

# The Colonial Master Gardener

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION &  
VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



April 2011

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY LINDA LUCAS

In the photo below, Barbara Gustafson and Angela Cingale are standing in front of a raised-bed planter recently constructed at the Williamsburg Botanical Garden with a donation from JCC/W MGs. Six Earthboxes fit into the planter, allowing plenty of space for waist-high gardening. This and the other raised beds pictured here make up the newest addition to the botanical garden... an area where all can enjoy gardening with native plants, herbs and vegetables.

Several JCC/W Water Stewards, with the help of Laurie Fox, Horticulture Associate at the Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Virginia Beach, have been busy working on a rain garden at New Quarter Park. In addition to solving a stormwater problem near a walking trail in the park, this will serve as an example of sustainable landscape management...slowing down the flow of the

stormwater, allowing it to seep back into the soil. *Rain Gardening in the South*, by Helen Kraus and Anne Spafford, is a practical guide on when and how to use rain gardens. The authors remind us that "all the water our planet will have is already here in some form...and gardeners everywhere can play an important role in protecting it."

Hopefully you've been able to take advantage of the nice weather we've had recently to get out into your own gardens. If you are not already growing plants for our big plant sale, there is still time to divide some of your perennials to share; and, on a rainy afternoon, look through your library of gardening books to see if you have a few to donate to the book sale at this year's plant sale. You can bring them to the April 7<sup>th</sup> MG meeting. Ruth Schultz has ordered the MG shirts and aprons and will have them available for pick-up at the April meeting. See you then.



### Next Monthly Meeting:

**April 7**, 9 a.m.,  
Williamsburg  
Regional  
Library; Guest:  
Jan Newton,  
Native Plant  
Specialist

## WANTED PROJECT CHAIRS

BY JEANNE MILLIN



Two projects that can be done from the convenience of home are looking for new chairs. If you are looking for ways to supplement your hours and help promote MG projects without a lot of physical work these both fit the bill.

Mobile Master Gardeners is currently chaired by John Giffin. The project consists of storing and scheduling a display board that MG's use to supplement their public appearances. The displays vary by the occasion and you and the requestor decide how much and what information is needed for each scheduled use. Please contact John at [giffinj@cox.net](mailto:giffinj@cox.net), if you would like more information.

Speakers Bureau is currently chaired by Minouche Robinson. As chairman you maintain a roster of MG's who have expertise in the various subject areas most request for speakers for public meetings in the area. You are the central point of contact, filling requests for MG speakers with members area of expertise. Please contact Minouche at [minouche@cox.net](mailto:minouche@cox.net), for additional information.

# The Colonial Master Gardener April 2011

2010  
MG Board

*President:*  
Linda Lucas

*VP Projects:*  
Jeanne Millin

*VP Internal Ed:*  
Harriet Parsons

*VP Administration:*  
Margene Hartsough

*Secretary:*  
Pat Janot

*Treasurer:*  
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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.

## INTERNAL EDUCATION

BY HARRIET PARSONS

A couple of weekends ago I traveled to Norfolk with several other Master Gardeners to hear Doug Tallamy talk to us about his book, *Bringing Nature Home*. More importantly, he talked to us about what we can do as individuals to save our biodiversity. Biodiversity refers to the biological diversity of the plants and animals of a region, in our case, North America. Or as Barb Dunbar, master naturalist says, "the earth is set up pretty cool." "Was" might be the verb of choice in this time of suburban crawl into nature.

Tallamy spoke to us, with statistics, about the loss of habitat and the increase of non-native species into our environment. His point is that many insects, birds, and wildlife are not attracted to or able to use non-natives as a food source and as a result are rapidly disappearing from our land. Why do we need biodiversity? Because this is what generates oxygen, clean water, creates topsoil, takes care of carbon in the air and gives it to living plants. Without change, he feels we are creating our own demise. Scared? Don't be. The solution, **plant native plants!** Plant Joe Pye, Milkweed, and Black-eyed Susan. **Insects** are good and are attracted to plants that have shared a long history with them.

