

# The Colonial Master Gardener



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

December 2005

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER CHARLIE CLAPPER, '02

### **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.*

### **December 1**

Monthly Master Gardener Meeting,  
Williamsburg  
Regional Library,  
9:00 am

**"10 Horticulture Malpractices"**, Jim Orband, Extension Agent, York County. Jim has served as an Extension Agent in York County for more than 20 years. He has a B.S. and M.S. in horticulture from Virginia Tech.

Dear Master Gardeners,

Some organizations call their volunteers VIP's – very important persons. What is volunteerism and why do we Master Gardeners engage in it enthusiastically? *Wikipedia* (the free encyclopedia) defines volunteerism as "the willingness of people to work on behalf of others without the expectation of pay or other tangible gain." Most volunteers work on an impromptu basis, recognizing a need and filling it. The James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners Association has grown to the point where accomplishing our mission is anything but impromptu. We have no difficulty recruiting people interested in becoming master gardeners but only through good volunteer management can we expect to sustain ourselves as an organization.

The Board recognizes that all volunteers have some basic needs:

- Specific tasks
- Tasks that match volunteers' interests, skills and their reasons for volunteering
- Purposeful & interesting work
- Clear instructions
- Reasonable deadlines
- Convenient, flexible timeframes
- Supplies to complete tasks
- Adequate training
- A safe, comfortable and friendly working environment
- Follow-up
- Constructive feedback
- Appreciation, recognition and rewards

One major role of the MG Association Board is to meet the needs of the volunteer membership. The Board must ensure that volunteers' time is not wasted, that they are supported and appreciated, that they have opportunities for a range of volunteer jobs and that their jobs fit their skills and interests as volunteers. Not an easy task for our MG board – of volunteers ourselves. Because of our growth, we have been working to clarify our role and relationship with the Extension Office. Soon you will receive an e-mail and a website posting of a Role Statement for the Board that lays out our current thinking on how to meet your needs as volunteers.

As you know there have recently been several resignations from the Board and other leadership positions. Ralph Ashton resigned as Vice President, Projects; Angela Cingale, as State Representative; Sally Sissel, as Training Class Coordinator; and Bob Winther as Training Class Administrative Coordinator. The resignations result from these individuals' disagreement with

the Association's role vis-à-vis relationship with the Extension Office. They deserve our hearty thanks for their contributions to the organization. All will continue as active Master Gardeners.

I am pleased that Linda Lucas will coordinate the 2006 Class. Much thanks to Linda and her team. We are seeking other volunteers to fill the VP and State Representative jobs. Please consider volunteering to fill one of these jobs. And we are actively working to use the visioning process to better define the Board-Office relationship. LeAnn DuBois and I believe we are making progress—and strengthening our partnership.

“Everybody can be great ... because everybody can serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

## LOOK UP VIRGINIA: TREE/ UTILITY LINE CONFLICTS

LEANNE DUBOIS, '96

I recently attended Virginia's first Trees and Utilities Conference called “*Look Up Virginia*”. All throughout the country major conflicts exist between utility lines and inappropriately tall trees planted in close proximity to power lines. Driving throughout the County it's easy to site many misshaped trees pruned by the Power Company to accommodate power lines. Virginia Dominion Power employs certified arborists and foresters who can be called out to assess trees on private property for removal and in some cases replanting.

Trees can cause power outages by direct contact or by branches falling on the lines. This issue was brought to the forefront in August of 2003 when it was found that the Northeast blackout that affected 50 million people was caused by a tree/utility line conflict. As a result, utility companies will become more aggressive on tree clearance. It's even more important as Master Gardeners to be aware of this issue and to educate local citizens on proper landscape plant selection considerations. It's all about the right plant/right location when making plant recommendations. When selecting plants, the order of importance should be: environment, size, maintenance and then aesthetics. A publication including small tree selections written by Dr. Bonnie Appleton; who maintains a Utility Line arboretum at the Hampton Roads Extension Research Center in Virginia Beach, can be accessed at, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/trees/430-029/430-029.html>.



## BUTTERFLY FRIENDLY PERENNIALS

As one of the VEC projects, some of us are working with the children on creating a Butterfly garden at Jamestown High School. If anyone has perennials that are "Butterfly Friendly" that they will be dividing in the spring, we would love some donations. Please contact Cathy Ripley at [bobcathyripley@yahoo.com](mailto:bobcathyripley@yahoo.com). We will be glad to come to your house for pick up.

