

The Colonial Master Gardener

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION & VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



APRIL 2009

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: LANDSCAPE LOVE

BY ANNE NIELSEN

With spring in the offing, all gardeners start thinking about their property and those nagging problems left over from last season. Some homeowners, especially new ones, are uncertain of exactly what to do. For JCC/W residents the answer is easy as well as free. They can call or register online for the Landscape Love program. The registration through the www.jccwmg.org website is easy to fill out. Their request is forwarded to the team assigned to that area.

The teams are made up of MG volunteers working in the geographical area closest to their homes. This gives the feeling of neighbors helping neighbors. This year we are trying to have a pruning team member on all the teams as there are always questions about pruning. Water Stewards and Tree Stewards are also helpful in answering erosion, water and tree concerns. Every year we add several interns to each team. This is their chance to put into action all the knowledge that they gained from their classes. Their responsibility is setting up visits and filing reports online. Soon they start feeling confident enough to add their voices to the veterans.

Most homeowners are looking for recommendations for specific shrubs for a sun or shade area. Having their concerns listed on the registration forms allows us to be prepared with the information that they will find helpful.

Many homeowners don't have a good gardening book. I often compare this to "cooking without a cookbook"... difficult to say the least. We bring our favorite beginner gardening books and show them sections devoted to their particular problem. We also point out that gardening books can be checked out of the library. We also refer them to our own website which contains a wealth of information available to everyone. It's a way to



start educating residents to solve their own problem.

Most visits last 1–1 ½ hours. A general survey of the property will lead to advice on mulch, spacing and proper planting of shrubs, pruning techniques, pest management practices and many other gardening concerns. Along with advice we leave a "goody bag" from JCSA with lots of advice on how to save water and money!

We are happy to report good results from our visits in the past. Every year we hope to become even more professional. We always follow the VA Tech guidelines. We never give information we can't back up. The answer to difficult questions is always "I'll have to get back to you when I've done some research".

This year, registrations for spring visits began March 1st and will end April 15th. There is an afternoon training session planned for April 6th to help both interns and returning MGs familiarize themselves with forms and procedures. After registrations close, team captains will hold a meeting to assign visits. These home visits begin in late April and should be finished within a month or so.

Helping homeowners get a good start for spring is a very satisfying experience. When we do this again in the fall, perhaps you would like to share in the fun! To join this team in the fall, contact Anne Nielsen at anne-mail@cox.net.

Next Monthly Meeting

April 2, 9 a.m.,
Williamsburg Regional
Library.

Andrew Koenig of
Bartlett Tree Experts
will speak about
*Caring for Mature
Trees and the*

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PROPOSED BY-LAW AMENDMENTS:

Please review the proposed by-law amendments prior to the
APRIL 2 Meeting!
We will be voting on the changes at the meeting.
Thank you.

INTERNAL EDUCATION NEWS

CAROL FRYER

"One of the healthiest ways to gamble is with a spade and a packet of seeds"... Dan Bennett

It is about that time of year that we may be planting seeds in the garden, and I thought the above quote was apropos for us gardeners who may not be greatly successful with seed packets and growing seedlings.

I was on a Pruning At-Home session recently, and the homeowner gave me a cluster of berries from her Nandina domestica that has **yellow** berries. The cultivars with yellow berries according to Michael Dirr's *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* are 'Lutea', 'Aurea' and a true 1 ft. dwarf – 'Lemon Boy'. Aurea has yellow leaves and fruits at certain times of the year. I found this image of the cultivar 'Leucocarpa' on the Internet. I will let you know if I have any success propagating from seed.



At our April 2nd meeting, we are very pleased to have as our speaker Andrew Koenig, arborist and District Manager of Bartlett Tree Experts in Williamsburg. Andrew is one of approximately 250 ISA certified Master Arborists in the world. The topic he will address is "Caring for Mature Trees and the Physiology of Aging". Following his presentation, Mr. Koenig is willing to do a talk-and-walk around the library to look at the trees, identify issues and/or problems, and answer questions. If you can stay past 11AM for this optional portion of the program, we

would love to have you join us for this field experience.