Tallamy wants us to replace our lawns with our own Suburban National Park, connect your backyard with your neighbor, who connects with his. Push out your flowerbeds, plant your borders with native tree plants such as white oaks, river birches, serviceberry, and blueberries. Use less mulch, more plants, lots of leaf litter. This is a grass roots approach to conservation: "think not of yourself, think of what you can do for biodiversity." I was so excited and guilt-ridden I went home and dug out the non-native invasive Porcelain berry vine! Seriously, read his book and rethink your

garden. We will be showing his video at the December meeting.

Also of note, from the Virginia Gazette 3/19, VIMS has published a study of how the loss of plant biodiversity disrupts the services that ecosystems provide to humanity. The group analyzed the results of over 500 studies gathered across 5 continents over 20 years. The findings are important locally because estuaries like the Chesapeake Bay are low in plant diversity, putting them at risk from species loss.

Our speaker for the April meeting will be Jan Newton, a board member of the John Clayton Chapter of The Virginia Native Plant Society. Perfect timing! Jan is known as the "plant lady" for her work with the Stonehouse Elementary School's Habitat garden, featuring over 80 Virginia native plants. She is also the designer and webmaster of the school's website. Jan also helps rescue plants from development sites.

Bloodroot flower



*Gardening today is showing you believe  
in tomorrow.*

*Unknown*

## THERAPEUTIC GARDENING

BY LINDA LUCAS



If you are currently part of the Therapeutic Gardening team or would like to learn more about this project, we invite you to join us on Friday, April 8, in Room A at the Rec Center at 10:30. This will follow the Seeds of Learning training that will be conducted there from 9:00 to 10:30. In addition to information and training for the various therapeutic gardening programs we will have this year, Nancy Rivolta from the Williamsburg Landing will share ideas and insights on working with the memory-impaired. Please contact either Barbara Gustafson (564-1888) or Linda Lucas (565-0335) if you would like to attend.

## PLANT SALE STEERING COMMITTEE PROMOTES PARTICIPATION

BY DENNIS WOOL



Anyone who has ever worked on the Master Gardener Plant Sale will attest to the diversity of activity that surrounds this annual fun(d) raising event. There will always be the mystery plant that has arrived and lost its tag, or the last minute surprise that the committees have overlooked. The tremendous wealth of knowledge and experience always steps forward to make our Plant Sale a huge success between our members and with the community.

Some of our MGs are known for their specialty plants and draw a following that wait early on line to get a specimen. Some of us explore plants from seed while others get busy trying cuttings. There have been a few MGs who pressed for time or space buy plants in 1 or 2 inch pots during late March or early April and transplant into 6" pots that "blossom" for the sale. Monetary donations remain a positive option. No matter what your preference, experience, or time – please participate, our goal continues for 100%. The results are demonstrated through extended friendships, knowledge, and a pretty good time.

Important dates: April 25-28 Donated plants to Ailene Bartlett's home; April 29 plants move to Longhill Road Recreation Center and "in-house" sale; April 30 Plant Sale 9-2; May 2 MG.

## LANDSCAPE LOVE

BY ANNE NIELSEN



Landscape Love is getting ready for the busy spring season. We had a great response from MGs who have worked in the program before. We actually filled all our spaces and had to put some volunteers on standby in case of unexpected drop outs. Thanks to everyone who volunteered!!

Our first meeting will be on April 13th at 9:30 am at the Rec Center on Longhill Rd. in room A, where the interns are doing their classes. We will be getting the list of interns that have selected our project around April 1st. Carol Fryer and Barb Landa tell me that the whole class is first rate and very enthusiastic. On the 13th we will be doing the intern training. We always invite team members to come and meet their new members. Team leaders must be there, everyone else is optional. Our program will cover the VA Tech guidelines and the procedures for meeting residents. There will be some new enclosures which will help the interns and team members with research. Looking forward to a beautiful spring and a cooler summer this year.

