

# The Colonial Master Gardener

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



April 2006

## President's Corner Charlie Clapper

*"Sing a song of Spring," cried  
the pleasant April rain  
With a thousand sparkling  
tones upon the window pane,  
And the flowers hidden in the  
ground woke dreamily and  
stirred,  
From root to root, from seed  
to seed, crept swiftly the happy  
word.*

-Celia Thaxter

By now Williamsburg spring is in bloom – literally – and our gardening season is underway. Already we're in April -- month four of the not-quite-so-new-year. As MGs we need to maintain our gardening skills and expertise and we all should know the latest plants and planting techniques, latest developments in integrated pest management,

and new water and plant conservation measures. Jean Winters, Vice President for Internal Education is now beginning work on a training plan for the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardener Association. She'll set up a training committee to identify and help make available the training we need. Currently available training opportunities come to us from many sources. Our monthly lectures provide training on a broad range of topics -- native plants, risk management, to drought resistance plants and Google searches. The Norfolk Botanical Garden and the Lewis Ginter Garden afford us the opportunity to hear nationally recognized speakers such as Andre Viette. Our extension office

and other extension programs offer training. Other Master Gardener Associations offer training as do professional organizations. The list is long. We are also looking at how best to use our monthly programs to further our training goals. We also want need to know where our training gaps are. Leanne has told us she'll suggest training sources (including herself). We want to provide the latest and best training for JCC/WMG MGs.

## Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, April 6, Williamsburg Regional Library

"**Container Gardening**", Bruce Barton, also known as Mr. Bruce, is the owner and grower for The Flower Pot Garden Center in Grafton. Mr. Bruce is well known for his unique plant selections and designs used in containers.



## State Coordinator Update Leanne DuBois

David Close, the State Master Gardener Coordinator sent a survey to all extension agents and Master Gardener Coordinators requesting input for the branding of the Master Gardener helpline. After compiling the results the consensus was to brand the name throughout the state as "Extension MG Help Desk". Dave feels this name captures all aspects of the service: 1) it is sponsored by VCE 2) it is covered by VCE MG volunteers and 3) it includes all

forms of the service: phone calls, walk-ins, emails, and plant clinics. The broader purpose of branding this service is to join in with VCE and CALS (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences) overall in an effort to make our programs more recognizable across the entire state. Dave states, "This is simply about marketing and exposure. There is no hidden agenda to fully standardize the VCE MG program at the state level. Everyone here on

campus recognizes how and why each VCE MG unit is and should be uniquely tailored to local needs both from program development and program delivery levels." It may take time to transition but we'll have to follow suit and promote the Helpline as "Extension MG Help Desk".

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## Internal Education News Jean Winters

All Master Gardeners are welcome to attend a refresher course in Landscape Design Principles which will be given on March 23 from 9:00 to 12:00 at the Human Services Building on Old Town Road. This course will be in the auditorium. Call Linda Lucas for info.

Spring is upon us...the daffodils and pear trees are particularly eye-catching just now! Enjoy their beauty!

As I said at our March meeting, my dear grandmother's gift of the penned saying, "The chain of friendship stretching far, links days that were with days that are", reminds me that the knowledge we have learned in the past sees fruition as we use it now. It's rewarding to share that which we know, and if someone asks a question that we are doubtful about, we can look it up and share the answer when we're more sure about it...remember our "thick" manual and all the other resources we have!

We're working on our continuing education ideas...it will take time to get a program worked out. In the meantime, I encourage you to refer to the "upcoming events" in each newsletter...there are always opportunities there. Individual reports often contain ideas too.

Fred Weaver's "Risk Management" presentation opened our eyes to some information probably new to most of us. The little cards he referred to were ordered, have arrived and are ready to be distributed as needed. They should be carried with you as you do your volunteer work. I will have them for you at the April meeting.

Last week I went to Matthey's Garden and Melissa's Meadow when the interns had their field trip there. Both are wonderful gardens to see as the seasons progress...I urge you to visit as the weather gets warmer and the many plants wake up from their winter's nap. You may want to volunteer some work time too! I've read that Matthey's Garden will be part of the Historic Garden Week in Virginia...it will be open free of charge from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the tour day, April 25th...parking in the school lot is allowed during those hours. Enjoy!

