

The Colonial Master Gardener



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

August 2005

PRESIDENT'S CORNER CHARLIE CLAPPER, '02

Dear Master Gardeners,
Thank you for electing me your President. I look forward to this next year and working together to build an even stronger organization and better planet. As I mentioned at our July meeting I want to focus on people, projects and partnerships.

People are the most important ingredients of our organization. Keeping people involved, interested, and giving us the tools to do our volunteer work is essential to success. Continuing educational opportunities must be available to all members. For example, I'd like to see more people attend the Master Gardener College each year. The Board and I will identify training that will allow you to maintain and increase your gardening skills. For example, the upcoming Water Steward Training will teach us new skills to work in the important business of water conservation.

Safety and risk management (preventing accusations of abusing people) need to be foremost in our minds as we perform volunteer tasks. We don't need to hurt ourselves as we help others! Being aware of tripping hazards, and using proper lifting and bending techniques are important. Also, in working with youth, risk management is vitally important. Risk Management refresher training for all of us is in the works.

As MG's we need a variety of projects to sustain our interest and skills. The Board and I will work closely with our Extension Agent Leanne DuBois to identify new projects, to ensure that current projects meet extension objectives, and that volunteers trained to do the work are available. I'm quite excited about the prospect of new work coming from the Water Steward training. Joined with Tree Stewards, Turf Love and Landscape Love, these programs reinforce each other and move us towards being even better conservationists.

Partnerships increase our impact, strengthen our programs and stretch our resources. We operate under the auspices of the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Working with Leanne we need to identify and expand our work with community organizations and individuals from our diverse community -- schools, conservation organizations, health care providers, Colonial Williamsburg, civic organizations.

Our role as Master Gardeners is growing ever more aware of, and caring for, our home planet Earth by practicing sustainable ways, teaching others and enjoying this very special place.

"Who will eat the kernel of the nut must break the shell" – Anonymous

PRESIDENT

Charlie Clapper, '02
564-6191

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

AUGUST 4,
Williamsburg Regional
Library: How To Grow
Clean Water and Happy
Critters (Including You),
Lance Gardner, PhD
student studying water
quality & sea grasses at
The Virginia Institute of
Marine Science/William
and Mary, and Master
Gardener (Gloucester)

INCREDIBLE EDIBLES AILENE BARTLETT, '85

We are beginning to get reports from our members on their "incredible edibles"! It looks like Claire Gross, '04 gets the reward for the first tomato, having harvested a "Fourth of July" and a "Sweet 100" on June 21! (She knit them sweaters before setting them out on Apr. 9.) Kari Abbott, '04 has harvested tomatoes, and so have Bill Hopkins, '98 and I. We did have a couple of "Roma" types that suffered blossom end rot.

Frances Harrick ('05)'s sweet potatoes got eaten by some sort of varmint (I'd bet rabbits or deer), but she's enjoying her herbs and waiting for tomatoes.

I've also harvested blueberries, blackberries (thornless!) and squash. Beans are blooming! Stay tuned!

Thanks to everyone who sends reports - MORE, PLEASE



Shelia Nigro, '04 and Mary Mills, '04 tend the Shields vegetable garden.

AUGUST GARDENING TIPS HELEN HAMILTON, '04

From Fine Gardening, Aug 2003, June 2004

Cleanup after trimming hedges: use a child's plastic saucer sled to catch the falling clippings.

Plastic peanuts: put them in a sack of landscape fabric, or a nylon stocking, and then the peanuts can easily be placed in the bottom of a large pot (to lighten its load), and later removed without spilling everywhere.

Removable knee pads: Remove the pockets from a pair of jeans, sew them to the knee area and tuck in a piece of dense foam rubber.

Seed starter: hold the soil together by adding a package of unflavored, unsweetened gelatin to half the recommended amount of water. The soil blocks won't crumble when moved, and the gelatin retains water for the plants.

Plant tags: Store them in photo albums, organized by different areas of the garden. Label each tag with the date the plant was purchased and its location in the garden. Include in the photo album the packets from any plants started from seed.



From Helpline FAQs, August, 2003-4

Shore juniper, Blue Pacific: Does not do well in heavy, clay soil; roots will die from poor drainage.

