoolyard safari to see what habitats we could find around the playground. One child asked, "What animal would be crazy enough to make a home where we play?" The answer was moles, which have left trails all over the back of the playground, then of course voles. Earthworms, we happened to find one sliding through the dirt. Birds, as there were some crows flying about, and one lone nest in a tree. The rotting log JMG brought to class was filled with wonderful surprises as well.

The habitat lessons are part of the preparation for the field trip to York River State Park. It is one goal of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative is all schoolchildren have a "significant watershed experience" at least twice in their education. W³ & U, Aquatic Adventures is providing such an initial experience this semester for the first grade at DJ Montague. All the classes this fall are leading up to the FIELD TRIP in May (May 9, 10, 11).

Preparation for the field trip, several water stewards, tree stewards, and Master Gardeners are walking the trail we are using at York River State Park to help prepare guides for anyone who would like to volunteer on the field trips. I am working out stations for the children to visit, and animal habitats for them to find while they are at the park. JMG WILL NEED SOME VOLUNTEERS for the field trip. I will be asking for commitments at the April meeting, so be thinking about it. It should be a positive experience for everyone.

On February 14 more great news arrived. Kelly A. Kelly, JMG's wonderful first grade teacher at DJ Montague Elementary School, received a \$750.00 Virginia Naturally Classroom Grant. The grant was written in collaboration with JMG. It will cover the cost for all 130 children in first grade to go to York River State Park, and buses to take them there.

Other excitement, the summer day camps classes of W³ & U, Aquatic Adventures have been set, and will happen the weeks of June 26-30, and July 10-14, 2006 from 10:00 – 2:00 at **York River State Park**. This is an exciting cooperative effort between the Park, VCE, Master Gardeners, and 4-H. Exciting events are planned. I will have more information next month, so be watching.

Thank you to everyone who signed up for the Wetlands Habitat Class, enough people signed up, the class is set. Yippee! The PRIDE MiniGrant JMG received was to purchase reference materials for the attendees of this class.

The last bit of news to share....Back in November I heard about the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference, held in November 2006 in Norfolk. I emailed the contact person at Department of Game and Inland Fisheries in Richmond, asking if a breakout session would be an appropriate place to talk about how the information the biologist, game wardens, and foresters (that attend this meeting) discover is used to excite children into becoming biologist, game wardens and foresters. The idea was accepted. The talk is going to be titled something like, "I Want to Be You When I Grow Up!" Several people are helping, gathering information, pondering ideas, thankfully, we have nine months, so like a baby, this presentation will be nurtured, and the idea will grow.



A class at Williamsburg Christian Academy, participating in the JMG program, has just completed an activity to learn how water travels through the water cycle.

As always, everyone is welcome to join in our fun. Things will settle down, there are no more grants out there for now, so focus in this month is on course development. There are many ways to volunteer, if you are interested please email bearsbaskets@cox.net or call (564-4539).

CW LEARNING GARDENS MARILYN RIDDLE, '01

The members who work at the George Reid Garden, Shields Kitchen Tavern Garden, and as Meet the Gardener Guides are pleased to present an informational segment at the April club meeting. Since this is the first meeting for the interns, we should be able to reach the most members in our MG unit.

Check out the latest including minutes, calendars, and past newsletters on our website: <http://jccwmq.org>

MELISSA'S MEADOW GRACE RAYMOND, '93

Melissa's Meadow will have a work day on March 16--WEATHER PERMITTING. We will be removing last year's growth and weeding vetch.

WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDENS PROJECT SALLY SISSEL, '99

Thanks go to Rich Strenkowski, Leanne, the Board and the Membership for approving a new project, entitled, simply: Williamsburg Botanical Gardens. This project is rather short and simple: to design, order plants, and supervise the planting of a perennial bed in Freedom Park, the demonstration garden for the future Williamsburg Botanical Gardens. While admittedly not as educational a project as we Master Gardeners have come to expect, the real purpose of this project is to show our support for the new Botanical Gardens and to establish a relationship which can develop and flourish and allow us to be a real part of the future Gardens and do what we really do best: educate the public.

Rebecca Sutton and I are co-chairs of this project. A small number of members will be meeting soon to develop the design and decide on plantings--all of which, of course, have to be approved by the Gardens' staff. Sometime later in the Spring, 15 or so Master Gardeners will be needed to supervise members of the community in the planting of these perennials. Many members have already shown interest in helping in the Spring, several of whom are also members of the Williamsburg Botanical Gardens. Please contact me or Becky if you would like your name added to our list of "supervisors".

