

The Colonial Master Gardener



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

June 2007

President's Corner Charlie Clapper

Last Friday, I planted Lamb's Ear and Rosemary in my front yard, praying they don't become "deer dinner." Seeing our healthy herd makes me wonder. I also planted milkweed, hoping to give the Monarch Butterflies that depend on it a chance to lay their eggs. I mulled May temperatures 10° above normal and worried for July. I pondered the mysteriously disappearing Honey Bee nationwide. Finally I reflected on the two years just passed.

My term as MG President ends in July. I want to thank you, the Association membership, for electing me as your president and working with me. Thank you to the other Board members – Dave Banks, Lynn Flood, Mary Ann Kimminau, Anne Odle, Rich Strenkowski, and Jean Winters. They put in the extra effort needed to manage this growing and changing organization. Thank you to Barbara Gustafson for her expertise and her organizational background. Thank you to our Extension Agent Leanne DuBois for sharing her knowledge of the community's needs.

We have just finished a very successful plant sale – a record breaker! Thank you to Becky Sutton, Barbara Gustafson, Becky Morgan and Ailene Bartlett for making it such a success. Thank you to everyone who grew the plants, prepared them for sale and worked during the sale.

At the May meeting you elected a new Board. Congratulations to Dave Banks, President; Pat Crowe, Secretary; Sarah Dougherty, Treasurer;

Lynn Flood, VP Youth; Judy Hansen, VP Projects; Jean Winters, VP Internal Education; and Anne Odle, VMG representative. Thank you for your willingness to undertake this important work. Thank you to the nominating committee – Marilyn Riddle, Chair, Linda Lucas, Ann DeForest, Caryl LeFevre and Wayne Blatner. They made many calls to put the slate together.

Our Town Meeting in May was most successful. Our membership strongly supported continuing work on the Vision and Goals and ways of evaluating progress towards meeting the goals. The current Board will work with the incoming Board to hand-off this important work. Our Master Gardener Association Vision and Goals will strengthen our ability to fulfill our mission and help both our community and our planet.

These past two years, I have tried in my President's Corner to recognize the diversity of "gardening" interests. I've wanted to emphasize our community's horticultural education needs. A changing community and organization need the help of each and every individual master gardener and the strengths that all of us bring to the table – oops, to the garden. Please continue to stay involved and stay informed. Our community and our gardens and our planet all need you! Meanwhile the Lamb's Ear and Rosemary are still there. . .

Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, June 7, 9:00 am, Williamsburg Regional Library

Stephen Living, Watchable Wildlife Biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries



Upcoming Dates to Remember

- June 19-24 MG College in Blacksburg, see Page 4 of this newsletter for details
- **NO MONTHLY MG MEETING IN JULY**
- August 2 monthly MG meeting
- Oct 22-28 OPERATION REJUVENATION - Rebuilding community gardens devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Coordinated by Dave Close, State MG Coordinator. Mark your calendars, details forthcoming. Departing from and arriving in Blacksburg.

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Internal Education News Jean Winters

" A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift;

above all, it teaches entire trust."

Gertrude Jekyll

I trust that questions were answered and concerns were addressed at our May town meeting. It is my opinion that we do need to move forward with goals refined to integrate with our "Vision" for the next several years. I am in doubt about "putting numbers" to it all, but there does need to be some form of evaluating that which is accomplished. Many of us are adverse to much change, but it is obvious that much in Williamsburg, and in the entire world as a matter of fact, is moving in directions different from what we have been experiencing until now. To be effective as Master Gardeners, we need to change a bit too. If our volunteer

hours are to be meaningful, we should strive to serve in areas where we are comfortable, but also in areas important to our environment and its needs. From an "educational perspective" I hope we can continue to provide the "tools" and information you need in this effort...we want to have some fun too!

I look forward to introducing Stephen Living, Watchable Wildlife Biologist, who will speak to us in June. We will not have a meeting in July, it was decided by the Board that since the first Thursday will probably be part of a long week-end for many (Wednesday being "the Fourth of July"), attendance would be less than usual. We plan to resume as usual in August.

Enjoy your summer gardening with your "grand teacher"!

EDITORS NOTE: The deadline for submission of material for the July Newsletter is June 15. Please send to Lise Kline, newsletter editor, at legskline@cox.net or call 757-259-9477. Comments and questions are also welcome. Thank you.

**The Sunshine Fund
sent a remembrance this month
to:**

**Children's Hospital,
in memory of MG
Max Walton**

Cindy Halliday

JCC/W MG Hour Awards for 2006

4000 hours

Sue Liddell

Ailene Bartlett

3000 hours

Kari Abbott

Barbara S. Gustafson

2000 hours

Sally Sissel

1000 hours

Jean Barter

Angela Cingale

Charles Clapper

Lynn Flood

Genrose Lashinger

500 hours

Carole Ashton

Ralph Ashton

David Banks

Helen Hamilton

Mary Ann Kimminau

Alice Kopinitz

Becky Morgan

Pat Rathke

Rebecca Sutton

Robert Winters

250 hours

Virginia Banks

Carol Conner

Patricia Crowe

Lise Kline

Linda Merslich

Martha Millhouse

Lyn Natanski

Susan Powell

Susan Quick

Richard Strenkowski

Toddy Voorhees

Robert Winther

Donna Xander

**We're on the web
at
www.jccwmg.org**

For a Greener Garden HELEN HAMILTON

That is, a truly green, or organic garden, free of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and filled with native plants that need minimal amounts of extra water. They are good for the environment, and safer for kids and pets. Planting one is simpler and cheaper than you might think.