## HORTICULTURAL PROGRAM AT MERRIMAC DETENTION CENTER

LEANNE DUBOIS, '96

A Horticultural Skills program will again be taught to youth at the Merrimac Detention

Center. The nine week course is a joint project with 4H. The course features practical horticultural

knowledge and business skills to enhance the youth’s workforce skills. Last year the program resulted in a graduation ceremony and a completion certificate from Virginia Cooperative Extension for 12 students. The classes will be held on Wednesday’s from 8:00 – 9:00 pm beginning in January. Volunteers are welcome to teach and can log hours under VCE special projects.

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

**ADVANCED MASTER GARDENER PRUNING TRAINING OPPORTUNITY**

This training session is designed to teach volunteers advance pruning information, as well as preparing them to train the public. You are invited to attend, however, you must pre-register with Jane Gustin at 874-7427 to ensure your packet of pruning materials. (Her email is [jigustin@aol.com](mailto:jigustin@aol.com))

The administration, theory, and classroom portion of the training will be held on Wednesday, December 7, from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon, at St. Luke’s Church (fellowship hall) at 300 Ella Taylor Road, off Route 17. Morning pruning sessions will be held on December 14 and 15 in-the-field at the York County Learning Garden and Arboretum from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. You may attend one, or both hands-on sessions.

Jane Gustin is the York County Pruning Team Coordinator. She organizes the four public pruning sites, schedules Master Gardeners to cover about 8 educational pruning classes and Master Gardener Trainings, and communicates with Pruning Team members.

December 2005  
Master Gardener  
Pruning Training Opportunities

Date/Time	Pruning Event	Location	Special Notes
Wednesday, December 7 <sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m.–12:00 n.	Advanced in class training (theory, administration)	St. Luke’s Methodist Church, 300 Ella Taylor Road, Grafton	Required to learn basics, and “how to teach” information to the public
Wednesday, December 14 <sup>th</sup> 9:30–11:30 a.m.	Pruning Practice (hands-on)	York County Learning Garden & Arboretum	Must attend one or the other!
Thursday, December 15 <sup>th</sup> 9:30–11:30 a.m.	Pruning Practice (hands-on)	York County Learning Garden & Arboretum	



**DECEMBER TIMELY GARDENING TIPS** HELEN HAMILTON, '04

From Fine Gardening, December 2004:

**Leaf pickup:** Use two garbage can lids, held as you would a pair of cymbals – you can pick up a bushel of leaves every time. Or use tennis rackets.

**Hostas:** Have you planted early blooming wildflowers such as *Mertensia virginica* (bluebells) and *Sanguinaria canadensis* (bloodroot) between your late-emerging hostas? The wildflowers come up early and flower before the hostas fill in, then go dormant under the canopy of hosta leaves.

**Compost bins:** Used pallets, free from lumberyards (?) make an easy to assemble compost bin. Stand four pallets on end and hold them together with tie wraps or wire. The bin is just as easy to disassemble, and can be painted to improve its appearance.

For another compost bin, portable, bend chicken wire to form four-foot tall cylinders, about four feet across. Close the ends with lengths of wire, or bend the cut edges around an uncut edge to close the cylinder. Place your mini compost bin behind big shrubs for camouflage and fill with layers of leaves, grass clippings, vegetable peelings, etc. After the material decays and packs down, lift the cylinders, move them to new locations, and start over.

**Clean tools:** with a dry barbecue brush, those designed for cleaning charcoal and gas barbecue grills. They have metal bristles and a steel scraper that make cleaning caked-on mud off garden tools a quick chore.

**Tree removal:** If you still have downed trees from Isabel, the trunks can be cut into lengths varying from one to three feet tall. Placed among the shrubs and perennials and topped with various pots and planters filled with annuals adds both variety and elevational interest to your beds and borders.

And if you have lost a favorite old tree, ask the tree-removal crew to cut 6-inch-thick rounds from the trunk. Use these for woodland paths or garden steps by digging out an appropriate area, seating the rounds level, and securing them with soil. Although the wooden steps can get slick in the rain, the memory of your lost tree will make them well loved.

•••••  
• Don't forget that Master Gardener •  
• Birdhouses make great Christmas •  
• Gifts!!! •  
•••••

**Rooting hormones:** To root cuttings in water, add a young willow branch or two to the container. The wood contains a natural hormone that speeds the rooting process.

**THANKS FROM ALL TOGETHER, I NC.**

Thank You Master Gardeners!

On behalf of All Together Inc., I want to express our deep appreciation for your support for the CELEBRATION of CULTURES held Sunday, September 18, 2005 at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Together with JCC Parks and Recreation, the event brought together 1200 people for an afternoon of family fun, food and music. We believe this gathering across a broad range of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups enhanced mutual awareness and understanding and will result in greater appreciation for the rich diversity to be found in the Greater Williamsburg Community.