## The Art of Designing with Herbs and Everlastings

Worth a "look see": [www.highcountrygardens.com](http://www.highcountrygardens.com) This is an interesting website that provides much information on water-wise gardening and drought tolerant plants. Although the company is located in New Mexico, they provide insightful information for all zip codes

The Williamsburg Garden Club announces a lecture and demonstration by Donald Haynie, an internationally known expert and co-owner of Buffalo Springs Herb Farm, Raphine, VA, Monday, March 20, 10:00 a.m. at the Williamsburg Regional Library Auditorium. Mr. Haynie will

demonstrate the art of designing with herbs and everlastings. The process of proper drying and arranging for wreaths, swags, and table centerpieces using fresh and dried materials will be presented, along with design tips to achieve professional results. A question and answer period

will follow the talk and autograph copies of Mr. Haynie's books, "Delicious Herbal Fare" and "The Season of Advent" will be available for sale. OPEN AND FREE TO THE PUBLIC

## Lawn Weed Control Leanne DuBois

Want the latest on Lawn weeds information; check out the Turfgrass Clipping newsletter article <http://www.vtturf.com/TurfClipping.aspx> entitled "Spring" Into Your Lawn: Weed Control Considerations. This web article discusses appropriate selection and timing of preemergent herbicides, the pros and cons of weed and feed formulations, and postemergent

strategies on winter annuals and perennials. This timely information will be beneficial to you as we enter the major season of lawn product sales and questions in the helpline never end on turf weed control. Appropriate timing of pre emergent herbicide is key. The article states that pre weed control response is optimized sometime between 100% forsythia bloom to

50% bloom drop. Although it can be applied earlier, the duration of control through the prime months for weed seed germination will be shorter. The turf mantra remains.....maintaining a healthy, dense turf is the best defense against weeds.

PROJECT UPDATES

Please remember that the project chairs wish to hear from you if you are interested in volunteering for any projects this year. The project descriptions along with the spreadsheet that describes the needs by season are both posted on our website at www.jccwmq.org in the "members pages section".

Melissa's Meadow will have a work day April 20 around 8:00-10:00am. Bring tools to do weeding and clipping to keep the path open. You may call Grace Raymond at 566-3921 if you have any questions.

There is a Project Chair meeting on March 22 at 9:00 AM in the Williamsburg Regional Library.

Seeds of Learning Mary Ann Kimminau

All seasoned MG'S are invited to help with this year's Seeds of Learning. Please try to commit to all the times at a particular school but at least the whole day at a particular school. You may contact me by phone at 565-6272 and by email at Kimminau@Verizon.net.

APRIL:

- 4/4 Matthew Whaley 9:30-11:30 1:30-2:30
4/5 Matthew Whaley 9:30-11:30
4/12 D.J. Montague 9:30-11:30 12:15-1:00
4/13 D.J. Montague 9:30-11:30 12:15-1:00
4/14 James River 9:30-2:00
4/26 Rawls Byrd 9:30-11:30
4/27 Rawls Byrd 9:30-12:15

MAY:

- 5/2 Norge 9:30-11:30 12:40-1:40
5/3 Norge 9:30-11:30 12:40-1:40
5/8 Clara Byrd Baker \*
5/9 Clara Byrd Baker \*
\* actual Hours have not been confirmed

This is a project done with 1st graders and is actually a lot of fun. Everything needed for each session will be brought to the site so all you have to do is be present and enjoy the experience!.

Junior Master Gardeners are Springing Up Kari Abbott

April showers will hopefully come. All the ground around here is in need of water. This is a wonderful lesson for the children, as the first graders all have rain gauges now to measure water outside, and know the one inch per week rule. In addition, their knowledge of conserving water can be put to use immediately. Classes at DJ Montague Elementary School are going well. March was about how water was used in industries, such as papermaking and tree farms (which we have many of in the state of Virginia). The children liked making paper, the cool, squishy, feel of the pulp they made into various

shapes. The best part was using the shredded money from the Federal Reserve to make the paper look really cool. Next, we are preparing for the park and working on some concepts like camouflage. IF ANY of you have old silk flowers that you do not want anymore, that I can use for a camouflage activity (the children will make insects out of pipe cleaners to match the flower) please bring them to the General Meeting on April 6th. JMG would greatly appreciate any donations of flowers, greens, ivy's, whatever you would like to donate.

At Williamsburg Christian Academy we are moving on to a weather chapter, and seeing how water affects weather. Tornado's, clouds, weather provides interesting things to learn about. The kind people at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have provided a lot of information for the children. For those of you signing up for the Wetlands Habitat Class you should get an electronic reminder. The class is full. It should be a lot of fun. As always, everyone is welcome in the Junior Master Gardener project. We have

fun, laugh, and get lots of positive feedback all the time. Zap me at bearsbaskets@cox.net if you would like to play.

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## April Gardening Tips Helen Hamilton

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

Spring arrived on March 20. The last frost for this area (Hampton Roads) is around April 20. Planting vegetables and summer annuals too soon can subject them to late killing frosts. Setting plants out before the soil is sufficiently warm has proven to cause delayed growth and in fact, plants set out later after the soil has warmed up have grown better than those set out earlier, despite their later planting date.