1) **Plants:** Install those that are native to coastal Tidewater, as much as possible. Check out the list of "Drought Tolerant Plants" on the Master Gardener website, and additional lists and local sources on www.claytonvnps.org, the website of the John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society.

2) **Water:** Avoid using sprinklers to prevent water from evaporating into the air, or at least use them very early in the morning. Use soaker hoses or, better yet, put in a drip-irrigation system. In drier climates, homeowners irrigate their gardens with gray water – used household water from rinsing dishes, discarded aquarium water, etc.

Reduce the amount of your lawn. In James City County water use increases by 60% in the summer, and often by twice that amount. The water is drawn from an increasingly stressed groundwater aquifer. Why are we watering our lawns with pure drinking water?



A garden pathway created with wood chips in the author's garden.

3) **Compost:** Easy to make – just pile vegetable and fruit scraps, garden waste, and leaves in an out-of-the way corner for about two months, then spread an inch or so around your garden and let it break down into your soil. Mix nitrogen-rich coffee grounds into your soil, which promote healthy leaf growth. Most Starbucks stores distribute free bags of "Grounds for Your Garden". Just mix the coffee grounds with dried leaves or grasses and apply to the garden.

And even easier – buy some worms and dump them into your compost. You can make a worm bin from a plastic bin with a lid, air holes near the top and drainage holes in the bottom. Add some shredded newspaper for bedding, a few handfuls of good garden soil, moisten slightly, mix well, and add the worms. Red wigglers, the best for worm bins, are sold online. Now bury in the bedding kitchen scraps of fruit, veggies, coffee grounds, tea bags and replace the lid. In a few months, all will be wonderfully rich compost, since earthworm castings are rich in nutrients.

You can buy earthworm castings online, a 5 pound bag for about \$14. The "extremely green" website says: "Castings are a complete organic fertilizer, produced naturally by earthworms. They are nature's purest form of sustained release plant food. Can be used on all plants with-

out fear of burning even the most delicate plants. Castings do not contain earthworms or their eggs. Castings look, feel and smell like black topsoil. Castings contain natural micronutrients and soil organisms for healthy soil. They are environmentally friendly, reduce water requirements, do not contaminate ground water, promote healthy root systems and rapid plant growth, and increase yield sizes."

4) **Mulch:** Make your own from yard waste, like shredding leaves with your lawn mower, or leaf blower adjusted as a vacuum. Mulch protects plants from cold and heat, puts nutrients into the soil, keeps weeds down, and preserves soil moisture. Maintaining healthy soil is the best way to prevent pests and plant diseases. **Avoid cypress mulch** – it's made from clear-cut trees important to the swamp system in Louisiana because they can absorb water from storms.

5) **Garden Pathways:** Are stumps and downed trees being ground into chips in your neighborhood? Wood chips make great garden pathways. In 3 years they have deteriorated to rich soil, and can be harvested for garden top dressing. For a neater look, rake the pathway clean, add filter cloth, trench the sides and install plastic edging. The yellow wood chips make a nice contrast with garden greens and blossoms.

6) **Herbicides:** Avoid chemical-laden products. Cheap vinegar kills weeds as well as Round-up. Try organic products, available at sites like www.extremelygreen.com. Make your own from garlic, onion and hot pepper steeped in boiling water. Better yet, pull the weeds and cover the area with layers of newspaper, wetted and weighted down with stones.

7) **Bugs:** Without pollinators, like bees and butterflies, you can't grow food crops such as peas, beans, apples and strawberries. To attract them, plant a lush, diverse garden, filled with plants like fruity shrubs, evergreens that provide cover, and plants with thorns for nesting to discourage predators. Ladybugs are especially desirable, since they lay their eggs on plants like Queen Anne's lace and eat aphids.

--In part, from Newsweek, April 9, 2007

DID YOU KNOW? 30% of fecal coliform comes from pets! So, pick up after your dog on the street AND on your property before it rains. (from tests in the Lynnhaven River, courtesy Lynn Flood)

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MG Program Updates (and other info)

MELISSA'S MEADOW WILL MEET JUNE 14 AROUND 8:30 TO TIDY UP THE MEADOW FOR THE SUMMER. ALL ARE WELCOME.