INTERNAL EDUCATION NEWS JEAN WINTERS, '01

As part of our new "initiative" to present programs that help to enhance some of the projects we are working on within our Master Gardener program, I would like to invite you to attend the upcoming Turf "U" Spring Session, Saturday, March 4th at 10:00 am, at the JCC/W Community Center, Room C...essentials about what to do with lawns this time of year will be covered. Later in the month, on the 23rd, Peggy Krapf will be conducting the Landscape Design class for the Class of 2006 (Human Resources Building on Olde Towne Road) and Linda Lucas has extended an invitation to our membership to attend...please let her know so that she knows how many to expect. We will continue to work on more opportunities for your enjoyment, interest and earning training hours.

I urge you to attend the Risk Management program at our regular Master Gardener meeting, March 2nd. It is going to be presented by Fred Weaver, the authority on the topic, and will be presented to the Class of 2006 as a required topic and as a refresher for others. As we work "under the umbrella" of Cooperative Extension we should be knowledgeable about how and why we are covered by insurance and how various concerns working with children are addressed.

In closing, I invite anyone interested in planning programs, for the regular meetings as of the fall and on, to advise me or Gale Hyatt. Gale has done a wonderful job and we wish to thank her for

that. She agreed to add several months to her tenure (as of this June) and she has done that, but now needs to have someone, or perhaps a team, to take her place. This might be an opportunity for two people to work together...there are details to be ironed out each month and working with a buddy sometimes makes the job easier and less responsibility for each one. This is a very important position...I am glad to work with you...and our whole organization will benefit from willingness to do what has to be done to present meaningful and enjoyable programs. Please let me hear from you!

MARCH TIMELY GARDENING TIPS HELEN HAMILTON, '04

Get ready for spring gardening with these tips for tools:

- To remove salt residue from crusty pots and to clean dirty tools, scrub with a mixture of 1/3 white vinegar, 1/3 rubbing alcohol, and 1/3 water. Use worn-out toothbrushes for small cleanup tasks.
- Keep a bucket with sand and a light oil mixture nearby your gardening tools. After cleaning the tools stick them in the mixture to prevent them from rusting.
- Attach a soap dish with soap and a nail brush to the side of a wooden shelf. Dig your fingernails into the soap before you begin working in the garden. Mount a paper-towel dispenser near your work area.
- Use grapefruit knives for weeding container gardens and transplanting seedlings.
- Keep heavy-duty paper clips and clothespins in your work area for hundreds of uses like sealing opened seed packets to clipping gloves closed as a precaution against spiders.
- Fill a used lotion or hand-soap dispenser bottle with mineral oil and squirt metal tools every time you use them or to remove sticky sap, grime or sawdust, then wipe with fine steel wool. To keep your string trimmer from breaking or sticking, coat the line with mineral oil.
- Paint inch and foot marks on the wooden handles of hoes, shovels, and rakes and use these whenever you need to measure in the garden.
- Make a heavy duty garden scooper from a bleach bottle; just trim the bottom when it's empty, after rinsing thoroughly.

Dry flowers or herbs quickly in your car! Cover flat surfaces with paper, spread a layer of blooms and park in the sun.

From Jim Lachowicz, Chesapeake MG, electronic newsletter

Late winter is the time to prune many deciduous trees. Look over your plants now and remove dead, dying, unsightly parts of the tree, sprouts growing at or near the base of the tree trunk, crossed branches, and V-shaped crotches. Check vt.edu for late winter pruning schedule.

Crepe Myrtles: Just trim and shape. Remove old seedpods and crossing branches. Remove many of the interior branches to allow new growth and flowers a place to grow. Remove new growth at base of shrub often. This will promote better flowering later. Flowers grow on NEW growth. Water, fertilize, and remove dead blossoms until mid-August for almost continuous summer bloom.

To prevent "Crepe Myrder" and for proper pruning techniques click on or paste the following site to your web browser:

http://www.yorkcounty.gov/vce/progareas/hort/crape_myrtle/crape_myrtle_pruning_s1.htm



A pruning clinic for fruit trees by Jim Orband was held in the Reid Garden. Approximately 30 people attended including many Master Gardeners.

Butterfly bushes and Rose of Sharon: The time to trim is now. You can hard prune these bushes anytime now through March, but the best time to trim them is after mid February. Only disbud or lightly trim to shape after March. Cut bushes 18 inches to waist high above the ground. Flowers grow on NEW growth. After blooms fade, prune off old flowers and new blooms will emerge. You can do this until August. The butterflies will love you for this.