Sincerely, Barbara Watson, President, All Together, [www.alltogetherwilliamsburg.org](http://www.alltogetherwilliamsburg.org)

## JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS PREPARING FOR WINTER KARI ABBOTT, '04

Although Matthew Whaley has been unable to start this fall, we are hoping for Junior Master Gardener classes to begin there in January. BUT, we are still working hard at Williamsburg Christian Academy and with a first grade class at DJ Montague. The classes this fall have been well, about fall.

The children started learning about parts of a tree. Tree cookies were donated to the JMG project and at DJ Montague, the children made tree vests to help reinforce the lesson. Sap is a big part of their vocabulary and used in spelling drills. The children understand that squirrels plant more oak trees than most Master Gardeners' ever will thus understanding one of the important things a squirrel does. Did you know squirrels can bury over 1,000 acorns a month? Boggling.

Merging into the next lesson on how animals prepare for winter was how animals use plants and trees to survive.

The children loved squishing the plastic frogs into the pond bottom colored play-dough to show how amphibians burying themselves for the winter. There was a lack of acorns to go around for squirrels, deer, and mice in the activity enjoyed by the children. That may be only too true in real life also. The underlying message is how connected nature is, and how cool it is. The children seem to be enjoying all the classes. Deciduous and evergreen trees are the hot topics for December.

Junior Master Gardeners have received some more books from publishers, and our library is filling out nicely.

Things keep on growing! If you want to grow with us, give me a call or email, [bearsbaskets@cox.net](mailto:bearsbaskets@cox.net). Cheers and Happy Holidays!

### PLEASE NOTE ADDRESS CHANGES:

Bob and Courtney Strang [rcstrang@verizon.net](mailto:rcstrang@verizon.net)

Rebecca Sutton [rebecca.sutton@cox.net](mailto:rebecca.sutton@cox.net)

## TIME TO PAY YOUR DUES FOR 2006 DAVE BANKS, '03

Just a friendly reminder that dues (\$15.00 per member) are due as of January 1, 2006. It would be helpful if you remembered to bring checks to the December MG meeting so I can start processing checks "ahead of the curve". Otherwise, many of us will have forgotten by the January meeting!

## MG ANNUAL BANQUET AND GRADUATION CEREMONY DAVE AND VIRGINIA BANKS, '03, CO-CHAIRS

The JCC/W Master Gardener Annual Banquet and Graduation Ceremony will be held on January 12 from 6:00-9:00 PM at the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists, 3051 Ironbound Road (near Five Forks). This is the same place we used last year, for those who remember it. Parking is plentiful, and the building is on one level and completely accessible. If you would like a map, please click on the following web page: <http://www.wuu.org/mappage.html>

Dinner will again be provided by Florimonte's, and will include a vegetarian option.



The Graduation Ceremony for the MG Class of 2005 will be the "main event", as is customary at these events. This year, however, there will be some new awards for MGs from prior classes too. We are also promised some entertainment, but it's a surprise....

Tickets need to be purchased in advance, for \$12.00 per person (since we need to have a head count to order the food a week or two ahead of time). It would be helpful if you could bring your checks to the December MG meeting. If you're not coming, you can mail checks to us at 215 Charter House Lane, Williamsburg 23188. Please have checks to us by mid-December since Florimonte's takes a holiday vacation and wants orders in place beforehand.

Don't forget to water those plants that you have potted up for the plant sale. It has been pretty dry and we would rather you water then for us to have a big snow fall!!! Happy Holidays from your Plant Sale Committee

Class of 2005 members are guests of the MG Association and they come at no cost--but we still need to know you are coming so the food will be there. Spouses, partners, family members all require a ticket.

We would like to see as many of you there as possible--come have a good time, chat with old friends without a trowel in your hand for a change, and honor awardees and new MGs.

**UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER**

- January 5, 2006, Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library, "How to use Google to research gardening topics," Judy Hanson, '04.
- January 12, 2006, Annual Master Gardener Banquet and Graduation Ceremony, Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists, 3051 Ironbound Road, 6-9 pm.
- February 2, 2006, Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library, "Historic Triangle Corridor Enhancement Project," Bill Frymoyer and Caren Schumacher
- March 2, 2006, Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library, "Risk Management," Leanne DuBois, '96.

Seen Recently in a Crossword Puzzle:

Garden challenge	Lawn of the jungle
Garden magazine	Weeders' Digest
Garden nursery	Baby bloomers
Garden club	Sowing circle
Garden topiary	Beveled hedges
Garden problem	Ants in the plants
Garden stress	High bud pressure
Garden contest	Iris sweepstakes

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