

The Colonial Master Gardener

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION & VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



August 2009

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

BY BARBARA GUSTAFSON

Incredible Edibles was created as a Master Gardener project in 2004 to promote the use of locally-grown produce and to encourage the growing of one's own fruit, herbs and vegetables, with a special emphasis on the underserved within our community. We seem to be constantly finding new ways to do this.

Last year we began a monthly program for parents at Child Development Resources focusing on the growing, harvesting and preparing of local produce using self-watering containers and raised beds. This is a lively program that promotes a constantly expanding interest in what can be grown and how to prepare it. As the parents come from many cultures, they are often teaching us as we are teaching them.

The gardens at CDR are planned by the Incredible Edibles team with input from the CDR parents, developed and maintained by members of the Incredible Edibles team, guided by team leader Gary Driscoll. These gardens provide a bountiful harvest that keep us constantly learning how to cope with various insects and diseases as well as exploring new recipes.

Last year we also began a display at our MG booth at Farmers' Market to help those less familiar with our area know what produce is currently available and how to prepare it. Recipes using the produce currently at the market are included in the display.

Then last year Jack Gross and Dennis Wool taught us, and many other master gardeners, how to create inexpensive self-watering containers that



are perfect for growing veggies and herbs. Incorporating these into our CDR program has proved quite successful. Parents are even learning to make their own self-watering container gardens for their home use. This year Roger Evans has joined this group and they are giving presentations throughout the community.

Incredible Edible members are now, along with the help of Doris Heath, our Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, exploring the possibility of initiating a Community Vegetable Garden in the Williamsburg-JCC area. She has discussed this with a Community Viability Specialist who, along with some Agricultural Agents, are creating some materials to assist localities in working with communities interested in developing community gardening programs. They envision doing a training this winter to prepare us to implement something in the spring. Other Master Gardeners throughout the state have been successful in doing this, so we are also exploring some of their methods that have proved successful. We shall keep you posted on developments.

If any of you would like to join the Incredible Edibles team to help us explore the many wonders of locally grown produce, contact the co-chairs: Art & Barbara Gustafson at Barbara-sg@cox.net.



Next Monthly Meeting:

August 6, 9 a.m.,
Williamsburg Regional
Library.

Denise Greene, owner
of *Sassafras Farms*,
Butterfly Gardens.



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INTERNAL EDUCATION

BY CAROL FRYER

Our next monthly meeting will be August 6th at 9:00AM at the Williamsburg Library on Scotland Street. Our speaker for the training portion of the meeting will be Denise Greene, owner of Sassafras Farms in Gloucester, VA. Denise grows and sells native perennials on a wholesale and retail basis. She spoke to us last year about native plants, and this time will be talking about *Butterfly Gardens* – choosing plants that provide needed nectar and food to attract and support a butterfly population during both stages of development.



Field Trip: On **September 14th** we have scheduled a field trip to Brent and Becky's Bulbs in Gloucester, VA. We will be carpooling and once we arrive on site, we will have a 2 hr. guided tour of the farm and planting beds, followed by a 1 hr. seminar in the main building on '*Bulbs as Companion Plants*'. The seminar will focus on combining bulbs, perennials, annuals, ground covers and flowering shrubs to create the garden you want with interest for all four seasons. The 'best of the best' bulbs for our area, and 'the right bulb for the right spot' will be discussed. There will be time after the seminar to browse in the bulb and garden sales room. The fall bulbs should be in stock when we are there. We will have catalogs available for members at our September monthly meeting. If you wish to order bulbs, you might be able to have your order filled that day if you bring a completed order form with you.

We have arranged for an optional lunch at Olivia's in Gloucester for those members who would like to stop for lunch after leaving Brent and Becky's.

There will be a \$15 fee for the tour and seminar payable to *JCC/W Master Gardener Assoc.* prior to the date of the field trip. Lunch will be a separate expense of approximately \$10-12, payable at the restaurant. You will need to register with John Giffin for this field trip, and also register if you plan to go to lunch at Olivia's. John will be sending out a flier with a registration form and the details via e-mail. We will be at Brent and Becky's from approximately 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

LANDSCAPE LOVE

BY ANNE NIELSEN

On August 1st Landscape Love registration will open again at www.jccwmg.org. We will take registrations from residents until September 15, online and through the Extension Office, 564-2170. Home visits will start about Oct 1. Teams that were organized in April will be used again. If you would like to join us and have not participated before, call me for more info. If you were on a team in the Spring but will **NOT** be available for Fall, please email me, anne-mail@cox.net.

