

# The Colonial Master Gardener

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION &  
VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



October 2010

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY LINDA LUCAS

We are in Charleston as I write this. Ed & I visited friends in Durham on our way down, and they are poster people for rain barrels as you see here. Last month our JCC/W VCE Water Stewards had an article about the benefits of using rain barrels; but we neglected to mention the most important source of them...our own Backyard Barrels & Bins project! Here is VCE-MG Jack Gross at the James City County Fair in June where Barrels & Bins volunteers were available to explain how to make their products or buy them ready-made. BB&B volunteers have been present at many events around the area, spreading the word about conserving water with rain barrels. They offer two sizes in rain barrels. Contact Dennis Wool or any of the BB&B volunteers for more information.



Jack Gross at County Fair

The Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia has proclaimed October 2010 "Virginia Cooperative Extension Volunteer Month", acknowledging the value of Cooperative Extension volunteers' programs to Virginia citizens. Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener volunteers are specifically mentioned in the proclamation for supporting the Agriculture and Natural Resources program by providing horticultural and residential water quality protection information to citizens through a variety of educational programs.

Cooperative Extension will be focusing each week of October on a specific aspect of Virginia Cooperative Extension: 1<sup>st</sup> week- 4-H Volunteers; 2<sup>nd</sup> week- Extension Leadership Council and Community Viability Volunteers; 3<sup>rd</sup> week- Agriculture and Natural Resource Volunteers; 4<sup>th</sup> week- Family and Consumer Science Volunteers. Dr. Alan Grant, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech, reports that "the entire month will give even greater visibility to the more than 36,000 Extension volunteers who donate more than 1.1 million volunteer hours valued at nearly \$24.6 million to Virginia." Thank you to all of you who contribute so much of your time to our JCC/W VCE-MG efforts.

Registration for the "School Gardens" advanced training sponsored by VMGA is open until October 10<sup>th</sup>. This training will take place in Natural Bridge, VA, on October 16. Check the VMGA website (vmga.net) for details on this and other VMGA activities and news.

Our annual Awards Dinner with Graduation for the Class of 2010 will take place on Thursday evening, January 13, 2011. As the year draws to a close, hopefully all interns and active VCE-MGs will help out our hours' keeper, Art Gustafson, by submitting hours monthly instead of waiting till the last minute!

## Next Monthly Meeting:

October 7, 9 a.m.,  
Williamsburg Regional Library;  
Claire Britcher, "Cottage Gardens"

## INTERNAL EDUCATION

SUBMITTED BY HARRIET PARSONS

Our speaker for the October meeting will be Claire Britcher, a York County Master Gardener and Williamsburg Botanical Garden program volunteer. Claire will talk to us about cottage gardens, a style for those who love plants and gardening. In other words, all of us! See you at the meeting.

# The Colonial Master Gardener October 2010

2010  
MG Board

*President:*  
Linda Lucas

*VP Projects:*  
Jeanne Millin

*VP Internal Ed:*  
Jerry Babski

*VP Administration:*  
Margene Hartsough

*Secretary:*  
Pat Janot

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*VMGA Reps:*  
Marilyn Riddle and  
Angela Cingale

*Past President:*  
Dave Banks

*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.

## THERAPEUTIC GARDENING SYMPOSIUM:

### AN INCREDIBLE DAY OF LEARNING!

BY PAT CROWE

They came from Winchester and the Eastern Shore, from Blacksburg and Fredericksburg, from Disputanta (Disputanta?!) and Wicomico. Over 145 were registered for the September 22 *Healing thru Gardening* symposium and by all accounts, it was a great gathering!

Master Gardener teams gathered the night before to set up furniture, exhibits, and equipment. When our participants arrived as early as 7:30 AM, we were ready! Twelve of our own Master Gardeners delivered presentations that made our unit proud! Our speakers poured incredible effort into their presentations and handouts. Dee Albright's 'herb of the day' students even received homemade lavender cookies as one of their handouts! Vendors and exhibits drew interest and positive comments. Breakfast and lunch were tasty and the service was flawless!

Marion Baker of Gloucester said, "Dwayne Mc Smith was the most inspiring. He showed what can be accomplished in spite of physical challenges and age. I learned some especially valuable information about the needs of people with Alzheimer's disease from him and from others."

Comments like "general organization for the conference was outstanding", "interesting and appropriate vendors, very helpful people at registration, good facility for such a program, cost is excellent" and "it was obvious that a great deal of time, talent and volunteers made this event possible" were written on evaluations.

Almost 40 Master Gardeners from our unit were involved in symposium preparations and presentations. Whatever your part, whether you were involved in set-up or clean-up, equipment wizardry, registration or hospitality, whether you served as a speaker or introducer, created displays or took photographs, you had an important role in making the day the success it was! Kudos to one and all!

PS: Check out the pictures and copies of presentations; they'll be posted on our website soon!

**Photo credits:**  
Pat Crowe,  
Angela Cingale

Master Gardeners became eager students during Dr. Relf's presentation, *Gardens in Health Care*.



