

# The Colonial Master Gardener



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

September 2007

FROM THE EXTENSION OFFICE LEANNE DUBOIS, EXTENSION AGENT,  
HORTICULTURE



## Ailanthus: Tree of (not so much) Heaven

I recently received a call concerning a loathing towards the Tree of Heaven "asking why isn't anybody doing anything about this"? He went on to say that he cut his down early in the spring which just magnified the problem

sending suckers out in force. The Tree of Heaven is known by many names: tree-of-paradise, stink-tree, and its scientific name, *Ailanthus altissima*. The "ailanthus problem" is well known among natural resource managers who classify ailanthus as an invasive exotic: invasive because the tree spreads rapidly and has few insect or disease pathogens and exotic because this species is not native to the U.S. Among invasive exotics, ailanthus is especially notorious due to its ability to quickly invade disturbed areas and resists control after established.

Introduced from the Orient to the U.S. east coast in the late 1700's, ailanthus was originally used as an urban landscape tree and later to stabilize construction sites. However, like many introduced species, ailanthus quickly escaped from its intended uses and has since spread to every region of the U.S.

At first look, ailanthus can be easily confused with sumac and young black walnut. Similar to sumac and walnut, ailanthus leaves are pinnately compound, i.e., they have multiple leaflets on a single leafstalk.

Control methods for ailanthus can be characterized as physical, chemical, and biological. A late growing season combination of physical and chemical control that begins by cutting large trees before they have produced and scattered their seed. If time permits, cut all standing ailanthus, leaving about 12 inches of

stem standing for later identification and application of herbicide. Cut stems may be piled and burned. An alternative to burning is to simply let piles sit indefinitely to provide wildlife habitat. Regardless of the control method chosen, it is important to reclaim the site with a desired tree species after ailanthus is initially controlled. It's also important to remain vigilant in removing reemerging populations.

Ailanthus is only one of hundreds of invasive exotics now impacting Virginia's natural landscape. Help save our woodlands; remove a Tree of Heaven today.

## America's Anniversary Garden – National JMG Award Winners

The America's Anniversary Garden (AAG) National School Design Contest Award was presented to a group of 4th grade students and teachers from Gainesville, Georgia. The contest was awarded nationally through the Weekly Reader Magazine. These Junior Master Gardeners had their design selected from 65 designs submitted from 32 states. The award ceremony took place at the Jamestown Settlement on August 10. Dr. Mark McCann, Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension along with the AAG originators presented the award. The prize package sponsored by Jamestown 2007 and Virginia Tech included round trip air fare and 2 night hotel accommodations in Williamsburg as well as admission to area attractions. More than a million third and fourth grade students have been introduced to the AAG program nationwide through the Weekly Reader® program. Virginia Cooperative Extension established a partnership with the National Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program, which in turn secured a project with the Weekly Reader program to promote horticulture education to elementary school children. Personnel with JMG developed an eight-panel educational poster on horticultural topics including America's Anniversary Garden.

## Next Monthly Meeting

September 6, 9:00 am,  
Williamsburg Regional  
Library, Habitat at Home, Carol Heiser,  
Habitat Education Coordinator at the Virginia  
Department of Game and Inland Fisheries



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## Internal Education News Jean Winters

"September...what a turnover, what a water-shed of the year."  
V. Sackville-West

"The gardener's autumn begins in March, with the first faded snowdrop."  
Karel Capek

And so it is that we look to autumn for cooler weather and different colors in the landscape! Summer has been great, I hope, for all of you...family visits, gardening, traveling, whatever has been happening. Now we look forward to a different type of garden work and the sharing of ways to accomplish the tasks that involves. Super Turf Saturday will have passed and, if like other years, it will have been a great day to help our neighbors better understand what gardening and tending landscapes entails as cooler weather comes. We are grateful, as always, for the help you give in behalf of this endeavor...the various chores are meant to be helpful and fun for those

who participate. So, though at this writing we have yet to "experience the day", Bob and I thank you for your contributions, and we hope you will have earned some recertification time for your volunteer hours...what better way than to hear the Virginia Tech "doctors" share their expertise!