Amaryllis: Stop watering in late August, let the soil dry, store in the dark and cool temperatures not below 50; retrieve the plant in 2-3 months, cut off lingering foliage, return plant to sunny window and water a little; flower appears in 2-8 weeks.

Artillery fungus: This fungus produces small black spores which are released in a "shotgun" effect which then sticks to surfaces like cars and houses. The fungus often grows in old mulch. Solution: remove old mulch and replace with fresh large pine bark nuggets, coco hulls, Atlantic white cedar or cypress.

Butterfly larvae: While the adults feed on nectar-containing plants like butterfly weed and butterfly bush, the larvae require dill, milkweed, parsley or fennel. So if you have butterflies in your garden, make sure Mama Butterfly has the proper food source to lay her eggs, and don't plan on harvesting parsley for yourself – the larva of the monarch butterfly will strip all leaves from the plant!

Squash bugs: plant a natural predator such as catnip, tansy, radishes, nasturtiums, marigolds and mint.

ANOTHER ALI EN I NVASI VE PLANT HELEN HAMILTON, '04

Golden bamboo, *Phyllostachys aurea*, is highly invasive, grows rapidly to 10-15 feet and spreads aggressively by underground stems. Suckers will appear everywhere in the landscape. Shoots have been discovered coming up through the lawn, in the garden beds, and even through the steel backing and plastic liner of a garden pond!



It is difficult, but not impossible to control. Every two weeks during the growing season, cut stems to the ground (new and old) and paint the stumps with the strongest Roundup available (Cokes and Lowes carry 18%). Repeat each year and eventually fewer new stems will appear, unless you are close to a neighbor's population. To permanently stop the invasion from another area, dig a trench 15" deep, and line with concrete.

If plants from your neighbor's garden damage your property, it may be seen as a breach of civil duty of care (or a 'tort of negligence'). Your neighbor may be liable for the damage, even though the negligence may not have been deliberate.

BOOK REPORT AILENNE BARTLETT, '85

You guessed it - I've gotten another book. When in Fredericksburg last weekend I visited my most favorite place, Tractor Supply Company (as good as Borders!) and found Barbara Pleasant's *THE GARDENER'S WEED BOOK*, which identifies over 70 common weeds, gives time-saving tips for weed management, and tells you how to put them to practical use. It's published by Storey Publishing, which tells you that it's in the organic mode, lots of organic solutions for control. Illustrations are good, and lots of common names are included (did you know that chickweed has TEN common names??)

She also has one on plant diseases, which I did not realize at the time. Stay tuned for next month... Meantime - eradicate weeds!

Here is a cool link to teach kids about soils: <http://www.ppi-ppic.org/Elementary/homepage.html>

WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN PAUL TUBACH, CHAIRMAN

The board of directors of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden (WBG) is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with James City County (JCC) to establish a Demonstration Garden at Freedom Park in the area called the "Ellipse". Both parties expect to finalize this agreement by month's end. This agreement includes a provision for matching funds by JCC to contribute \$1 for every \$2 raised by WBG, up to \$10,000, excluding in-kind services.

The primary goal of this agreement is to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden to satisfy a major first step toward the establishment of a permanent Botanical Garden and Arboretum site at Freedom Park. WBG will operate and maintain this two-acre Garden under the operational oversight of The Division of Parks and Recreation for a period lasting not less than three years, and if properly operated and maintained, allow an extension of the MOU by mutual agreement of both parties.

A master plan is currently being developed for the site and should be finalized by September. WBG Alliance organizations, including Master Gardeners and Council of Garden Clubs, as well as interested citizens, are invited to participate in the planning process, financial support and implementation in November.

The Williamsburg Botanical Garden is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation in Virginia and was founded in 2000. All contributions are tax deductible. For further information about the MOU, membership in the Botanical Garden, donating to the Demonstration Garden or involvement in the planning process, contact WBG Chairman, Paul Tubach, at 259-3209 or visit our website www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org.

JAMES CITY COUNTY FAIR

Remember that the James City County Fair is coming August 12-13 to Upper County Park in Toano! Everyone is urged to enter fruits, vegetables, and flowers, whatever...! Doris Heath at the Extension Office has the list.