We all encounter mature trees in our landscapes and in the landscapes we visit through our projects such as Landscape Love, Turf Love, and the Pruning Program. We visit botanical gardens and arboretums to see a variety of species, but we seldom talk or read about the aging process in trees. We may not know the average or expected life span for many species of trees. I know that Andrew Koenig will help us gain greater knowledge of tree functions, gain an appreciation of remarkable old trees, and guide us in learning what care might be needed to support mature trees.

We look forward to seeing you on April 2nd at the Williamsburg Library on Scotland Street. Our business meeting starts at 9 AM and is followed by our monthly training. Our new interns from the class of 2009 will be joining us for their first monthly MG meeting and we wish to welcome and acknowledge them as they begin their internship hours within our many projects. Welcome Aboard!

The speaker at our May 7 meeting will be Marie Butler from the Virginia Zoo. Her topic is: "I Have Elephants in My Garden, So What's YOUR Problem?"

* * * * *

By the way, the Visitor Center of Colonial Williamsburg has several gardening books on sale at significant discounts. I just picked up a copy of Dirr's *Hardy Trees and Shrubs* that has great photos of plant materials that will grow in our region. I looked through an appealing book on designing gardens for children, *A Child's Garden: 60 Ideas to Make Any Garden Come Alive for Children* by Mollie Dannenmeier. Both are good resources and there are many more.

2009
MG Board

President:
Dave Banks
258-8632

VP Projects:
Jeanne Millin
258-4724

VP Internal Ed:
Carol Fryer
220-0759

VP Administration:
John Giffin
345-5209

Secretary:
Pat Crowe
645-4538

Treasurer:
Sarah Dougherty
565-7954

VMGA Reps:
Jim & Nelda Pressly
220-1858

Past President:
Charlie Clapper
564-6191

Co-op Ext Rep:
Doris Heath
564-2170

The MG Board meets on the third Friday of each month, at 9:00 am, at the James City County Health and Human Services Building, on Olde Towne Road.

The Board meetings are open to all Master Gardeners, and all are encouraged to attend.

PLANTS GALORE SALE: APRIL 25, 2009

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Yes, it's that time of year again! Time to set the clocks forward, put your winter coats in the cedar chest, and volunteer to help with the 2009 Plants Galore annual fundraiser. There are many ways that you can contribute in this effort to raise money for Master Gardener projects.

On the day of the sale, there will be lots of opportunities to help and jobs to fill, from transport and set up, checking out and table experts, to sale helpers and breakdown. You say that you're not going to be in town that day? Well don't worry, you can help with plant digs, pre-sale plant care, potting parties, transport, etc. Members and interns, we have jobs for you!

Propagation Workshop



So please, contact the Plant Sale Co-Chairs, Susan Giandomenico or Deborah Secrist, and sign up to volunteer either before or during the plant sale. With your help, we'll have a successful sale and a great new year!

Susan Giandomenico : susangia@cox.net
Debbie Secrist : gardenhoe@me.com

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MELISSA'S MEADOW

BY GRACE RAYMOND

The idea for a wildflower meadow began in 1994 in the VA Native Plant Society. The purpose was to create a decorative planting for the Tennis Center and a habitat for birds, butterflies and other insects. Ultimately the field could be used in teaching both botany and entomology.

VA Cooperative Extension and the JCC/W Master Gardeners helped in the creation of Melissa's Meadow and continue to assist in the maintenance. The soil began as hard clay and construction rubble. It was modified with a heavy mulch of newspapers by the College Recycling Club plus pine bark mulch and urea the first year. Each spring we again use newspaper to block weed growth, covering it with a layer of mulch. The Meadow is located on a modified berm, permitting a variety of soil and water conditions and a variety of native, drought tolerant plants. There are deciduous and evergreen trees on the periphery providing food and protection for birds and insects important to the meadow. The word "meadow" means, "to mow". William and Mary does the mowing each year to keep the meadow from evolving into a mature hardwood forest, which is the climax vegetation in the climate.



In the MG vision statement, Melissa's Meadow falls mostly under learning. If you put in a couple of hours a month and pay attention you could learn to recognize 30 perennials at various stages of growth, not to mention the weed ID you would master.

We meet the third Thursday of the month between 7:00 AM and 11:00 AM. The hotter it gets, the earlier we start and the earlier we finish. At our first meeting, we will walk through the meadow, see what is coming up, what weeds need pulling, and anything else we need to know. Since we meet only once a month and there are 30 interns, I would suggest that interns sign up for one or two sessions and if you enjoy the project, become a regular next year.