In early September we look forward to having Carol Heiser join us for our meeting. Carol is a graduate of Virginia Tech with a Bachelor's Degree in Forestry and Wildlife. She has had experience as a Naturalist and a Conservation Specialist...now she serves as a Habitat Education Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries in Richmond. I know you will enjoy her presentation! See you there !

**JCC/W MG  
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.*



Members of the MG Composting Team at work. Composting will be the focus of an upcoming Farmers Market.

**We're on the web  
at  
[www.jccwmg.org](http://www.jccwmg.org)**

## Finally, Something to Watch on TV submitted by Ailene Bartlett

There are a couple of programs on the Richmond PBS channel that pertain to farms and farming, and have a lot of interesting information for anyone interested in gardening, farming, food production, etc., etc.

- Channel 23 in Richmond is Channel 6 on Cox. The program "Virginia Grown" appears about once per month at, I think, 8 p.m. Richard Nunnally, a former Extension Agent, is the host, and he explores several gardens, farms, or other agricultural enterprises in the hour show.

- The other three are on air beginning at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday. "Virginia Currents" is not really a gardening show, but covers a host of Virginia interests and activities, many of which this MG knew nothing about! "Virginia Farming" and "Farmers' Almanac" follow it, and again, cover lots of different topics, all of which are designed to put new wrinkles in our brains.

TRY 'EM - YOU MIGHT LIKE 'EM!

**BAMBI AND THUMPER HELEN HAMILTON, MG, WITH CAROLYN AND RALPH WILL, WILLIAMSBURG WILDFLOWER RESCUE TEAM**

O yes, they are cute! Until they chew your azaleas and your perennials and your annuals and anything else green. What to do? We begin by planting "deer resistant" plants. Notice "resistant" -- that does NOT mean they are immune to deer browse, only that these plants are not real favorites. A friend tells me the only plant not eaten by deer is hay-scented fern; they don't seem to like dog fennel, a native with bad behavior which remains standing along the entrance to the Ellipse Garden at Freedom Park, while deer jump the two fences and break the wires to get to the goodies inside the garden.

Did deer chew my plants or the bunnies? If the cut is sharp, at a 45-degree angle, it's the rabbits. Deer tear plant parts and leave a rough edge to woody stems, and jagged tears on leaves.

There are two types of remedies for deer browse: chemical and mechanical.

1) Chemical control is suitable for small gardens and ornamentals and there are two types of these, contact and area repellents.

a) Contact repellents are applied directly to plants -- their taste repels deer. Formulations include hot peppers, rotten eggs, mint and peppermint oils, soaps, among others. They are most effective on dormant trees and shrubs.

b) Area repellents repel deer by

odor and should be applied near plants you want to protect. These products can include rotten eggs, putrefied meat scraps (tankage), bar soap. And I have "been told" that human hair and human urine, especially male urine, will also repel deer.

All chemical products should be reapplied periodically, and after a rain, as the scent will disappear.

2) Mechanical control, that is, fencing, may be the only option where deer are abundant or crops are particularly valuable.

a) Electric fences will attract deer, particularly if peanut butter is added; when deer make nose-to-fence contact, the shock will train them to avoid fenced areas. But electric fences should not be used in public areas where children and adults could receive a shock.

b) Woven wire fencing is permanent, year-round, and not a hazard to the public. A ten-foot high fence of woven wire will effectively exclude deer, but the cost, excluding labor, is high, \$2 to \$4 per linear foot.

Four-foot green, plastic-coated fencing around individual shrubs and clumps of newly-planted perennials definitely protects from deer browse. Deer will tend to reach over a three-foot fence when the shrub is more than two feet high.

Green coated wire is much less obtrusive than bare wire fencing. It is available only at Lowe's at \$45 for a 50-foot roll. About ten feet is needed for the average azalea, at a cost of \$8-10 per plant. It works, provided the fence is staked down with two cheap plastic tent stakes, about 50 cents each.