We saw about 40 families in the Spring and their visit reports indicate that they were extremely pleased with the Master Gardeners who helped them. This is a wonderful chance to help out in our community and I thank everybody who participated.

We will be at the Saturday Farmer's Market on August 8th, August 22nd, and Sept 5th. I need volunteers for those mornings to help me. Call me, Anne Nielsen, @ 259-2455 or email anne-mail@cox.net. We will be passing out flyers and talking to people about the program.

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG GARDEN BLOG NOW ONLINE

Laura Viancour provided the following information about the Colonial Williamsburg Garden blog launched in June.

1. Go to <http://www.history.org/>
2. Click on "What's New"
3. Click on "Garden Blog"

OR, you can go right to <http://blogs.history.org/garden>

MELISSA'S
MEADOW

BY GRACE RAYMOND



We will not meet in the meadow in August but will resume in September.

2009
MG Board

President:
Linda Lucas
565-0335

VP Projects:
Jeanne Millin
258-4724

VP Internal Ed:
Carol Fryer
220-0759

VP Administration:
John Giffin
345-5209

Secretary:
Pat Janot
221-0289

Treasurer:
Linda Wever
566-0286

VMGA Reps:
Jim & Nelda Pressly
220-1858

Past President:
Dave Banks
258-8632

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.

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IRS APPROVES OUR TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

BY JACK GROSS

On April 17, 2009 the Internal Revenue Service approved our request for tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(3) organization. This means contributions to our organization are tax deductible. We are now qualified to receive tax deductible contributions. Another significant advantage is that we will not have to pay sales tax on our large purchases which, over time, will save money. So, the organization can receive tax deductible gifts and pay no sales tax, but what does it mean to the members?

As of April 17, 2009 the members may take a charitable tax deduction on the individual income tax return. It has been my observation that many members drive thousands of miles every year on behalf of the organization. Now they can take a \$.14 cents per mile deduction for each mile driven. If you itemize your deductions, you can deduct certain charitable contributions from your income taxes. The higher your income tax bracket, the more your charity tax deduction is worth to you. Remember, the joy of giving should be a gift in and of itself, but it doesn't hurt that the IRS can give you a tax break for your charitable giving. Here is some general information that might help you decide what is tax deductible.

- ◆ Not every dollar you give is tax deductible, only contributions that don't get you a good or service in return are deductible. For example, plants purchased at the annual plant sale would not be a charitable contribution because you received something in return.
- ◆ Membership dues that actually constitute a contribution, for which you receive little or no privilege or benefit of monetary value in return, are deductible. This means membership dues to JCCWVG are tax deductible.
- ◆ Contributions are deductible for the year in which they are actually paid or delivered. Pledges are not deductible until the year in which they are paid.
- ◆ **This one is very important.** The value of volunteer time or services to a charitable organization is not deductible. However, out-of-pocket expenses directly related to voluntary service ARE deductible.
- ◆ Keeping good records cannot be stressed enough. Keep receipts, cancelled checks or any other documentation to verify the deduction. Maintain an itemized list of any donated items. I recommend maintaining a calendar with the mileage and destination and the amount of out-of-pocket expenses for each daily entry.

Now that we are exempt under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, we are also considered to be a public charity. While this distinction carries with it certain rights and responsibilities, they will not be obvious to the members. It will be the responsibility of the officers and board members to guide the organization to see that the "i's" are dotted and the "t's" are crossed.

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM THE VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

4-5 August, "Green Tonic: Urban Gardening for Health and Wholeness", Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 3 PM
www.lewisginter.org

20 August, Blandy's Remarkable Ginkgoes, State Arboretum, 10 AM
www.hort.vt.edu/hhg

22 August, Creating an Herbal Potpourri, CHP Tufton Farm Nursery, 9:30 AM
www.monticello.org

9 September, 34th Annual Nursery, Landscape & Arboricultural Field Day, VA Tech Hampton Roads AREC
<http://www.vnla.org>

10 September, "Trees: The Ultimate Stimulus Package", Waynesboro, VA
www.treesvirginia.org

12 September, Virginia GoGreen Garden Festival, Richmond, VA, 9 AM,
www.virginiagardening.com

18-19 September, American Conifer Society, Southeast Regional Conference, Richmond, VA
www.conifersociety.org

24 September – 4 October, Virginia State Fair, The Meadow, Doswell, VA
www.statefair.com

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



SUNSHINE NOTES

Get well notes were sent in July to **Fay Anderson** and **Helen Hamilton**.