NEWS FROM JMG KARI ABBOT, PROJECT CHAIRPERSON

Greetings to all! May has been a truly exciting month in this project, as the end of the year field trips have or are going to occur. Many thanks to Dan Tevlin, and the interns Pembroke, Ruth, Laura, Katherine, Roger, Pat H., John G., Deb, Nancy and Jim K. for helping to make the first graders experience in the forest at York River State Park a fabulous one. As I was not at my best, these folks stepped up and made sure the quality of the program was kept at the highest standards. They did a great job! This year the field trip tried a new approach providing trail markers on the Beaver Trail, and each marker had some information to share with the children. The wildlife participated also, as deer tracks, snakes, lizards, birds, one pink lady slipper and so many more nature treasures were found. Virginia Department of Forestry provided some wonderful tree tags which were placed on the trail. The words may have been a little big for first grade, but the children loved the signs and tried hard to read them.

May 24th is the last field trip this year, the third grade is going to Jamestown 4-H. If you want to experience the fun we have working in this project, come join us. The children are going to be going through 3 stations...Water Wonders, a game that shows the children the water cycle is not round; a wetlands walk using the nature trail at the 4-H Center; and an aquatic insect identification exercise to learn which insects are indicators of good water quality. It will be a busy but fun packed day.

The environmental education modules that have been taught at DJ Montague and Matthew Whaley over the past two years were highlighted in a break out session at the Project Learning Tree International Conference in Wichita, Kansas May 9th. People from several states are interested in the way the program has been inserted as a science adjunct during the day and the activities incorporated in the lessons.

As always everyone is welcome to join in the fray, please email me at bearsbaskets@cox.net if you want to participate, Do know that June, July and August tend to be quieter months, but there is always something to do. My best to you all.

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW FOR 20TH ANNUAL MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE

The 20th Annual Master Gardener College will take place at Virginia Tech in **Blacksburg, VA** from **June 19 - 24, 2007**. We hope to see you there to celebrate our MG College 20th Anniversary with us! To view the tentative schedule and session descriptions, go to the following website:

<http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener/mgcollege.htm>.



APRYL'S HOUSE PROJECT UPDATE

In November, 2005, Cindy Halliday made a project proposal to the Board to support a project called "Apryl's House". The project reads as follows...I have edited some of the original proposal for clarity:

In May 1996, Apryl, who was 17 at the time, was in a car accident. She was treated and released from the hospital. Six months later she developed an aneurysm which the doctors did not think she would survive. She was 29 weeks pregnant so the doctors decided to keep her alive long enough to bring her son into the world. Apryl defied the odds and has been living in Ruxton Nursing Home for 9 years. Since the aneurysm, Apryl's children Kay, 9 years old, and Lee, 8 years old, have been living with their grandmother, Iris. Iris was not going to let Apryl deteriorate in a nursing home, and shortly thereafter took a position as an aide at Ruxton so that she could spend more time with her daughter. Iris works full time and raises Lee and Kay; they all spend as much time with Apryl as they can.

Apryl is ready to come home, and her family is ready for her to do so.

In the fall of 2004 four Walsingham Academy students and their teacher decided to start a project that would help their community. The students decided they wanted to help build the home AND help raise the money to build it.

In early 2005 the Friends of Apryl approached Habitat for Humanity about building a house for Iris, Apryl, Kay and Lee. Bring Apryl Home is now the mission of the students at Walsingham Academy, Friends of Apryl, The Old Point National Bank, Commonwealth Insurance Center and Habitat for Humanity.

Site of Home

Williamsburg or James City County: site to be determined

JCCWVG Project Proposal

1. Work with Pittman family (Iris, Apryl, Kay and Lee) to develop a landscape plan for the house and yard.
2. Draw a landscape plan.
3. Utilize materials appropriated by Habitat for Humanity (\$300 is budgeted for all materials including plants, grass seed, fertilizer, mulch, etc)
4. Teach Walsingham Academy students about planting grass and plants.
5. Supervise Walsingham Academy students who will do the labor.
6. Teach the Pittman family how to maintain their yard.
7. Arrange for donations of extra plants yard tools and equipment

The JCCWVG Board approved the project in 2005 and asked if Landscape Love could help coordinate the project needs for education and homeowner assistance. When the 2006 budget was proposed by the Board there were monies placed into Landscape Love and set aside for plants and materials. No monies were spent in 2006 as the project was delayed pending decisions about where the house was to be located. That was resolved late in 2006 and the project is now nearing completion.

Many of you know that Cindy Halliday has recently been in the hospital after a car/bike accident. Regardless, the project is continuing and we have developed a list of JCCWVG volunteers to help with this effort. The scope of the project has changed somewhat. Working with Peggy Kraph (landscape design), Judy Hansen and Barb Gustafson we are attempting to create within the landscape design a "demonstration site" for both a "Waterwise Garden" and "Vegetable Garden". If successful these sites will be imbedded in an "underserved community" and might allow us access for developing further educational opportunities in that community.

SEEDS OF LEARNING MARY ANN KIMMINAU AND ALICE KOPINITZ, PROJECT CHAIRPERSONS

The Seeds of Learning project has been completed. Our thanks go to all who participated, we couldn't have done it without you!