

The Colonial Master Gardener

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



October 2006

President's Corner Charlie Clapper

As a child did you have a small turtle in a shallow plastic bowl – the ones with ramps in the center topped with a brown and green plastic palm tree? Recently Larry King Live showcased a wondrous assortment of creatures including a small bog turtle. King's guest explained that these turtles were now endangered in the northeastern United States due to loss of habitat. Everywhere we are losing forest cover for more parking lots and new businesses (which we happily patronize). The bog turtles pay the price.

Driving along or within your neighborhood you probably notice retention ponds affectionately referred to as BMP's or "Best Management Practices." BMP's can refer to any number of different environmental issues and the "best" way to handle that issue. The small retention pond variety BMP's have become a major concern within our community. Daily we see more and more development proposals and concern for handling en-

vironmental issues within existing neighborhoods.

Retention Ponds (BMP's) both maintain a permanent pool of water and temporarily store storm water runoff from roads and yards. In addition to storing water capacity, retention ponds can also be very effective in removing pollutants from storm water runoff. These include sediment, nutrients (fertilizer), toxins and heavy metals. Finally, if designed and planted with aesthetics in mind, a retention pond can sometimes enhance residential property.

Appropriate design of the ponds depends on their sites' physical limitations along with financial and political considerations. Key design factors include the type of facility desired, variability of the rainfall and runoff, soil and cover types. Developers want to increase density (increased profits) of their neighborhoods while still meeting state and local environmental laws and regulations. Elected officials must

respond to public concern about impacts from growth.

Once built, these ponds also require regular maintenance. Those costs are usually borne by the homeowners' associations. Estimated annual operation and maintenance costs for ponds are 3-5% of original construction costs. Ponds and any inlet and outlet structures must be inspected regularly to ensure proper operation. Bank erosion must be prevented and vegetation controlled. Debris, litter and sediment must be regularly removed. Otherwise these BMP's cannot meet their purposes.

We have many existing BMPs in our community. More will be built with new developments. What is our role as Master Gardeners on helping our community address these issues? How can we meet human and bog turtle needs?

Next Monthly Meeting

Thursday, October 5, "State of the Chesapeake Bay," Libby Norris, VA Watershed Restoration scientist, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Williamsburg Regional Library

Ms. Norris' primary responsibility with CBF lies in identifying, designing and implementing wetland and riparian buffer restoration projects in Virginia. Her activities include working with farmers and landowners through outreach and education, coordinating conservation partners and providing restoration expertise to CBF staff. She actively participates in and represents CBF during agricultural related conferences and meetings and serves on Virginia's State Technical Committee.



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GARDENING TIPS FOR OCTOBER HELEN HAMILTON

Window Boxes: Have you tried growing fall leaf vegetables in boxes hung from your deck railing? Works great! Spinach, mustard, leaf lettuce – all coming up nicely. I covered the soil with seeds, and am now thinning the seedlings, adding them to my salad. As the weather gets colder, I plan to cover the boxes with some sort of plastic to protect from frost.

Hummingbirds: If they missed your home this year, fall is a good time to plant the perennials they love, especially those with trumpet-shaped blossoms. Some native plants they like are: Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), Trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*) [be careful! this plant can take over!], Wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Beardtongues (*Penstemon spp.*), Bee-balm/bergamot (*Monarda spp.*).

Ferns: Are you gardening with mulch in your shady areas? Try installing ferns in areas with dappled shade and constant moisture. Christmas fern (*Polystichum*

acrostichoides) will remain evergreen all winter. Other species that do well in this area are Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), Sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), Chain-fern (*Woodwardia areolata*), Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*). All these ferns are clump-forming and will not travel; they die back in the winter and will emerge again in the spring. However, Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), forms drifts, so plant this species where you have a lot of space to fill.

Mulch. Don't bag those leaves! All those nutrients the trees made over the summer should not end up in the landfill. They make wonderful ground cover. Use the whole leaves for winter mulch, and create a stockpile of ground-up leaves for spring mulch/compost. Run your mower over them or use a small bagged vacuum.

Free fertilizer. (1) Add coffee grounds to acid-loving plants like azaleas and pines. (2) Wood ashes contain phosphorus,

calcium, and potassium and raise the soil pH, so use them around plants and your lawn when liming is recommended.

Bulbs. When planting bulbs, if you are not sure which end of the bulb is the top, plant it on its side. The stem will always grow upright. Generally, bulbs have a flat side. Plant the flat side down.