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 Janot. She will send a note or take appropriate action on behalf of the organization. Pat may be reached at 221-0289 or janotap@verizon.net.

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MORE ON MG COLLEGE

BY CAROL FRYER

The 22nd Master Gardener college this year was attended by 275 Master Gardeners from all across the State – the highest attendance to date. Seven Master Gardeners from our unit attended MG college this year. Many of the nearby units, such as Virginia Beach and York County have at least 15-25 people attending each year. Last year we wore our new JCC/W t-shirts to college and made quite an impression. This year there were many units with brand new colorful t-shirts of their own with impressive designs. Our own Susan Giandomenico developed a t-shirt for the Virginia Master Gardeners Association, the conference organizers, and the proceeds from the sales of these shirts went to the Endowment Fund that supports the Master Gardener Coordinator position at Virginia Tech. They had a very successful sale.

During the annual meeting, it was announced that Governor Kaine proclaimed the week of June 14th, 2009 as Virginia Master Gardener Week to celebrate 30 years of accomplishments. The proclamation was read to the group by Cherie Haggerty (from Hanover County) who had been instrumental in obtaining the proclamation.

The dates for next year's Master Gardener college are June 24-27, 2010. Mark your calendar. It is a great time to meet people from other units, to share ideas, and to learn what new things are happening in the field of horticulture and related areas. There are receptions almost every night (wine and food), lots of camaraderie and fun, as well as wonderful learning opportunities.

One of the programs I attended was a visit to **The Urban Horticulture Center at VT**. The staff and graduate students at the center showed and explained their cutting edge projects and research. One graduate student we met was working with plant hormones to affect the growth patterns of plants for the nursery industry. One type of hormone might make a plant smaller and denser which would make the plant more desirable and also reduce shipping costs. (Do you remember reading about plant hormones when you did your MG training and wondered why we needed to know about them?). Another research project dealt with using native pine trees to make a soilless potting mixture from local available resources. Much of the soilless potting mixtures used in the industry is shipped in from Canada. The current mixes are typically made from peat moss with vermiculite and perlite added. The potting mix being made at the Urban Horticulture Center has been manufactured by grinding up pine trees to a fine texture. It has been tested for approximately 4 yrs. at the Center with good plant growth results, and hopefully the product may be available before too long.



Loudon County shirt

The Center has also been responsible for the *Beautiful Gardens™* Plant Introduction Program. Each year a number of new or underused landscape plants are selected by a committee for evaluation. Those exhibiting wide adaptation, beauty, and pest resistance are released to participating growers for propagation and “finishing”. Plants ready for sale will be sold under the brand name *Beautiful Gardens™*.

One Master Gardener who has hybridized Asiatic lilies developed a lily that has up to 100+ blooms on the stocks. He submitted his information to the Beautiful Gardens Program, and one of his lilies was in full bloom at the Center while we were there. It is awesome. They will continue working with this plant for a few years before there will be enough plant material to introduce it to the nursery trade. The staff encouraged Master Gardeners to submit new hybridized plants they may have propagated or discovered.

Since I recently completed the Tree Steward training, one research project of particular interest to me was the *Deep Planting of Trees* project. Approximately eight years ago, trees were planted in a field at various levels below grade, e.g. the root collar of some trees were 12” below ground level, some were 8” or 4” below grade, and control trees were planted the recommended way with the root collar at grade level. Growth patterns and stress patterns in all the trees were monitored. The findings show that the growth patterns were the same for all of the trees even though some had been planted 12” below ground level.

Following severe stress events, such as hurricanes, severe storms, or severe drought, the trees that were planted too deep began to show decline when compared to the control trees. The severe stress events were the determining factors that caused the deeply planted trees to show symptoms of stress and decline, at least during the time period that these trees were planted and monitored. The species of trees used were limited to 2 types. I think I remember them as being maple trees and oaks.