JCC/W Master
Gardener 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.



Presents a



Saturday, April 4th
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
at the Virginia Department of Forestry's
New Kent Forestry Center
11301 Pocahontas Trail, Providence Forge, Va. 23140
Rain or Shine

UPCOMING EVENT: WALK IN THE FOREST

APRIL 4 (7 A.M.—4 P.M.)

Lisa Deaton is asking for help from the MGs. If you would like to help out for a few hours, contact Lisa at 804 -328-3031 or lisa.deaton@dof.virginia.gov

Schedule:

7 am Guided Birding Trip
10 am Nature Hikes (on the hour)
11 am Exhibits and Seedlings Available

Bring a lunch and enjoy— the Event is free

SUNSHINE NOTES

If you know a Master Gardener who is ill, facing surgery, has suffered a family loss, or any event in which that person might benefit from a **sunshine note**, please contact the MG Secretary, Pat Crowe. She will send a note or take appropriate action on behalf of the organization.

Recently, she has sent the following:

- A note of condolence to Annette Bell following the death of her brother-in-law.

Pat may be reached at 645-4538 or pk.Crowe@cox.net.



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FARMERS' MARKET

The Farmers' Market project begins on Saturday, May 2 and continues every other Saturday through the month of October. Volunteers for the first 3 months will be scheduled as soon as the interns have their "sign-up day". The ideal is to have 2 interns and 1 experienced MG at each market. If anyone is interested in helping at a market or two, please let Sally Sissel know. Our booth will be in Merchants' Square beginning May 2, from 8:00-11:30.



FARMERS' MARKET

2009 SCHEDULE

- May 2:** *Mobile Master Gardeners*
- May 16:** *Vegetables*
- May 30:** *Water*
- June 13:** *Gardening with Children*
- June 27:** *Flower Gardens*
- July 11:** *Pruning*
- July 25:** *Incredible Edibles*
(vegetable container gardening)

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT GUIDE

The Integrated Pest Management Guide is available for reference or download on the VA Tech website. In previous years, paper copies of this guide were provided to Master Gardeners upon request. Due to funding restrictions, this is no longer the case. Copies of this guide may be available for purchase.

Master Gardeners are reminded to use only the most current guide when performing research or advising clients.

INVITATION FROM THE HERB SOCIETY

Wednesday, April 15 at 1:30 in the Williamsburg Community Building, 401 N. Boundary Street, Susan Witting Albert, critically-acclaimed author and nationally-recognized speaker on the history and lore of herbs, will be the guest of the Herb Society of America/Colonial Triangle of VA Unit. She will present a lecture entitled "Earth's Rich Bounty: the Shakers and their Herbs" and speak about Wormwood, her latest novel in the popular China Bayles herbal mystery series, set in a Shaker community. Wormwood is the author's 17th novel in the China Bayles series. Ms. Albert's enormously popular books are known for their snappy dialogue, humor, and regional background, as well as for the information about herbs that is woven into each book. Following her lecture, she will sign books, purchased at the event only, (cash or check) and herbal refreshments will be served. The event is free and open to the public.

INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL DAY

Mark your calendars! **May 2** is statewide Invasive Plant Removal Day! Here in the Williamsburg area, we will be partnering with the National Park Service to remove invasives at the entrance to Jamestown Island. The area was once a 4-H camp, and became a jungle of wisteria and bamboo. The NPS Invasive Species Control "SWAT" team has visited the area for the past 4 summers, and a path has now been cleared, where the native perennials and ferns are emerging. BUT the privet and wisteria and English ivy are coming back! We will be pulling privet, ivy, honeysuckle, and wisteria.

This statewide effort was initiated by Fairfax County Master Naturalists and our local chapter is joining the effort. The Virginia Native Plant Society has endorsed the project, as have the members of our local John Clayton Chapter.

Park at Powhatan Creek Overlook, and meet at the Jamestown Settlement by 1:00 pm. Bring cutting and pruning tools, and protective clothing -- bees and poison ivy may be encountered.