House plants. Don't wait for frost warnings to move your house plants indoors. Temperatures of 50° F or lower can damage many tropical plants. Houseplants that have been outside all summer should be allowed to make a fairly slow transition to indoor conditions. Quick changes in environment can result in yellowed foliage and leaf drop. To avoid injury, bring plants indoors before temperatures dip below 55 degrees F. Check for insect pests before you move the plants; it is easier to get rid of pests while plants are still outside.

Internal Education News Jean Winters

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.

As we move forward with ideas and plans for monthly programs, we also wish to suggest, from time to time, opportunities for hearing speakers from various groups (such as the Herb Society), which can be forwarded to you through our Newsletter. Please pass on information about upcoming programs, especially those open to the public, that you know about so that I can announce them. Working together to keep each other informed will be very helpful! I plan to work with Leanne DuBois about areas of interest and need as well.

In closing, I ask that you take a pause and enjoy the following from "Have You Heard the Cricket Song?", by Winston C. Abbott:

*To know life best
become a friend of the earth
and its living things
for the earth sustains your life
and mine
ever looking upward to the
sunshine and the rain
ever seeking beauty in the dis-
tant stars
ever moving in life's mysterious
circle
ever portraying life's infallibil-*

*ity.
The bursting seed
The fruit
The frost
and yet another seed.
Become a friend of the patient
and gentle earth
and you will understand the
meaning for your life
as I have come to understand
the meaning for my own.
Enjoy and savor each new
day!*

FROM THE EXTENSION OFFICE LEANNE DUBOIS, EXTENSION AGENT, HORTICULTURE

Community Conservation Partnership Grant Awarded

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has approved a Water Quality Improvement Fund grant for our Community Conservation Partnership (CCP). The CCP was initially formed after the Community Reforestation Project which brought together like minded area environmental groups to deliver conservation services to our citizens. The grant will be administered through Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District and involve a partnership with Virginia Cooperative Extension, (Master Gardeners, Turf Love), James City County Environmental Division (PRIDE), James City Service Authority (Let's be Water Smart), JCC Neighborhood Connections, Virginia Department of Forestry, James River Association and the Williamsburg Land Conservancy.

Environmental consequences related to urban development are considered a major non-point source of pollution. The objective is to install Best Management Practices for Home Owners Associations (HOA) in James City County drawing on the CCP resources collectively to address resource protection and conservation through education, social ownership and commitment. The Water Stewards are beginning to formalize a program to address Storm Water Retention Pond Management. *Turf Love* and *Landscape Love* are meeting the needs of individual homeowners who are working to maintain healthy landscapes. A list of recommended native plants that are avail-

able locally is being developed to be used by HOA's and individuals to establish riparian buffers and plants suitable for Resource Protection Areas, (RPA's). (RPA's are lands at or near shorelines that have water quality value or are sensitive to impacts which may degrade water quality and are mandated by county ordinance to remain in their natural state.)

By streamlining our resources and talents, Master Gardeners are actively engaged in a holistic approach to address many of the concerns facing our growing community.

The Continuing Saga of the Leyland Cypress

The recent visit from Ernesto brought back memories of the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel. Calls are coming in the office about leaning or fallen Leyland Cypress and as all trained MG's know, Leyland Cypress are shallow rooted and prone to uprooting in a high wind storm. As if that's not enough of a problem, add to that the fact they are susceptible to Seridium Canker which causes stem die back to which there is no chemical control.

A few good replacement choices include:

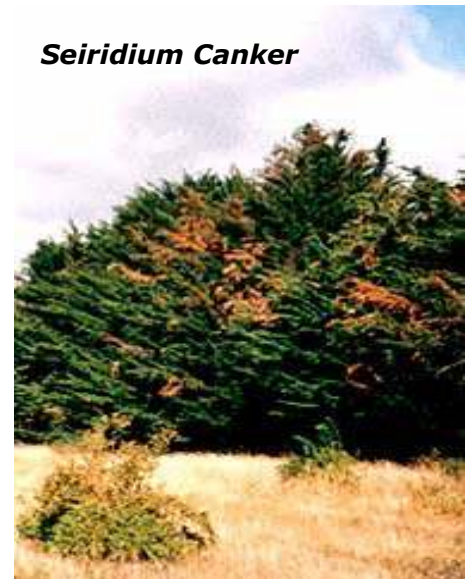
Cryptomeria (*Cyrtomeria japonica*) - a fast growing large conifer with unique foliage growing up to 40 – 50 feet tall.

