

The Colonial Master Gardener

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION &
VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



November 2011



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY ROGER EVANS

There will be some format changes taking place this month.

Starting in November, we will begin e-mailing the general meeting minutes, the treasurer's report, and an agenda for the upcoming meeting to you so you can be better informed. This is not to take the place of the minutes being posted on the website for public access.

At the November meeting, John Giffin will be demonstrating the new Master Gardener time-keeping system and answering questions. If you haven't used the new system or need a refresher, it is important that you attend this meeting because it goes into effect January 2012.

Starting soon, one Project Chair will give a short talk (no more than 10 minutes) about their project so that all of us can find out what the other projects are doing each month.

The cost of the training program has risen tremendously over the last few years. To keep training costs down, it was suggested to the board at the August meeting that the graduation ceremony take place during a general meeting, and that this would also allow a larger percentage of our

Master Gardeners to participate in the event. After a lengthy discussion, the board voted not to have the graduation and awards dinner in January 2012, but rather to have a stand-up reception, with spouses invited, at the January general meeting. The whole membership then has an opportunity to participate at no cost to any individual. The reception is to be held immediately after the graduation, which will take place during the January business meeting.

At the October board meeting we started exploring interest bearing accounts and possibly an organization that can administer a scholarship fund for us. The board suggested and discussed the new informational e-mail changes that are starting this month. Lastly, the board discussed a summer social event, either at a parks and recreation site, or York River State Park, at which all individuals and their families could get together. It was decided that this idea would be put out at the November meeting to see if there was any interest and if someone to volunteer to undertake organizing the event.

MATTHEW WHALEY STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN JOURNEY NORTH

BY GENROSE LASHINGER

Our students at Matthew Whaley are about to embark on an exciting adventure as a part of the international science project called Journey North. In November, each child will plant a Red Emperor tulip bulb on the grounds of Matthew Whaley. Next spring, we will share our local observations and track spring's progress.

Journey North students plant and observe tulip test gardens to track the arrival of spring. They observe and record when their own plants – and those in other school gardens across the Northern Hemisphere – emerge from the ground and bloom. As students track this one plant type, along with temperatures, day length, and other

seasonal signs, they discover how different factors influence plant growth. This sets the stage for better understanding our changing climate.

Funding for this project comes from part of the funds allocated to Matthey's Garden by the JCC-W Master Gardeners. The MG's will also help with the planting of the bulbs.

Monthly Meeting

November 3, 9 a.m.,
Williamsburg Regional Library;

Guest Speakers :
The Williamsburg Physical Therapy Group



2011
MG Board

President:
Roger Evans

VP Projects:
Beth Fugate

VP Internal Ed:
Harriet Parsons

VP Administration:
Margene Hartsough

Secretary:
Mary Ellen Edwards

Treasurer:
Bob Winther

VMGA Reps:
Marilyn Riddle and
Angela Cingale

Past President:
Linda Lucas

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.

INTERNAL EDUCATION

BY HARRIET PARSONS

Excitement was in the air on this beautiful fall day, we were going to make tufas! A group of 15 or so of us got together at the Pressly's greenhouse to learn how to make hypertufa plant containers (see photos on Page 3). With the assistance and direction of Angela Cingale and Jim and Nelda Pressly we all mixed Portland cement, perlite and peat moss with water and applied this mixture to the outside or inside of molds in various shapes. Creativity abounded! Some of us used the traditional shapes Jim provided (think English troughs), others inverted giant banana leaves and made shallow watering bird baths, some of us embellished ours with shells, rocks, leaves and other found objects. We were so impressed with our work we have decided to have another workshop to make them for the plant sale. Another workshop will also be held next year for those of you who were not able to make it this year.

Remember last year when Dennis Wool talked about the contacts he had heard from across the country in relation to the Bins and Barrels projects? This year our fame has spread through our involvement in the Merrimac Detention Center under the Youth Programs. I spoke with Helen Kidder, one of our Master Gardeners who, along with Minouche Robinson, teaches horticultural skills to juvenile offenders at Merrimac. This project is undoubtedly one of the most worthwhile that we, as Master Gardeners, are involved with. Helen tells me she has heard from Los Angeles County, New York Rikers as well as nearby Alexandria. They are impressed with our program and want information on how to incorporate or start their own. Good job, Helen!