**FERTILIZING** certain shrubs, trees and warm season turf grasses with high nitrogen can cause early tender growths that can be damaged in late frosts and will inhibit bountiful flowers or fruits later this year or brown out your lawn in April. So be patient. Mid-March is a good time to start most plants from seeds indoors so you can plant them in mid to late April in your gardens.

**CREPE MYRTLES:** Just trim and shape. Remove old seed-pods 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.

**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.

**LIRIOPE:** Rejuvenate by using a lawn mower to cut back the old foliage to a height of 2 to 3 inches. Avoid mowing too close and damaging the crown of the plant since that is where the new growth emerges.

**BULBS:** When the leaves of spring-flowering bulbs emerge, apply a complete fertilizer to

ensure quality blooms next year. Remove the bulb foliage only after it dies naturally. This will occur in 6 to 8 weeks after the plant's bloom fade.

**ANTS INSIDE THE HOUSE?** Two home remedies: (1) Spray ant routes with apple cider vinegar to cover their invisible pheromone tracks, so they can't find their way back to their foraging sites. (2) Make your own ant hotel – mix 10 teaspoons corn or maple syrup with 1 teaspoon borax. Pour a dab of the mixture into a small lidded container like a plastic film canister, poke holes in the lid, and set in a place frequented by ants.

**BIRDS** can rid your garden of many unwanted pests. To attract numerous species of birds and promote a healthy, well-balanced garden, choose the seed-producing plants birds love: black-eyed susans, coneflowers, coreopsis, cosmos, feverfew, millet, scabiosa, sunflower.

**INVITE** insect-eating toads, box turtles, salamanders, and lizards into your garden by placing small piles of wood or rocks in secluded areas of your yard.

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

### Upcoming Dates to Remember

- March 22 Project Chair Meeting, see page 5
- March 23 Landscape Design Principles refresher course, see page 3
- April 29 Plant Sale at JCC/W Rec Center, 9:30 to noon
- May 4 Monthly MG meeting, Williamsburg Botanical Garden, Angela Cingale, Williamsburg Regional Library
- June 1 Monthly MG meeting, Rich Earth, Liz Witkowski, Williamsburg Regional Library
- July 6 Monthly MG meeting, Creating Backyard Habitats using Native Plants, Louis Verner, VA Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries, Quarterpath Recreation Center

## Book Review Ailene Bartlett

**YANKEE MAGAZINE'S PANTY HOSE, HOT PEPPERS, TEA BAGS, AND MORE - FOR THE GARDEN. Dublin, N.H., Yankee Publishing Co., c2005.**

This is THE ULTIMATE in finding useable garden items in stuff scattered about the house! You name it: carpeting, old T-shirts, radiator grates, your kid's discarded skateboard or snow saucer - it's all in there somewhere, begging to be put to use in the garden! Had you thought of putting some of the crop of ubiquitous telephone directories, sans

covers, in the bottom of your planter boxes? When you empty them for the winter, voila! - good donation to the compost heap! How about stealing your daughter's cute ponytail holders for plant ties?

Not only is this a fascinating, and informative, read, it is also a real mind-jogger, conjuring up all sorts of possibilities around one's own Plantation. Try it, you might like it!

## Water Smart Clinics

The James City County Extension Office and the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners is presenting Water Smart Clinics at three different Williamsburg locations (see below for final two). Topics for the Water Smart Clinics include: Turf Management and Lawn Care (already presented on March 18 at Lowe's), Plant Selection and Design and Low Maintenance Landscaping. These clinics promote our working partnership with the "Let's Be Water Smart" program to encourage water conservation in the county.

**April 22, 2006**

**Topic: Plant Selection and Design**

Time: 10 a.m.

Location: Cooke's Gardens, 1826 Jamestown Road, Williamsburg

**May 20, 2006**

**Topic: Low Maintenance Landscaping**

Time: 10 a.m.

Location: James City County Human Services Building Water-wise Garden, 5249 Olde Towne Road, Williamsburg

*"Let's Be Water Smart" is a public / private water management initiative of the James City Service Authority to promote responsible water usage.*

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The 21st Annual Arbor Day Ceremony and Reception was held March 10, 2006. The Williamsburg Area Council of Garden Clubs recognized **Ailene Bartlett** with The Arbor Day Individual Award. Her name will be added to a plaque displayed at the Williamsburg Regional Library. **Kari Abbott** accepted the Certificate of Appreciation awarded to the James City County/Williamsburg Junior Master Gardener Program.