JAMESTOWN 4H CENTER WETLANDS NATURE WALK BARBARA GUSTAFSON, '99, CO-CHAIR

Two years ago the Jamestown 4H Center got a grant to build a Wetlands Nature Walk along the James River. When it was completed, Sue Vezeau, the Jamestown 4H Center Program Director, asked the Peninsula Tree Stewards (including members from York County, Hampton, Newport News as well as JCC) if they would be agreeable to undertaking a tree and plant ID of the site with the objective of creating an educational wetlands walk with viewing sites for the 4H participants and the general public. We went out to look and agreed that this was a logical and worthwhile objective.

The terrain made it difficult to get up close to many of the trees and shrubs. High boots and strong legs were a must, as well as a good lens and a variety of reference books. Our pros at tree ID, like Jackie Lohr (my co-chair), Diane Short, Sue Liddell and Larry Riddick, found themselves getting second opinions from Virginia Tech more than once. Along with the Bald Cypress, American Holly, Black Tupelo, American Sweet gum and Pignut Hickory, we discovered many native wetland shrubs and plants we do not often encounter. One of our remarkably skilled team, Wendy Mooring, also leads tours at the Living Museum and could take specimens back there for more specific identification. Cynthia Long of the Native Plant Society was invited to give second opinions on plant ID and proved to be another great asset.

We divided the walk into 26 views, 13 on the low side and 13 on the high side. For each view between 8 and 12 trees, shrubs and plants were identified and flagged for future permanent markers. Special items of interest, such as the sex life of hollies, lichen, snags, crayfish, water hemlock, cypress knees, downy false foxglove, the swollen trunks of the black tupelos and the lively osprey nest at the end of the walk were all noted. Art Gustafson devised a mapping system to simplify the designing of the view plaques. Lynn Flood obtained permission from Peterson's Tree Guide to use their tree silhouettes on the plaques. Flora Adams devised a cataloging system to help us know just what we had identified and how to locate everything. By late fall we were ready for the next step.

However, our project hit a snag in the form of a tornado January 11. Part of the walk was badly damaged and a number of trees and shrubs damaged or destroyed. So before we can continue, we must now go back and revise our ID, seeing what is still standing and what needs to be replaced. As the indomitable Sue Vezeau has noted, if it had to happen, at least it was before the plaques were designed and manufactured. Now hopefully all will be completed and the walk opened by next year. It is certainly an exciting project for all of us involved.



A tree has fallen over the nature walk after the tornado. More photos, including a "before" scene, are on the MG website.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT ANNE HALTINER, '00

Porcelainberry, *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*, is a non-native perennial vine that is spreading in the eastern United States and has been found in Virginia. This invasive species resembles grape vines and prefers open, semi-shady areas and quickly outcompetes native vegetation. It can grow 15 feet during the growing season and produces abundant seeds. Unfortunately, gardeners may find it an appealing plant and not be aware of its deleterious impact on native plants. It is spread through the ornamental plant trade. See the [North American Plant Protection Organization's Phytosanitary Alert System](#) for more information.



The Williamsburg Area Council of Garden Clubs will give the 2006 Arbor Day Individual Award to **Ailene Bartlett** and an Arbor Day Appreciation Award to the Junior Master Gardener program, led by **Kari Abbott**. Congratulations!

The awards will be given at the Council's Arbor Day Award Ceremony held at the Williamsburg Community Building (on Boundary St., across the street from the library) on Friday, March 10 at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome to attend.

CARING MGS MARY ANN KIMMINAU, '04

If you know of a fellow or past MG which needs to be comforted by a card or call due to illness or death in their family please contact Mary Ann Kimminau at Kimminau@Verizon.net or 565-6272 and I will be glad to take care of the matter quickly. It is an important part of our organization to remember each other in tough times.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- March 4, Turf Love U, 10-12 noon, WJCC Rec Center
- March 23, MG Class of 2006, Landscape Design, Peggy Krapf, call Linda Lucas to register
- April 6, Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library, "Container Gardening", Bruce Barton, Grafton shop owner and plant provider for Busch Gardens
- April 12, Wetland Habitats Workshop, Advanced MG training, 8:30-4:00, call Kari Abbott at 564-4539
- April 29, JCC MG Plant Sale, WJCC Recreation Center
- May 4, Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library, "Williamsburg Botanical Garden"
- June 1, Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library, "Rich Earth", Liz Witkowski, Owner, New Century, Inc., National Distributor of Rich Earth TN Mineral Soil Conditioner