I hope you enjoyed and learned a lot about watersheds and our role as stewards of our water resources from our joint speakers at the October meeting. I neglected to cover Sheeren Hughes of Wetlands *Watch's* credentials in the intro as I thought the first speaker would do so. To summarize, she was recently appointed to the Chesapeake Bay Programs Virginia Watershed Steward Action Team, and is currently working with the VIMS Center for Coastal Resource Management. Prior experience includes James City County



planning commissioner and chair, 18 years as an environmental consultant, landscape designer and environmental advocate. Her message, *Your actions can make a difference*. Make your yard a wetlands, don't mow so close (or at all), use natives, replace lawns, increase buffers, be rainwise, use permeable surfaces, rain barrels, rain chains, French drains and put in rain gardens. I loved her pictures of what Oregon has done, instead of storm drains they put in slow moving, curved rain gardens! Shereen sent me a list of links which I am happy to forward to you--Just shoot me an e-mail.

Our November speaker will be the *Williamsburg Physical Therapy group*. They will show us how to garden without destroying our backs, wrists and knees.

Upcoming events: January 20-22, *the Virginia Flower and Garden Expo*. I just forwarded an e-mail from Dave Close on this event; this is not your ho-hum flower show. Foraging is one of the topics. A survival skill for sure but sounds like fun. February 2 will see another close-by location in Newport News, the *Virginia Horticulture Foundation* will sponsor a MG Insect Day. "What's Buggin You?" is their theme.

In closing, a personal thank you to Frank Messina and our plant sale. I purchased a brown turkey fig tree 2 years ago, just a sapling at the time, donated by Frank from his own trees that he had propagated for the sale. The first year the deer ate it down to a stub. Today I picked 12 luscious figs! All together I have harvested 3 dozen or so (see the picture above). There is nothing like the wonderful plants donated by our fellow master gardeners. Thank you, Frank.

The Colonial Master Gardener November 2011



HYPERTUFA WORKSHOP!



ADVENT WREATH WORKSHOP

The Colonial Triangle Unit of the Herb Society will present an Advent Wreath Workshop on Tuesday, November 8. The workshop will be held at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 7479 Richmond Road, Norge. It begins at 1:30 PM and is free of charge.

Genrose Lashinger will design a wreath, fashioned of herbs significant during the Advent Season, including boxwood, signifying immortality, rosemary, symbolic of remembrance, and lavender which means virtue. At the conclusion of her presentation, the wreath will be raffled!

Raffle tickets are \$5 for one ticket and \$10 for three tickets. Proceeds will be donated to the Unit's scholarship fund.

Learn more about herbs, their uses and their significance in the Bible. Contact Pat Crowe for more information.



INTERNATIONAL MG SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE AWARDS BY JEANNE MILLIN



The awards ceremony at this year's meeting in Charleston, WV had many winners with projects that could be adapted to James City County/Williamsburg. All provided web addresses and some have separate web, face book or other media pages. Contact either Chere Harper or Jeanne Millin for additional information. There were six categories and three winners in each. The 1st place winners spoke about each of their projects. Space constraints will only allow me to summarize the 1st place winners. The 1st place Community Service award went to the Purdue, IN MG's who have a 19 week, horticulture and landscape design training program for incarcerated men. The men have built a 75x75 foot raised bed garden of vegetables which are donated to a local food pantry.

This year's group is working on building a greenhouse. The 1st place Workshop or Presentation award went to the Calvert County, MD MG's for a 19 session series of Hands-on workshops which they presented in partnership with their County library. Workshops were similar to some done in JCC/W (containers, natives, rain gardens, lawns, etc.), they also developed a series of follow-up e-newsletters with the same graphics and format. The 1st place Youth Project award winner was the Polk County, FL MG's. Their project is similar to both our E2 and SOL project but is focused on the 6,000 4th graders in the county and is jointly sponsored by the Farm Bureau. The 'Agri-Fest' is a daylong fair with pre-training and follow up for teachers and student leaders who educate on where and how our food is grown. Another interesting project in the Youth category was the second place winner-the Champaign County, IL Mg's. Their project focuses on at-risk youth with a

year-round education program at the Juvenile Detention Center. Students learn about and grow their own food, make foods like salsa and a music professor shows them how to make instruments from gourds.