Bunnies, of course, will crawl through fencing. Fine, flexible plastic grids over precious plants is the only real solution.

The real culprit is development pressure. Deer are being forced out of adjacent woodlands as new housing is constructed in the Williamsburg area. Essentially, we are part of the problem!



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**EDITORS NOTE:** The deadline for submission of material for the October Newsletter is September 15. Please send to Lise Kline, newsletter editor, at [legskline@cox.net](mailto:legskline@cox.net) or call 757-259-9477. Comments and questions about the newsletter are also welcome. Thank you.

## Community Gardens, English Style, Part I submitted by Art Gustafson

*Editor's Note: This account was sent to Art by Tony Dion, a former JCCC/W MG who now lives in England. Part II will appear in next month's MG newsletter.*



*The community garden in Okehampton, Devon, England.*

## Fatherford Road Allotments, Okehampton, Devon

The site is made up of 8 20-rod plots, and 24 10-rod plots. It was created and occupied in June 2005 as a result of being moved from our previous site when that site was sold out from under us after the landlord was granted planning permission for housing. After protracted negotiations with our landlord, Okehampton United Charity, a new purpose built site was created which included wide paths, driveways, an extensive car park, and a purpose built disabled 10-rod plot, and water was laid on. Since taking possession of our new site we sought and won lottery funding under the Awards for All scheme and purchased a communal shed, plants for the driveway and funds to start an orchard of rare heritage apples and plums. Okehampton College and a large local group who tend to the needs of the disabled have each taken plots. Future projects include a permanent toilet facility and beehives. We held a Grand Opening and Open House on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, 2006, during Allotments Week, where the site was officially opened by the Mayor of Okehampton, and we showed approximately 90 of our neighbours and local officials what a great allotment site looks like.

The age range of our plot holders runs from mid-20's to mid-70's. Several of our plot holders bring their primary school aged children or grandchildren to help them on the plots. One of our local community colleges has a plot where six teen-aged boys are taught the basics of allotmenting as well as showing them the practical application of many subjects taught in school.

At our first AGM in September 2005 it was requested that we research the possibility of planting a heritage apple orchard. It was researched and proposed to our landlord in November 2005, and approved by our landlord in January 2006. We have ordered

seven apple and two plum trees for planting this December, and an additional 12 apple trees for planting in December 2007. We have also had donated to us an apple and plum tree that was mistakenly planted on one of our allotments. The varieties of the heritage apple and plum trees we ordered are all old, historic, Devon, Somerset and Cornwall varieties that were chosen by our plot holders. The intent is to hold an annual orchard appreciation day in October beginning hopefully in 2010, where plot holders and local residents can taste and appreciate the fruit of our heritage orchard.

### Produce

Our plot holders are growing their soft fruit, flowers, herbs and veggies for themselves and their sometimes quite extended families in the area. As an example, one of our plot holders who recently harvested his potatoes over many days has fifty-seven 25 Kg paper bags of potatoes stored in his shed! He has a large extended family in the area and he ensures that they have all the spuds they need. Looking at what was grown on site just this year, we nearly run the alphabet - artichoke, asparagus, aubergine, beans (broad, runner & french), beetroot, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cape gooseberry, cardoon, carrots, sweet corn, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, comfrey, courgettes, cucumber, garlic, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, melons, onions, parsley, parsnips, peas (early, mid, main and late), peppers, potatoes (early, mid, main and late), pumpkins, radish, shallots, spinach, squash, tomatoes, and turnips. Soft fruit grown this year includes blueberries, blackberries, cape gooseberry, red and black currant, red and green gooseberries, red and green grapes, rhubarb, and strawberries (early, main and late). Amongst our plot holders, the varieties chosen of the above vegetables and fruits are as diverse as the appearances of the individual plots. Several plot holders grow companion herbs and flowers to deter the critters. There are at least two dozen types of herbs grown there. Every month of the year there are either vegetables or fruit being harvested. One of the pumpkin varieties is Lakota squash, a variety grown by the Lakota Indians in North America.