Also, Leanne DuBois, '96 needs people to help with judging various categories at the James City County Fair, and at the New Kent County Fair! If you can help, please contact her at the Extension Office ASAP!



Carole Ashton, '04 at the New Kent Taking Root tour in June.

SUPER TURF SATURDAY BOB WINTERS, '01

On August 20, 2005, Turf Love will present the fourth annual event at the JCCW Community Center. As in past years, James City County residents will be afforded the opportunity to hear speakers who are on the cutting edge of turf research. Home owners will be given practical solutions to everyday problems with growing turf in our area.

The morning speakers include Dr. Shawn Askew, Assistant Professor of Turfgrass Weed Science; Dr. Michael Goatley, Extension Turfgrass Specialist; and Mr. Sam Doak, Research Associate...all from Virginia Tech.

The afternoon speakers include Bob Annette, Volunteer at the Virginia Living Museum, on moles, voles and critters; Laurie J. Fox, Horticulture Associate of VT Hampton Roads AREC, covering sustainable landscapes from a whole system perspective, including water management, IPM, soil, plant selection, etc.; and two panel discussions. The Virginia Tech panel consists of the morning speakers, and the Turf Industry panel will offer helpful information on turf management products and services available in our area.

Our Working Lunch this year will include a demonstration of installing drip irrigation systems for gardens by our own Shirley Livingston, Master Gardener. There will also be demonstrations on lawn mower blade sharpening and core aeration and seeding. The Trade Show will feature locally available products and services needed for fall turf renovation and installing drip irrigation and rain barrels for your garden.

As in the past, active Master Gardeners are encouraged to participate. Continuing education credits can be earned for the Virginia Tech presentations. While we are waving the \$10 fee for Master Gardeners, we ask that you pre-register so that a place may be reserved for you. Applications are available at the E.O.C., JCCW Community Center and Farmers Market.

As you are dividing your plants this fall, please think about saving them for the plant sale in the spring. The Plant Sale committee is already working on next year's sale; hope everyone is keeping this in mind!

GOLDEN SPADE AWARD

At the July meeting, Ailene Bartlett, '85, and Rudy Roberts, '96, pictured on the right, were presented with awards for their significant contributions to the Speakers' Bureau. *The Order of the Golden Spade* recognizes those master gardeners who graciously give their time and talent to public horticultural education by speaking to various groups throughout our area. In the first five months of this year, Ailene and Rudy have addressed over 125 people.



OH, HOW HER GARDEN DOES GROW! JUDY MAYS, '03

We master gardeners are a rare breed – gardening is never far from our thoughts even when we're meant to be on vacation as was the case with me last month when I accompanied my husband on a business trip to Orlando, Florida. His job was to attend fact-filled, informative meetings while my job was to simply relax by the very inviting, very LARGE swimming pool at the J.W. Marriott Resort. Well, I hate to tell you this, but one day while lying by that beautiful pool, reading the most recent novel by one of my favorite authors, believe it or not, I got BORED! Well, let me tell you what happens when a master gardener from Virginia has too much time on her hands and not enough dirt!

As I said before, we were staying in the beautiful J. W. Marriott Resort Hotel which is connected to their other property, the Ritz Carlton Hotel by a swimming pool called the Lazy River. This pool meandered gracefully throughout the two properties twisting and turning revealing an unending verdant display of breath-taking tropical foliage, footbridges, fish ponds and just sheer beauty at every turn. I spent two days getting to know that pool area and still managed to get lost at yet another drop-dead gorgeous turn of the never-ending lushness on the third day! Anyway, I digress...as I said, I got bored. One day while exploring the perimeter of the property, I happened to see sunflowers in the distance. Sunflowers in a tropical setting, I thought! Something just isn't quite right about that so I decided to explore further. I walked towards the sunflowers and what to my wondering eyes did appear, but the most wonderful little kitchen garden that looked like something right out of the pages of a story book!