The 1st place Demonstration Garden award was given to the Davidson County, TN MG's. They have developed and maintain large vegetable, Antique Rose, medicinal and culinary herb gardens at the Nashville Zoo. They give tours, hold classes and instruct the public visiting the Zoo about basic gardening and heirloom plants with flyers for each area. The Innovative Project award winner was the Boone County, IL MG's. This group did an inventory of the 3,200 Ash Trees in the County, located the trees on a GIS map and color coded the map to indicate tree health in hopes of controlling the invasion of the Emerald Ash Borer. The final category and the one that excited many of us attending the meeting was the 1st place winner in the Community Service Category. The Sandoval County, NM MG's have challenged all of us to do something about hunger in our communities. They have solicited landowners who are not currently using their land and they grow in food for three food pantries in the area. Last year they donated over 30,700 lbs of fresh produce. Their goal this year is 50,000 lbs. Seventy MG's plus scouts, and other community volunteers participate in the project. The property owners get a farm credit tax write-off while providing the land, electricity and water. The MG's provided the irrigation system, seeds and gardening supplies. All of these award winners were inspiring and welcome inquiries. We are interested to see what will be awarded in 2013 in Alaska.

GUSTAFSON UPDATE

Linda & Ed Lucas saw Art & Barbara Gustafson recently...along with Barbara's son, Ed, who is making good progress. They are settled into their temporary Danbury, Connecticut, apartment and are enjoying fall in New England as they help Ed recuperate.



NOVEMBER WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH

BY HELEN HAMILTON, JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER,
VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

BUTTONBUSH

Cephalanthus occidentalis

Buttonbush is a much-branched, native shrub which grows 6-12 feet, or occasionally taller. Glossy, dark-green leaves are in pairs or in threes, on stalks, with narrow, oval blades up to 8 inches long. The tips are pointed, and the edges are smooth. Unusual, long-lasting blossoms are well-named – they resemble pincushions followed by button-like balls of fruit. White or pale-pink globes, one inch across, are in dense spherical clusters with a fringe of pistils protruding beyond the white petals. Subsequent rounded masses of nutlets persist through the winter.

This shrub or small tree grows in moist, humus soils in full sun to part shade, in swamps, thickets and stream/pond margins. Native to every county in the state of Virginia, the plant ranges from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec to Minnesota, south to Mexico and the West Indies. The flowers appear from June through August.

A nectar source for two species of sphinx moths, the



Photo: Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) taken by Helen Hamilton at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden

flowers are attractive to many species of bees, birds and butterflies. Ducks and other water birds and shorebirds consume the seeds. The poisonous foliage of this species is unpalatable to livestock. While the bitter bark has been used in home remedies, its medicinal value is doubtful.

Cephalanthus comes from the Greek *cephale* for “head” and *authos* for “a flower.” The species name *occidentalis* is Latin for “western.”

For more information about native plants visit www.claytonvnps.org.

BY LAW CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

SUBMITTED BY MARGENE HARTSOUGH

The Board approved the following three changes to the ByLaws. Please review these changes and be prepared to vote on them at the **November meeting**.

Article V Committees and Vacancies

Add another section as follows:

Section 4. Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Administrative Vice President with the approval of the Executive Board. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members covering a spectrum of participants from different class years, project involvement, intern training coordinators, board experience, members of New Kent and previous nominating committee members.

Rational: to bring bylaws into compliance with current practice and to insure a diverse committee is selected.

Article VII Meetings

Section 2. delete the sentence reading: The President

shall appoint a nominating committee responsible for nominating a slate of officers.

Rational: To bring the bylaws into compliance with current practice.

Article VIII Amendments and Procedures

Section 1 delete sentence reading: Proposed amendments shall have been submitted to the membership in writing at the previous meeting.

New Section 1 to read:

Section 1. These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Association by a majority vote of those present. Proposed amendments shall be distributed to the membership through the monthly newsletter and/or electronically no less that 45 days prior to the membership vote.

Rational: By sending members proposed amendment changes at least 45 days prior to a vote whether receiving electronically or via the newsletter members will have had ample opportunity to consider the change and be ready to cast a vote. There is no need to make paper copies to be passed out at meetings.



2011 FARMERS MARKET YEAR WAS

“DIFFERENT”!