Yum or yuck? Dr. Diane Relf demonstrated the effect of diminished eyesight and sense of smell on our ability to discern what fruits or nuts we are eating.



Linda Lucas demonstrated the use of a syphon to make hand watering quicker and easier.



Dr. Pamela Perkins enlivened her presentation, "Herb Gardening with Older Adults" with cartoons!



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Kirk Ballin, VA Agrability, demonstrates a "D" handle that makes tool use easier on backs.

## MORE THERAPEUTIC GARDENING SYMPOSIUM HAPPENINGS



Duane McSmith, Master Gardener Emeritus, shared information about his *Hide'n'Wood* Garden. He supplied door prizes (swamp hibiscus plants and lillies) for eager contenders!



Andrea Eadie (left) and Mandy Baldrige learn how to make "tussie-mussies" of scented and textured plants during a workshop on *Gardening Activities for the Memory-Impaired*. Mandy shared the following with us: "I found the symposium helpful and interesting. I learned a great deal about working with seniors who may have a need for special ways to garden as they age. I also gathered some great suggestions for my volunteer work with the memory impaired. I appreciated all the time and talent that went into making this a success!"

Photo credits:  
Pat Crowe,  
Angela Cingale



Domenica Jernigan (right) purchased a registration to the *Healing thru Gardening* symposium for her friend Frances Butler as part of her birthday gift.



Angela Cingale (right) and another symposium participant learned firsthand how difficult it is to plant wearing specially constructed thick glasses that blurred their vision.



Pat Janot (right) distributes lavender goodies to "Herb of the Day" workshop participants at the conclusion of Dee Albright's presentation.

## FARMER'S MARKET SCHEDULE:

FALL 2010

BY SALLY SISSEL

October 9: Trees/Shrubs

October 23: W&M Homecoming; Turf Plus General Q&A

## CHINESE PROVERB

*If you want to be happy for 1 hour, get drunk,  
If you want to be happy for 3 days, get married,  
If you want to be happy for 1 week, kill and eat your pig,  
If you want to be happy for a lifetime, plant a garden.*

Submitted by Carol Fryer

## THE NATURE OF HABITAT WORKSHOP: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE GARDENER

BY KATHI MESTAYER

Whether we're planning gardens and landscapes, putting them together, tending what's already there, or just observing nature, we're creating habitat. In fact, the outdoors *is* habitat whether we think of it that way or not. That puddle in the sidewalk the birds seem to prefer to the birdbath, the fireflies flashing in unison in summer, the box turtle crossing Strawberry Plains Road - they're all dealing with the resources (and obstacles) of their habitats. And we, as humans and especially as Master Gardeners, have a significant impact on them.

The Nature of Habitat workshop will deepen our ability to "see" habitat. During the past decades, the science of ecology has made huge strides in understanding the components of living systems, and how they interact and change. Using examples from our local area, we will discuss and illustrate concepts such as ecosystem, biome, diversity, fragmentation, succession, etc., and how they help us to see the outdoors as habitat, in all of its beautiful complexity.

A big part of the workshop will be discussing and sharing examples of how to create, enhance and preserve habitat in terms of its four basic components: water, food, shelter and a safe place to raise young. We will talk about how habitat concepts play out in our work as Master Gardeners, and think about what makes a habitat garden, yard or landscape good, better, and best. Habitat can be attractive, easy to maintain, and a source of year-round fascination for all ages.

Learning about habitat is an ongoing process that changes the way we experience nature and our yards, gardens, public spaces, and *the outdoors*. You'll never look at that leaf litter the same way again!

**Speakers:** Stephen Living, Department of Inland Game and Fishery, and Susan Powell, President -Master Naturalist Association

Nov. 3rd, from 8:30 AM - 12:45 PM at the James City/Williamsburg Community Center  
5301 Longhill Rd., Williamsburg, VA

Space is limited: workshop is free but registration is required. Please contact Carol Fryer if you would like to attend.

Habitat Workshop provided by the Master Naturalists and the JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardeners.

## WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH:

STRAWBERRY BUSH, *EUONYMOUS AMERICANA*  
CELASTRACEAE BITTERSWEET FAMILY

Strawberry bush is a shade-loving shrub that goes unnoticed much of the year. Leaves are narrow, long-pointed with fine teeth. In early summer, small greenish-purple flowers lie on top of each leaf. They are followed later with a warty fruit covering, somewhat resembling a strawberry. In the fall, the fruits turn orange-red and burst open to reveal 5 shiny red seeds - a very attractive display among the leaves now turning yellow.

Although it will tolerate full shade, strawberry bush fruits best when provided light shade and full sun. This shrub grows in mixed deciduous forests, low woodlands, and swamp forests, across eastern U.S. and most counties in Virginia. The distinctive green twigs are "deer ice cream" - heavily browsed by white-tailed deer. The plant must be protected with fencing.

The common name "hearts-a-burstin'" attempts to describe the appearance of the fruits in the fall. The genus name "*Euonymus*" means "good name."