I discovered not only glorious sunflowers blooming on tall stalks, but also corn, tomatoes, egg plant, herbs and all manner of wondrous vegetables! Why, it was enough to make my little master gardener's heart beat with rapturous anticipation! A kitchen garden! I had stumbled upon this charming little garden that consisted of raised beds edged in wooden sides and all neatly laid out in a sunburst pattern. The whole garden was enclosed with a fence and gate (that fortunately for me was not locked) just inviting everyone who happened to pass by to take a look. There were over sixty tomato plants all residing happily in their cages, beautiful little purple eggplants clinging to vines like Christmas

ornaments, stalks of miniature corn standing in a row like little soldiers at attention, and pot and pots and more pots of herbs such as basil, rosemary, tarragon, parsley, and the list goes on.

Who could have created such a vision in a resort situated smack dab in the middle of Mickey and Minnie's vacation home I wondered? Well, being the intrepid gardener and traveler that I am, I set out to find the answer to my question. After a quick visit to the hostess station at the property's restaurant called, Primo, I was told that the kitchen garden was the creation and domain of their Chef de Cuisine, Kathleen Blake. At my request, an introduction was arranged and a meeting was set up with Chef Kathleen for the very next morning.

As I waited in front of the restaurant for Chef Kathleen, this tiny thirty-something blonde (mother of four I later found out) descended the stairs at a brisk pace, stuck out her hand and warmly greeted me. I explained to her

that I was a master gardener from Williamsburg, VA and asked her if I could interview her for our newsletter back home to which she enthusiastically consented.

Chef Kathleen took me on a personal tour of her picturesque little garden and explained to me that her husband is the designer and caretaker of it. The beds are raised because it is a completely organic garden with drip irrigation lines. It is only about a year old and was destroyed three times last year during the hurricanes that relentlessly pounded Florida and each time the garden was replanted. Chef Kathleen explained that they make their own compost on the hotel property and that they use fish emulsion for fertilizer. She also told me that she grew up in a gardening family in Iowa having watched her father and grandmother and even had her own little vegetable plot as a little girl which is where her love of gardening started.



Kathleen learned how to incorporate a kitchen garden into her professional life when she trained at the original Primo Restaurant in the Rockland area of coastal Maine under Chef Melissa Kelly. Chef Melissa's kitchen garden was Kathleen's inspiration and it was there that she learned how to grow vegetables for both consumption and presentation for restaurant clientele. In fact, the garlic in Kathleen's garden comes from Melissa's Restaurant. The kitchen garden not only exists to provide fresh vegetables and herbs for her restaurant, but as a teaching tool for her cooking staff. Many of the people who prepare the food have never before seen vegetables or herbs growing in their own environment. She feels that this first-hand experience benefits the cooking staff greatly in their appreciation of the foods with which they work every day.

Kathleen and her husband get a lot of their seeds and starts from an organic farmer in Gainesville, FL. They are particularly fond of a variety of potato called "Blue Purple Persuasion". These particular potatoes were served to our group the previous evening at dinner and were a big hit not only in taste but as a topic of conversation! Chef Kathleen gears what is growing in the garden towards her menus and is also very creative in her non-traditional uses of some of the by-products of vegetables such as tendrils from sweet peas used in pasta dishes. Strawberries are used for both consumption and as a garnish and the miniature corn is used by the floral staff to create centerpieces for the restaurant.

When soil or pest problems are encountered in her garden, Kathleen seeks out help and advice from her local master gardener organization. She said that they are very helpful in helping to identify and offer solutions as well as to serve as an educational resource.

The kitchen garden has been such a success with the two existing Primo Restaurants that a third one has been created at the newest J. W. Marriott Resort called "Starpass" in Tucson, AZ which will be opening very soon.

As I said goodbye to Chef Kathleen, I came away with the feeling that gardeners are kindred spirits. It doesn't seem to matter from which state or country one comes or in what profession one works. Gardeners gravitate towards each other by their love of the earth and the mysteries and miracles it provides. My visit was made all the more enjoyable by this serendipitous experience and also goes to show how a boring afternoon can quickly turn into one of exquisite pleasure just by taking a little walk!

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- September 2 Master Gardener Monthly Meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library: "Hydroponics", Let It Grow Nursery & Hydroponics

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