BY SALLY SISSEL

Thanks to all fellow Master Gardeners and interns who helped make the 2011 Farmers' Market a success. For the past six months, everyone volunteering for the Market did a superb job—all showed up on time, ready and willing to help set up and stayed to help tear down. The theme and turf tables were well manned with wonderful information and handouts for the public.

This season included a few “unique” situations! First, of course, was the cancellation of the Market for the arrival of Irene. I can remember only one other cancellation and that was years ago and the cause was very high winds presenting a danger to our tents.

Probably, the absolute worst market in the past ten years was just a few weeks later when we were moved across Henry Street to in front of Barnes and Noble because a stage had been set up in our space for a concert later that day. It rained and rained and rained (concert was

cancelled). We had a whopping 36 contacts that morning—lowest in our Market history. A special thanks to the MGs who stuck it out until I finally sent them home while just a few of us waited for time to actually pack up. Nothing is worse than rain and cold!!!

A special thank you to Dan Tevlin, John Giffin, and Richard Stratton who picked up the tents and needed supplies and delivered them back to storage at Market's end. And to Bev Baker and Donna Xander who took the leadership role in my absence—always a comfort, while I am away, to know I need not worry when those two are in charge.

Come next April, I will be, once again, recruiting. My master plan is always to have one “real” MG and 2 interns at each market, so when I put out the call, I hope you will consider volunteering for one of the 13 markets.

INVASIVE LANDSCAPE PLANTS

BY JEANNE MILLIN

What do we do with Invasives in our own neighborhoods? This is a question that should be of concern to all Master Gardeners.

I believe this question should have a two pronged approach. The State Arboretum of Virginia at Blandy Experimental Farm, www.blandy.virginia.edu/arboretum_invasive_plants_list/ should be, for Virginia gardeners, the final judge of what is an invasive. Their list of Invasive Species should be in all our kits so that we don't plant or recommend anything on that list. There are nurseries in the area that still sell plants on this list.

Patronizing nurseries that do not sell invasives is one way we can stress how important natives and their cultivars are to the health of our gardens. Though I try to do this, there are some plants that are only available from large nurseries that still sell *Buddleia davidii* (Butterfly Bush) and *Euonymus alatus* (Burning Bush) to name two common Invasive Plants. They are responding to demands from the customer. Let's make sure that we don't encourage gardeners to plant these shrubs. If you can do it easily, you could also remind the nursery that

these are plants considered invasive by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The second approach is one to be taken in our own gardens. Look around, and see if you have any plants considered invasive. I am not recommending that we all go out and rip out our *Hedera helix* (English Ivy) or *Iris pseudacorus* (Yellowflag Iris), but when those plant fail, they should be replaced with plants that are cultivars or natives that are considered environmentally friendly. We can also clip the berries so that the birds don't eat them and spread the plants around the area, use barriers to stop the underground spread of that ivy and when we move, maybe this is the time to remove the *Berberis thunbergii* (Japanese Barberry) that we have kept under control but may become a nuisance to the next property owner.

The Colonial Master Gardener November 2011

VMGA MINUTES - OCT. 8 MEETING

BY ANGELA CINGALE

The Unit Support and Communications committee is looking for people to help with maintenance and inputting of information on the VMGA website.

Educational program on Feb. 25, 2011, *From the Field to the Table* at VSU. Topics include pollinators; natural plantings; school gardens; how to use Social media for MG's.

April 14, 2012: Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticulture Society has partnered with the Environmental Studies Department at Shenandoah University to present "Tomorrow's Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies, and Bees for YOUR Garden", and would love to have all units attend. Shenandoah University Environmental Studies & Biology professor, Dr. Woody Bousquet, will moderate the conference. The full day conference will be held at the Brandt Student Union at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA. Experts will provide valuable advice on ways to increase birds and butterflies in our yards with plant choices suited to the Virginia/mid-Atlantic climate and soils. Selected books, plants, and tools will be available for purchase. Space is limited. Registration is \$99 until March 1, 2012, and includes coffee and a box lunch. Preregistration is required and all registrations will be handled on-line. <http://www.pbrhs.org/landscape/index.html>.