Strawberry bush was attractive to early colonists, and was brought back to England in 1663. The fruit and bark of this shrub and its relatives contain glycosides that cause severe diarrhea in humans; the berries may also affect the heart, possibly causing cardiac arrest, and are especially dangerous for children. Native Americans used the roots of Strawberry bush to make a tea for stomach and urinary problems. For more information about native plants visit [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org)



### ATTENTION ALL PROJECT CHAIRS

There will be a meeting of all the Project Chairs at Jeanne Millin's house on Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm.

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## BARRELS AND BINS COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL YEAR

BY DENNIS WOOL/JACK GROSS

Designated by the Board this year as a stand-alone project, Barrels and Bins is pleased to report a very successful season. More than a half dozen demonstrations were provided in workshops, neighborhood associations, and the JCC Fair. While the self-watering containers have been a big hit, the introduction of two styles of rain barrels and a composter have been the big stars. Some back orders of these two popular items are now being filled and if there is any end of the year interest, orders will continue to be accepted until the middle of October.

Please note that while others in the community have rain barrels available, B&B would hope MGs would support our own projects—no one has a composter as economical as ours. We cannot close this season without expressing grateful appreciation to the 18 members of the Intern Class who have helped build and distribute our products - sales exceeding \$4,000 - so many thanks!

## 2011 PLANT SALE – NEWS YOU CAN USE

BY 2011 PLANT SALE STEERING COMMITTEE

Please take a good look at your flower beds this fall and see if there aren't a few perennials just waiting to be thinned out and saved for next Spring's Plant Sale. If they are not ready for prime time, make a note in your garden book to start early and pot those beauties up as soon as you can next March/April. We are pleased to report that 2/3 of the plants sold last April came from MGs and we would hope to do that again. As a goal - we are requesting that EACH MG contribute a minimum of 6 plants for the 2011 Sale - that would give us more than 1200 plants as a start.

We would also encourage MGs to contribute NO MORE than a tray of any given plant material - 400 heirloom tomatoes last year were more than could be sold or given away! As previously reported the 2011 Plant Sale will be held in the parking area on the east side of Longhill Road Recreation Center. The Steering Committee will be recruiting volunteers to serve as area facilitators - more details next month. Thanks in advance.

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## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE POND?

BY WATER STEWARDS, JCC/W MGS

In many developments in our area, stormwater retention ponds have been created. Often the grassy slopes surrounding the ponds are mowed periodically by landscapers and homeowners. The mowed grass over clay soil is not enough cover to slow water runoff during heavy rains, and very quickly, eroded gullies appear in the slopes. That soil is deposited in the ponds. Within a few years, the land is a steep eroded slope, and the pond is a marsh filling with vegetation.

The solution is to install native wetland plants around the pond edges, and/or to permit growth of vegetation from the natural seedbank. And stop mowing! James City County Environmental Division recommends no mowing within five feet of the water's edge. For further information, check out this website: [www.protectedwithpride.org](http://www.protectedwithpride.org)



Caterpillars feasting on Carol Fryer's six bloodflower plants.



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## WATER TIPS OF THE MONTH

BY ALICE KOPINITZ, WATER STEWARD



Install a rain sensor on your irrigation controller so your system won't run when it's raining.

Use drip irrigation to apply water directly to the roots of plants.

## MG LIBRARY: BOOK REVIEW

BY JEANE MILLIN, LIBRARIAN



Organic Gardening: A practical guide to natural gardens, from planning and planting to harvesting and maintenance

By Christine and Michael Lavelle

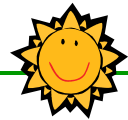
This 2010 reprint of a British book covers all aspects of organic gardening. With wonderful illustrations the first chapters cover soil, including sections on no-till (no-dig) gardening, soil conditioners, making compost and green manure; basic techniques, including weeding, watering, pruning and plant propagation; and plant health, including pests, diseases, disorders and beneficial predators.

Remaining chapters cover ornamental, wildlife and kitchen gardens. Finally it closes with lists of vegetables, herbs and fruits; a calendar of care and a list of suppliers whom of course, are all located in the British Isles. This book is a larger 9x11x1 general reference book is located in the MG library at SB435.5 L 50. It would make a great gift to someone wanting more general information about organic gardening.

## NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

The deadline for submission of material for the **November Newsletter** is **Monday, October 25.**

Please send to Cathy Lohwater, newsletter editor, at [cathy.lohwater@cox.net](mailto:cathy.lohwater@cox.net) or call 757-259-1133.



## 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, Pat Janot. She will send a note or take appropriate action on behalf on the organization. Pat may be reached at 221-0289 or [janotap@verizon.net](mailto:janotap@verizon.net).

### *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.*

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Oct. 7 Monthly Meeting @ WRL, 9:00 a.m.
- Oct. 15 Project Chair Meeting, 1 p.m. @ Millin's
- Oct. 25 November Newsletter Deadline
- 4/29-4/30 2011 Plant Sale (Rec Center)
- 6/21-6/26 MG College 2011

## 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.