*From the Reid Garden, a summer phlox in bloom, photo courtesy of Nancy Cornwell.*

**NEW KENT DEMONSTRATION GARDEN JEANNIE GILMAN  
NEW KENT MASTER GARDENER CO-ORDINATOR**

There is a growing crop of New Kent Master Gardeners and they are busy growing crops this year. We have started a New Kent County Demonstration Garden, a Red/White/Blue Anniversary Flower Garden, and Turf Plots.

The History of the Demonstration Garden:

The New Kent Master Gardeners met on April 13<sup>th</sup> to plan the garden. Garden design plans were created and seed and plants selected. With the design and plants selected, it was time to roll up our sleeves and begin. The final design included:

A Native American plot, designed in celebration and recognition of the 200th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown

An organic vegetable plot  
Turf Panels to demonstrate a variety of warm season and cool season grasses best suited to our area.

An America's Anniversary Garden at the office entrance

Paul Davis, Mary Mills, and a couple Extension volunteers built the raised beds for the vegetable garden, a 6' deer fence was installed around the raised beds, and a drip irrigation watering system was installed in the garden.

The purpose of the Demonstration Garden:

To demonstration to the community, visitors, and people considering moving to New Kent County what vegetables, grasses and plants that will grow and flourish in our community. To encourage organic gardening  
As a hands-on learning and research opportunity for all Master Gardeners.

It is our intention that it should be a showcase of gardening in our county.

Successes/Failures/Kudos/and/Rewards:

We have had a lot of experience this summer with our experimental Demon-

stration Garden. Growing an organic garden is not really the snap that we thought it would be. We experimented with manure tea; we had plenty of practice with weed identification, disease control, and pest identification. The Colorado potato bug and squash borer as well as many other insects enjoyed our crops. It was a challenge to figure out how to eradicate them without resorting to non-organic pesticides!

One of the rewards of having a Demonstration Garden is harvesting and sharing in the bounty (strawberries, corn, eggplant, cucumbers, peppers, green beans, tomatoes, potatoes, and butterbeans to name a few) —and it has been bountiful! Growing the Native American maize was quite successful. It has smaller kernels than our modern crops, but tasted delicious!

Thank you to the Master Gardeners/Interns who participated in the planning, care, and feeding of the Demonstration Garden: Sue Voigt, Roger Staskiel, Pat Hester, Debbie Secrist, Katherine Nice, Sandy Gauthier, Carole Ashton, Ralph Ashton and Nancy Harris.

And thank you to the New Kent Extension Office staff: Paul Davis, Unit Coordinator/AG Agent, Leanne DuBois, Horticulture Agent, Mary Mills, Unit Administrative Assistant, and John Townsend, VA Tech Summer Intern.

Future plans for the Garden:

For the fall, we plan to plant a cover crop and plant vegetables again in the spring.

Now that the New Kent Master Gardeners and the New Kent County Extension staff have laid the groundwork and we have had our first successful crops, we'd welcome more Master Gardeners participating in working, planning, planting, and researching for the future. If you are interested in working in a good country garden and participating in its bounty, please contact Mary Mills, New Kent County Extension office at 804-966-9645. We look forward to hearing from you!



*Pictured above is the New Kent Demonstration Garden, and work in the garden being performed by MGs: harvesting, Debbie Secrist; and Anniversary Garden watering, Mary Mills.*

## MG Program Updates (and other info)

### Melissa's Meadow

will meet Thursday, Sept. 20, around 8:30/9:00. Come and stay as long as you like. We will be reviewing the possibilities of collecting seeds and what our summer has done to the meadow. Be prepared for weeding and clipping.

### MG Contact Update

Jim Kavitz new email address:  
Kavitzjames@yahoo.com

Ann Davis new address and email:  
19528 Tidal Water Road  
Barhamsville, VA 23011-2359  
Phone: 804-843-2909  
Cell: 757-254-2599  
Email: annd44@verizon.net

WANTED!! **SEEDS OF LEARNING** PROJECT CHAIR  
TO COORDINATE 1ST GRADE MG PLANT PRO-  
GRAM WITH JCC/W SCHOOLS.

