

The Colonial Master Gardener



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

October 2005

PRESIDENT'S CORNER CHARLIE CLAPPER, '02

Hurricane Katrina's devastation continues to make the front page in newspapers and extensive coverage on television. All of us are touched by this huge human and environmental tragedy. As every day reveals yet another example of the extent of this natural catastrophe, I found it poignant to see whole neighborhoods where the buildings were shattered debris piles yet trees still dotted the area. My wife Heather and I subscribe to a half share of weekly crops from Dayspring Farm. They grow excellent organic fruits and vegetables in Cologne, VA (804-785-9401). Each week we get a shopping bag of crops familiar and new to us – blackberries, corn, tomatoes, soy beans and lots of squash. In this week's newsletter, farm owner Charlie Maloney talks about his colleagues in the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group who live in the area affected by that Hurricane. They focus on the widespread destruction of the rural communities and the immediate needs of small farms, farm workers and fisher families. You can get more information at their website www.southernmutualhelp.org

Speaking of vegetables remember to get your information on Incredible Edibles to Ailene Bartlett or Barbara Gustafson. Adventuresome MG vegetable growers might consider the unusual (to us!) next year. The September 12 *Washington Post* contains an article on "new" crops. How about N'goyo, a bitter African eggplant with green ridges or a Njilu, a Congo Republic eggplant? The article discusses the shift away from "traditional" crops, towards vegetables with names difficult for English speakers to pronounce. It underscores a growing desperation in the agricultural community, where longtime growers struggle to stay afloat by appealing to a "burgeoning" diverse market audience providing foods familiar to peoples moving from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Try something new and different next year!

Thanks to Bob and Jean Winters and the many MG's who assisted to make Super Turf Saturday a grand success. The public craves information on improving their turf. Turf Love, Landscape Love, Tree Stewards, and soon Water Stewards all emphasize the need to water and fertilize correctly, with our environment in mind. I continue (in case you haven't figured it out) to be interested in conservation landscaping.

Finally, the Williamsburg Farmers Market soon ends its regular annual run. Buying such fruits, vegetables, plants, meats, fish and baked goods direct provides a weekly treat and way to support these local growers who arise so early every Saturday morning to come here.

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

OCTOBER 6

**WILLIAMSBURG
RECREATION
CENTER (NEW
LOCATION, SEE
NOTE ON PAGE 3)**

"Bird Migration & Techniques Used In Tracking Bird Migration,"
Bill Williams,
Virginia Society
of Ornithology

JAMESTOWN 2007 – AMERICA'S ANNIVERSARY GARDEN

LEANNE DUBOIS, '96

In celebration of the commemoration of America's 400th Anniversary, a group of extension specialists and I have been awarded a grant by the Jamestown 2007 committee to develop and promote a statewide theme garden. The garden called the *America's Anniversary Garden* includes a selection of annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs in a red, white and blue color theme. The gardens will be featured at entrance corridors throughout the state, and will be available to purchase as a "kit" at garden centers for residents and tourists alike. Each year an expansion kit will be added to allow gardeners to expand their *America's Anniversary Garden*.



A publication detailing the plants selected, proposed planting designs and planting care instructions is being drafted and will be available to Master Gardeners throughout the state and for distribution to the public. This theme garden will be a positive way to unify all Master Gardeners throughout the state in working towards a single mission to commemorate Virginia's rich history, beautify our hometowns and promote gardening in Virginia and beyond.

BOTANICAL GARDEN TAKES ROOT

HELEN HAMILTON, '04

That was the title of a recent Daily Press article, describing the emerging Community Demonstration Garden at Freedom Park. An update was presented Tuesday, September 13 at the Williamsburg Library. Dr. Donna Ware, botanist at the College of William and Mary, described some of the interesting and unusual plants she found on the site during an initial survey. Charlie Martino, of Cooke's Gardens, is working with landscape companies, clearing downed and diseased trees and root mats. Design teams are working on the planning of appropriate species in specific areas of the garden. Brian Taber discussed the formation of a butterfly garden, and Denise and Wesley Greene met with Paul Tubach, Chairman of WBG, last week to talk about the wildflower meadow and trees, shrubs and native plant groupings.

The Wildflower Rescue Team has adopted a section of the pine grove and will install native ferns in the area. It is hoped that other community and school groups will take responsibility for sections of this demonstration garden. What a great learning and teaching tool the WBG will be for future MG's, the Junior MG's program, and for our community! To be able to show and tell about the native trees, plants and flowers and see butterflies in a natural habitat is a wonderful resource for us.