Remember to check out the **Calendar Of Events** on our website (www.jccwmg.org)

EDITORS NOTE: The deadline for submission of material for the May MG Newsletter is **April 27**. Please send to Cathy Lohwater, newsletter editor, at cathy.lohwater@cox.net or call 757-259-1133. Comments and questions about the newsletter are also welcome. Thank you.

PAPER COPIES OF NEWSLETTER

If you are receiving a paper copy of the MG newsletter and no longer need it, please let Cathy Lohwater know at: cathy.lohwater@cox.net

This would reduce costs associated with paper and postage. Thank you.

PICTURE GALLERY

Remember to visit the MG Picture Gallery on-line: <http://picasaweb.google.com/jccwmg1>

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LEADING THE ORGANIZATION

BY SUSAN GIANDOMENICO

Who is faster than a speeding vole? More powerful than a patch of wiregrass? Able to leap tall sunflowers in a single bound?

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's the MG Executive Board!!



I have been fortunate over the past several months to sit in on the Monthly MG Board Meetings. What an amazing group of people we have leading our organization! In addition to their monthly face-to-face, they spend countless hours chained to their computers and in sub-meetings discussing budget constraints, administrative tasks, project issues and how to move the organization forward as we continue to grow. I am sure that their own home gardens have suffered greatly because of their dedication, drive and downright love for the MG organization and its great group of volunteer members.

So, the next time you see a member of the Board, thank them for the work they do for the MG's. Your kind word might just help them look past the dead boxwoods in their front yards a little longer.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM VMGA:

OFFICIAL STATEMENT REQUIRED

Master Gardeners frequently write articles for magazines or newspapers. The official statement to be used as the concluding paragraph for columns and articles has been supplied by VT Communications and Marketing as follows:

"Virginia Master Gardeners are volunteer educators who work within their communities to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management education and training. As an educational program of Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Master Gardeners bring the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth."

CHATTERVOX

The ChatterVox Portable PA System has arrived. This is an amplification system for a speaker to use either indoors or outdoors. The ChatterVox amplifier weighs only 1lb. 2oz. A simple volume control with built-in On/Off switch and Power On LED indicator constitutes the only user control. It has an environmentally friendly, high capacity Nickel Metal-Hydrate rechargeable power system that can operate up to 14 hours of continuous use and be recharged overnight. The ChatterVox is supplied with a "fanny-pack" that is worn around the waist and a headset microphone plugs into the unit.

If you would like to use the ChatterVox for a workshop or a project activity, contact Nelda & Jim Pressly to sign it out - 220-1858.

MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE

Master Gardener College will be held at Virginia Tech June 18-21. Check out the power point presentation "2009 MG College Preview" at the VMGA website (www.vmga.net) and give consideration to attending this year. Speakers include Alan Armitage, Joe Murray, Bonnie Appleton, Holly Scoggins and Alex Niemiera. Registration will be available by mid-April on the VMGA website.

VMGA has six \$100 scholarships available for Master Gardener College. Two of these scholarships are reserved for associations with fewer than 70 members. Scholarship information is available on the VMGA web site (www.vmga.net).



NICE WORDS FROM HRC:

WATERWISE GARDEN

Diana F. Hutchens, facility manager at the Human Services Center (where MG classes are held), passed along these nice words of appreciation to Harriet Parsons and the Waterwise Garden Team:

“You cannot believe how beautiful the front of the HSC is. The daffodils are in full bloom, in pots, and beds, everywhere, the King Alfred’s are huge! Please pass along my thanks to them. Not many people coming to DSS or the Clinic really want to have to be coming here to begin with but the floral greeting they are getting has to make it a little easier!”



Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Apr. 2 Monthly MG Meeting @ WRL; Andrew Koenig of Bartlett Tree Experts, “Caring for Mature Trees and the Physiology of Aging”
- Apr. 4 Walk in the Forest @ New Kent Forestry Center
- Apr. 15 Herb Society Meeting
- Apr. 18 Earth Day @ Waller Mill Park
- Apr. 25 Plants Galore Sale
- May 2 Farmers’ Market Project Starts
- May 2 Invasive Plant Removal Day @ Jamestown
- May 7 Monthly MG Meeting @ WRL; Marie Butler of the VA Zoo, “I Have Elephants in My Garden, So What’s YOUR Problem?”
- June 18-21 MG College @ VA Tech