This experience was just one morning out of three days of scheduled classes. There is a wide range of topics to choose from so there is something for everyone from cooking with herbs to soil analysis.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that gardeners get a tetanus/diphtheria (Td) shot at least once every 10 years, because they are at a higher risk of tetanus infections.

Source: *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine, Aug. 2009

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TREE STEWARD UPDATES

The MGs in this year's class of Peninsula Tree Stewards are doing various projects in their communities to finish their qualifications for the advanced designation of Tree Steward.

The JCC/Williamsburg MGs in this class are working on a survey and documentation of the outstanding trees and shrubs on the historic Ambler/Vermillion property, located across Jamestown Road from the Jamestown Settlement. This formal landscape was designed in the early 20th century for the historic Jamestown home and its surroundings. Now owned by the county and closed to the public, this property is loaded with outstanding examples of mature trees and shrubs.

To assist us with the identification process, we have had some notable assistance.

On July 8, William Apperson, County Forester for the Department of Forestry visited the site. Seen below with Anne Nielsen, Carol Fryer and Jeanne Millin, Bill helped us pin down some difficult identifications. Others involved in the work are Tod Allen, Cathy Lohwater, Dan Tevlin and Donna Xander. Flora Adams, already a Peninsula Tree Steward and MG, also attended this tree ID walk. It was a great learning experience for all of us.

On July 15, Wesley Greene, and Don McKelvey, Garden Historians for Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, along with two of their aides, assisted the new Tree Stewards in identifying additional trees and shrubs in the landscape at the historic Ambler/Vermillion property. Their knowledge of landscape plantings in the earlier centuries was especially helpful.

A booklet detailing information about the large trees, gardens, and greater landscape will be the outcome of this project which has been on-going since April, 2009. When the County decides on the final usage of the property and the house built in the 1820's, we hope our work will help them make the best decision.



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WEB RESOURCES

BY CAROL FRYER



From The Remarkable Trees of Virginia Project:

(Project Coordinators: Nancy Ross Hugo and Dr. Jeffrey Kirwan)

To nominate a remarkable tree or to view trees already nominated, visit:

www.cnr.vt.edu/4h/remarkabletree.

Categories of interest include old trees, historic trees, champions, community trees, unique trees and fine specimens.

To nominate a champion tree to the Virginia Big Tree Program and/or learn how big the largest tree of each species in the state is, visit:

<http://www.cnr.vt.edu/4H/BIGTREE/>

For tree ID fact sheets and cultural information, visit:

<http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendo/dendrology/main.htm>

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/silvics_manual

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- **Aug. 1** Landscape Love Registration opens
- **Aug. 6** Monthly MG Meeting @ WRL; Denise Greene, Sassafra Farms, "Butterfly Gardens"
- **Aug. 8** Farmers' Market: Therapeutic Gardening
- **Aug. 15** Super Turf Saturday
- **Aug. 22** Farmers' Market: Plant Propagation
- **Sept. 14** Brent & Becky's Bulbs Field Trip

OTHER WEB RESOURCES:

Virginia Cooperative Extension – publication and articles on all aspects of horticulture and agriculture.

www.pubs.ext.vt.edu

Plants Database from USDA – database of plants with taxonomy from kingdom through variety and cultivar; searchable by State, endangered, invasives, etc.

<http://plants.usda.gov/>

Database of Plants, birds, animals, etc.

Field guides for wildflowers, insects, birds, animals, etc. Good for quick searches for the plants, birds and animals you see in your yard.

www.enature.com

Plant identification, ID It! (Virginia Tech) –

two dichotomous keys (twig and leaf) plus an "interview me" section. For woody plants.

www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/idit.htm

Diagnosing Plant Problems: VCE website – Plant Disease Factsheets

Covers diseases of vegetables, herbaceous ornamentals and woody shrubs and trees, with helpful images.

www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/plantdiseasefs

Virginia Tech Weed Identification Guide website:

High quality pictures and a grass weed identification key to help in identifying that unknown weed.

www.ppws.vt.edu/weedindex.htm

Virginia Tech Insect Identification Laboratory Home Page

Links to identification keys and pictures of common insect and mite pests in Virginia.

www.idlab.ento.vt.edu

(more coming next month)

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

The deadline for submission of material for the August Newsletter is Aug. 24.

Please send to Cathy Lohwater, newsletter editor, at cathy.lohwater@cox.net or call 757-259-1133.

ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENERS AND VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

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.

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments. Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.