SHARE THE FUN OF GROWING AND LEARNING  
ABOUT PLANTS AND THEIR PARTS WITH ENTHUSI-  
ASTIC FIRST GRADERS.

PLENTY OF HELPERS USING INTERNS & VINTAGE  
MG'S. TIMEFRAME OF PROGRAM; APRIL - MAY.

PREVIOUS YEAR'S CURRICULUM AVAILABLE; YOU  
MAY USE WHAT WAS USED LAST YEAR OR BUILD A  
NEW ONE.

CONTACT ANY BOARD MEMBER TO VOLUNTEER.

THIS PROGRAM IS WELL RECEIVED BY THE  
SCHOOLS SO NOT HARD TO LINE UP. THERE ARE  
NINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS NOW SO IT WILL BE  
BUSY BUT JUST FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS.



MG Jeannie Gilman harvesting in the New Kent demonstration garden.

### Harvest Now For Dried Arrangements Later Ailene Bartlett

We are encouraging all MGs to harvest materials suitable for making dried arrangements so that we can offer another possibility for next year's plant sale. Here are some plants which are easily dried; they should be harvested at their peak, hung in a dry place, and left until quite dry. Then, they can be taken down very carefully, wrapped in tissue paper, and placed in a box until spring.

Artemisia

Celosia (If you don't have some of your own, check with Amy at the Farmers' Market)

Gomphrena

Helichrysum

Ornamental grasses (after they have bloomed out)

Lunaria (probably too late for this season)

Lavender (also probably too late)

Hydrangea

Astilbe

Statice

Members may know others - give it a try!

## VIRGINIA CAMELLIA SOCIETY HANDS-ON CAMELLIA WORKSHOP



Saturday, August 25, 2007 -- 9:30 AM to Noon  
Meet at Hofheimer Camellia Garden at Norfolk Botanical Garden.

Learn the importance of “disbudding” for better blooms and the secret, of “gibbing” camellia japonicas for early blooms at this **free**, hands-on workshop. (Gib & applicators will be available for sale.) You will learn the process of removing and potting the new camellia plants propagated by air-layering at the April 14, 2007 Hands-On Workshop. Bring pruning shears, and garden gloves (optional). Instructors are members of the Virginia Camellia Society. Free and open to the public. Check in at gate, park in picnic area; follow path and signs to Hofheimer Camellia Garden. You will be “harvesting” air layers that are held over and sold at a future NBG Gardeners Market to benefit the Hofheimer Camellia Garden at NBG; you are learning about other aspects of camellia culture; and you are volunteering at Norfolk Botanical Garden. Visit the Virginia Camellia Society website: [vacamelliasociety.org](http://vacamelliasociety.org), or email: [info@vacamelliasociety.org](mailto:info@vacamelliasociety.org)



From the Reid Garden, carrot tops in bloom, photo courtesy of Nancy Cornwell.

**HELP URGENTLY NEEDED:** WE HAVE A DATE! WE HAVE A GREAT PLACE!! WE HAVE AN EAGER GROUP OF HELPERS!!! ALL WE NEED NOW IS A **MG SUMMER PICNIC COORDINATOR** TO PULL IT ALL TOGETHER!!!! PLEASE E-MAIL SARAH DOUGHERTY AT [OAKHILLMAX@EARTHLINK.NET](mailto:OAKHILLMAX@EARTHLINK.NET) IF YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO ACT AS OUR COORDINATOR FOR THE EVENT TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23!



Pictured here is an Elevated Container Garden with Earthboxes, designed for use in Therapeutic Gardening.

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Oct 4 monthly MG meeting, Charlie Staton, Robert Beverly Looks Back, 1607-1707
- Oct 22-28 Operation Rejuvenation Swarm, find details at <http://msmastergardener.org/Operation%20Rejuvenation%20Swarm.htm>
- Nov 1 monthly MG meeting
- Dec 6 monthly MG meeting



An upcoming Farmers' Market will feature Incredible Edibles. Shown is the MG team in the field learning from Andy Bradshaw.