Area being cleared in Freedom Park.

A meeting is scheduled next week with our MG president Charlie Clapper, extension agent Leanne Dubois, Paul Tubach and I to look at ways Master Gardeners could become actively involved in this project.

For the garden to grow, new members are much needed. WBG brochures, with a membership form were distributed at the last Master Gardener meeting. And volunteers are crucial in the installation process. Landscaping crews

will be preparing the soil and delivering plant material the first days of November and planting will take place on the first two Saturdays in November, the 5th and 12th. This is a great opportunity for us to be involved in an emerging botanical garden. Contributions of time, talent and financial resources are encouraged. For more information, visit www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org.

PLEASE NOTE: The October 6 monthly Master Gardener Meeting will be at the Williamsburg Recreation Center, 202 Quarterpath Road, Williamsburg, VA. The Rec Center is located off of Route 60, between Quarterpath Inn and Yorkshire Restaurant. The Rec Center phone number is 259-3760, should you require directions.

OCTOBER TIMELY GARDENING TIPS

HELEN HAMILTON, '04

From Helpline FAQs, late fall, 2003-4

English boxwood decline: Drought stress often causes parts of the plant to appear yellow. It is caused by a fungus, *Paecilomyces buxi*, and there is no effective chemical control. The fungus is soil borne and can infect new transplants; therefore, once the disease has been present in a bed, it is not advisable to replace with English boxwood. Other types of boxwood and other species of woody ornamentals are not susceptible and can be planted in an infested bed. Plants in the early stages of decline may improve with adequate care. Also, check the soil acidity; a low pH could cause deficiencies of certain nutrients which would result in yellowing.

From other sources/gardening periodicals:

Asparagus: Did you know they can make great foundation plantings? *Asparagus officinalis* likes well-drained, slightly alkaline soil, and houses with concrete foundations can provide these conditions. The eaves keep the soil dry, and the concrete foundation leaches lime to make the soil alkaline. The feathery, fernlike masses of the mature stems make a good backdrop for bedding plants.

Check out the latest
on our website:
<http://jccwmg.org>

Bagworms: If you see spindle-shaped brown bags of needles hanging from the branches of junipers, it's too late to treat them chemically this year. You can pick them off by hand, eliminating the spring hatch from overwintering eggs. And/or in mid-June spray with a chemical effective against the emerging larva. See this website for more info:

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/departments/entomology/factsheets/bagworm.html>.

Bulbs: To avoid slicing into your bulbs when you install new varieties in the fall, try planting them in the black plastic pots used by nurseries (we usually have lots of those around). The rim of the pot rests just below the soil line, and an added bonus is gophers and moles can't get to bulbs protected by the pots. When the bulbs have multiplied and become overcrowded, just lift the pot and divide the bulbs.

Coffee Grounds: Good for acid-loving plants like azaleas, gardenias and conifers. And they add nitrogen to your plants. And they repel slugs. So, dump your coffee grounds around these plants about once a month before watering.

Dahlias: For labeling dahlia tubers for overwintering indoors, use a fine, permanent pen, like a Sharpie, to write the cultivar name (and perhaps the color) on the tuber itself. This method eliminates tags and bags and removes the possibility of a mix-up.

From the VT Website, <http://www.ext.vt.edu> "October Tips"
Your trees and shrubs have begun to harden for the upcoming cold weather. To encourage this, remove mulch from around the stems of shrubs and trees.

Light pruning of both needle and broadleaf evergreens is recommended in late fall to encourage a strong framework to help the plant overcome any snow damage. Remove any weak or crowded branches.

If you have a sunny area to naturalize with small, flowering annuals, sow seeds of sweet alyssum or Johnny jump-ups. They will come up this fall or early spring and bloom extra early next spring. Both are very hardy and self seed readily to maintain the natural area.



Barbara Gustafson and Carol Connor are two of the Reid Garden guides.

ALI EN I NVASI VE PLANT PART I

GRACE RAYMOND, '93

September 2003, my husband and I hosted a reunion. That was at the end of several years of drought and I had to disguise the fact that my "garden" looked terribly neglected. Many, many wheelbarrows of mulch were spread from fence to fence. Spring 2004, a new weed appeared but blended in nicely with the regular weeds. I pulled throughout the summer. This was the year that rain returned and this little weed prospered to the point that by fall, I was overrun. It has HUNDREDS of seeds along the stem that pop and scatter when pulled in the fall.