Eastern Redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) – Native evergreen and able to thrive under dry, compacted soils and other adverse conditions. Does not tolerate shade or wet sites.

Emerald Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* "Emerald") - This species of Arborvitae is generally not adaptable to our heat but the cultivar "Emerald" has exceptional heat tolerance. It grows slowly and up to 10 – 15 feet tall.

I noticed a few classic Bradford Pear mishaps also during the last storm making these two trees the text book examples of what not to plant in our Hurricane prone area.

Seiridium Canker



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PROGRAM UPDATES (AND OTHER MG INFO)

Welcome to JCC/W Master Gardeners

these transfers:

Frank Messina

Jerry Babski

Fran Zinn

Please note the following address
changes:

Sue Quick

stevensueq@cox.net

Patricia Steele

Steelesvineyard@hughes.net

WANTED!

Speaker's Bureau has received a number of requests for two topic areas—**herbs** and **invasives**—that are rather in short supply in our “portfolio”. If you have or would consider putting together a presentation on either subject and be willing to join the Bureau, please call or e-mail Greg Allen (allensofva@verizon.net). Speaker's Bureau pay is double normal Master Gardener pay!

Peninsula Tree Stewards

The Peninsula Tree Stewards are comprised of MG's from Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, York and James City Counties.

James City county is well represented by Flora Adams, George Anderson, Bill Baetz, Richard Bunger, Hester and Tim Coyne, Ann DeForest, Lynn Flood, Wade Green, Art and Barbara Gustafson, Phyllis Jennings, Frances Knight, Sue Liddell, Peggy Manning, Rudy Roberts, and Laura Tucker. If you have any questions, please let us know.

2007 MG Training Class will begin on January 8, 2007. If you know people who might be interested in participating, please have them call the Extension Office at 564-2170 to receive an application packet. Completed applications will be accepted through the end of October.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Friday, Oct 27 Fall VMGA Educational Program at Maymont, Richmond. Speakers include Peggy Singlemann (Horticulturist at Maymont) and Leanne DuBois. The basic program charge will be \$12 for VMGA members and \$24 for non-VMGA members (\$12 of which may be applied to membership if desired). The deadline for registration is Oct. 20. For registration and program info. visit <http://vmga.net/calendar.htm> If interested in carpooling, contact Anne Odle at anneodle@cox.net or 259-9025.

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PROGRAM UPDATES (AND OTHER MG INFO) CONTINUED

Melissa's Meadow will meet on the third Thursday of October. We will be busy clearing the path, gathering early seed heads, and general tidying up of floppy plants. We will need clippers, hedge clippers and a weedeater or two. Need I add that some weeding will be needed to be done? Come join the group around 8 and stay as long as you like.



President Charlie Clapper congratulating Ailene Bartlett on receiving a 4000 hour service award.

Junior Master Gardeners

A big thank you goes out to the volunteers who stepped up and did a great job this summer with the two successful camps at York River State Park. A thank you breakfast was held for these special people in August, JMG really appreciated all they did.

With the beginning of school, The Junior Master Gardener Project is back in full swing at DJ Montague Elementary School. There are seven first grade classes this year!!

Fridays are hopping. JMG goes into the classroom the second, third, and fourth Friday of every month, teaching 2 or 3 classes. September is SEEDS, it exposes children to seeds of all different colors and sizes and gets them thinking. They sort seeds in different ways looking at the same and different qualities. They learn about where they can find seeds outside. October - looks at insects you would find in a garden. The core concepts are working on the three body parts, six legs, and two antenna concepts. November - How plants and animals prepare for winter. The entire year is planned out, and the classes are all written down with the supporting pictures, books, and props. It is going to be exciting. The classes this year all will lead up to the field trip in April, so there will be a lot more groundwork going into the field trip, hopefully improving it from last year.

At Williamsburg Christian Academy this year the focus is working on a nature trail behind the school. The children are working on learning tree identifications so they can label the trail for others to use. Later in the year JMG will help develop classes for each grade to use the nature trail, creating an outdoor classroom for the entire school.

JMG needs help this year, so if you are interested in volunteering, JMG NEEDS YOU!!

Right now there are not enough people to fulfill the requests that have come to JMG, we have one school that will not receive a JMG Class because there are not enough volunteers. Time commitments can be as small as two hours a month through May, to more if you would like. If you would like to help with one piece of the class schedule that would also be greatly appreciated. Please contact Kari Abbott, bearbaskets@cox.net, for a schedule or to volunteer.

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