Dave Close reported that (1) Dr. Grant has appointed Roger Harris as head of Agricultural Dept. as of Oct. 1st; (2) Survey 2011, Animals and Home Pest Management Guide link has been sent to MGs to give feedback for 2 weeks until 10/21.; (3) Master Gardener College for 2012 will be held June 19th-June 24th and special events are planned for the 25th anniversary and it will focus on Tree Stewards; (4) The Community Viability Specialist is Eric Benfalt who is located in Richmond and will be working on Local Food Systems; (5) Redistricting of the counties was not successful and has been reshuffled; (6) There is not enough money to hire 25 new agents, and so far, 11 positions have been filled and 14 have not. This was due to the state reinstating \$2.5 million to VCE. Most AG agent positions are paid two-thirds by the state, one-third locally and sometimes a 50-50 split; (7) A recommendation was made that each unit have an evening or afternoon with the supervisors or forum for city officials to show them how VCE helps their community.

LANDSCAPE LOVE

BY ANNE NIELSEN



As October draws to a close Landscape Love teams are hurrying to finish their final visits for the year. We were scurrying in late August to gather registrations and finished with a bonus season of 52 visits. That is a record number for us.

Ford's Colony wins the gold star for completing 20 visits with all their excellent reports turned in before the other teams!!! Williamsburg has a devoted resident who signs up every season and sends me glowing reports of what they've told him. This fall he promoted Sally Sissel to project chair which I am ready to relinquish whenever she claims it!! It was fun as always.

Our new method for one final report sent on to homeowners has worked well. The information included was in greater depth and valuable to me and to the homeowner. More gold stars to the Interns!! We look forward to the Spring with a new crop of Interns and as many "old timers" as possible. The success we have is made possible by the combined experience of Master Gardeners and their desire to know more, be better communicators and to serve the public. Thank you all for your valuable time.

Gold Stars all around!

NOVEMBER GARDENING TIPS

SUBMITTED BY AILENE BARTLETT

Here are the Rodale Press GARDENER TO GARDENER ALMANAC & PEST-CONTROL PRIMER things-to-do for November:

- Cover lettuce, and other things you've planted, with floating row covers before the first hard freeze.
- Continue to plant trees and shrubs.
- Set out new strawberries or move rooted runners early in Nov.
- Sow poppy seeds now for flowers next May
- Gather leaves to add to the compost pile, or to shred and use as winter mulch.
- Pot up a clump of mint, let it freeze one time, then bring it indoors for snipping throughout the winter.

If you're not busy outside now, these should bring you up to speed! Good gardening!

The Colonial Master Gardener November 2011

BOOK REVIEW

BY JEANNE MILLIN, LIBRARIAN



The Green Guide, by Joe Lamp'I

Joe Lamp'I, otherwise known as 'Joe The Gardener' has a PBS TV show, which is currently not available in this area, except on WHRODT (the digital channel), a website

www.growingagreenerworld.com, many books and is a very outgoing salesperson for greener gardening. His TV show can be seen through his website and once you view an episode, you will wonder why he isn't available in this part of the country. The line to have him autograph his books was long so the one now in our library, found under SB435.5 L36, is not autographed but Chere Harper, who spend a few minutes with him, giving him program ideas on some of our projects, has an autographed copy for her own library.

This is not an illustrated garden manual but a series of short essays on green gardening that is fun to have on your reading table. A series of articles on how to control pests and weeds without chemicals, I found especially helpful. As Master Gardeners move to an IPM approach, we need more helpful tips on how to save the environment and our water supply without losing our plants. This book has some ideas that we can incorporate into our mental lists. The book is divided into Eight Topic areas and is worth having in your own library. Check out our copy and decide for yourself. Joe did one of his TV shows, focusing on the Colonial Gardens in Williamsburg, next time the show visits the area, and we can have him autograph our copy.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

The deadline for submission of material for the **November Newsletter** is **Friday, November 18.**

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

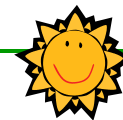
Upcoming Dates to Remember

- 11/3 Monthly Meeting, 9 AM @ WRL
- 11/18 Nov. Newsletter Deadline

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 educational programs.

SUNSHINE NOTES



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, Mary Ellen Edwards. She will send a note or take appropriate action on behalf of the organization. Mary Ellen may be reached at (804) 966-9366 or JMEMEE12350@verizon.net.

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.