Spring 2005, the weed was EVERYWHERE and growing. I pulled, shuffled with a hoe (useless as it rooted itself once again) and cursed. Through the help of VPI, I have identified this hateful weed as Fatoua, Mulberry Weed (*Fatoua villosa* [Thunb.] Nakai or Hairy Crabweed.) It is considered new as it was first identified in Louisiana in 1964; therefore you will not identify it in most reference books. It came from East Asia and it has been transported with greenhouse plants and nursery stock and has the potential to be a threat to the nursery industry.

If you would like to see pictures of this plants Click here: [Fatoua villosa page](#) You will find much helpful information. It is killed with a post emergent but I recommend that the plant still be pulled as the seeds are liable to be viable. Ignore it at your peril!

ALIEN INVASIVE PLANT PART II HELEN HAMILTON, '04

ALIEN ALERT, REPEATED! – Asian Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) Remember to look for this highly invasive, aggressive grass growing along roadsides and gardens. It is low-growing, straggly, but is beginning to produce zillions of seeds which will be sown far and wide for next year's growth. I found stems in my garden, located hundreds of yards away from what is probably the source plant, prolific in the roadside ditches along Seasons Trace road.

Hand pulling is the only effective treatment, unless you can mow it down before the seed heads form. Here's a picture:



JUNIOR MASTER GARDENERS KARI ABBOTT, '04

WOW! Thank you so very much for the donation of wonderful Virginia Wildlife, National Wildlife, Nature, and American Biology Teacher magazines! There are more periodicals to go through still, but I promise I will. THANK YOU. Susan Powell, my daughter, and I have cut out over 400 pictures and illustrations of VIRGINIA plants, fungi, trees, animals, and birds for the Matthew Whaley ecology class. The class will be full of color, examples, illustrations, and photographs of nature in our state.

Also thanks to Anne Haltiner who has patiently inventoried and cataloged all the books donated to JMG. To date we have received over 100 books for use in the project. Our biggest surprise was when DK Publishers gave JMG 20 copies of Ecology and 20 copies of 1001 Cool Facts about Planet Earth to use in the Matthew Whaley class this fall and others in the future.

On September 14, JMG conducted a class on herbs at Williamsburg Christian Academy. It was a great class, as there were many smells, textures, and tastes present. Many thanks to Linda Lucas, Susan Powell, and Judy Hansen for providing herbs for the class and to Sue Voigt for her "sage" wisdom when I got confused as to which plants were in which bag. The children were excited to have some plants to grow in their classroom. They are keeping records for each plant to reinforce other school skills. A continuation of the class will be herbs for butterflies (there are several Black Swallowtail caterpillars crawling around the last sprigs of dill and Queen Anne's Lace), herbs for healing, and then the unit will end with a review of poisonous plants that are here in Virginia. October will bring a new chapter of learning.

The "Your Backyard Classroom" Class has been scheduled on Thursday, October 20. It is a class that teaches you how to use the resources of the state parks in the Chesapeake Bay area. The class will be at York River State Park, which is full of fossils, beaver lakes, wildflowers, wildlife, and more. The class offers great ideas for when relatives visit, especially grandchildren who always are looking for something to do. To attend, please email me at bearsbaskets@cox.net.

Lastly, anyone who wants to come help, laugh, and have some fun, you are always welcome in JMG!

SPRING SALE PLANNING CATHY RIPLEY, '02

NOW IS THE TIME!! When you are dividing your plants and transplanting, don't forget your plants for the spring plant sale. Potting them now and putting them all in one spot so they can easily be watered once in a while will give them a good root system for spring planting. Let me know if you have a large project and need some help, we can round up some more hands to make it light work.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS CHANGES

Toddy Voorhees overshoe@earthlink.net
Helen Walters marcel1055@verizon.net

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

- November 3 Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, "Orchids", Barbara Wallace, Current President Williamsburg Garden Club Council, Past President Tidewater Orchid Society & Peninsula Orchid Society, previously worked in the Biology Department at William and Mary
- December 1 Monthly Master Gardener Meeting, "10 Horticulture Malpractices", Jim Orband, Extension Agent York County



The Master Gardener Board 2005-06 is pictured, from left, Dave Banks, Treasurer and Webmaster; Mary Ann Kimminau, Secretary; Angela Cingale, State Rep; Barbara Gustafson, Past President; Lynn Flood, VP Youth Programs; Charlie Clapper, President; and Ralph Ashton, VP Projects. Not pictured is Jean Winters, VP Internal Education; Ann DeForest, State Rep; and Leanne DuBois, Extension Agent.

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