## BOOKS FOR THE PLANT SALE

BY JEANNE MILLIN



This year we are going to have a table with used and new books for sale. If you are overloaded with books and want to make some room for new titles, **bring your donations to the April 7 MG meeting.** They will be priced and make available to members and the public. If you would like to help, contact Jeanne Millin @ 258-4724.

## MULCH!

BY THE JCC/W WATER STEWARDS

**Mulch (not cypress mulch!)** benefits newly planted trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals by conserving soil moisture, moderating soil temperature, and suppressing competing grass and weeds. Apply mulch immediately after watering newly installed plants. Do not over mulch! Two to three inches is adequate, less if you are using a fine material, more if it is coarse. Use either organic mulches (shredded or chunk pine bark, pine straw, shredded leaves) or inorganic mulches (shredded tires, volcanic and river rocks). To prevent insect, disease, and rodent problems if using organic mulches, and bark abrasion if using inorganic mulches, keep mulch from touching tree trunks and shrub stems. Do not use black plastic beneath mulch around trees and shrubs because it blocks air and water exchange.

## HERB SALE AT CNU

BY MARY LIB PULLER

The Colonial Triangle Unit of Virginia is sponsoring an herb sale at CNU's Gardening Symposium on April 16th. Herbs in 4" pots can be purchased for \$4.25 or 3 for \$12.00.



Ross Hotchkiss, Mid- Atlantic Director, Board of American Daffodil Society, speaker at the March 3rd MG meeting. He spoke on both Daffodils and Boxwood.

Photo by Toddy Voorhees

# The Colonial Master Gardener April 2011

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## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

### PROJECT (E<sup>2</sup>)

BY KARI ABBOTT, CHAIR



### ***THERE HAS BEEN A FIELD TRIP CHANGE!!!***

You learn to go with the flow working with schools, and we have had to move a field trip date.

#### NEW DATE:

The NEW E<sup>2</sup> field trip for Clara Byrd Baker is Friday 27 MAY

DJ Montague is Friday 6 May  
Matoaka will be going 10 & 11 May  
Kindergarten will be going 20 May to Greensprings Park by Jamestown High School.

The TRAINING WALK WAS ALSO MOVED TO WEDNESDAY MAY 4th at 9:00 AM at York River State Park. If this causes any one a problem, I will come early (as in 8:00 am) on Friday 6 May to do a walk through for anyone able to attend due to date changes. Please email me if there are any questions or concerns.

If you are interested in joining the fun, please contact me, information below. Everyone is welcome to come have fun with the E<sup>2</sup> Project.

Other excitement has been going on in the E<sup>2</sup> Project. We have reworked our rock/soil cycle class to make it better this year and the first graders have enjoyed this module. There are so many good things are happening.

Please e-mail Kari Abbott if you are interested or have any questions ([bearsbaskets@cox.net](mailto:bearsbaskets@cox.net)) .

## BRADFORD PEAR

BY KIM STRADER, HORTICULTURE CHAIR, VIRGINIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

*Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford' was brought onto the market and became all the rage. It would develop fruits but the seeds were sterile. It did not take long to realize that the 'Bradford' Pear had bad branching structure which caused the tree to split apart as it got older. To remedy this problem new cultivars of *Pyrus calleryana* were developed with better branching structure such as 'Aristocrat' and 'Cleveland Select' to name a few. Unfortunately, when this happened it allowed the various *Pyrus calleryana* cultivars to cross pollinate and produce a viable seed. Now we are faced with a huge problem.

The Pears grow in very dense populations and they come up as a reverted form that often has thorns. In light of this, I recommend that people do not plant any of the cultivars of *Pyrus calleryana*.



Photo by Kathy Mestayer, taken from Rt 199 near Rt 5

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## RAISED BED GARDEN WORKSHOP

BY SUSAN VOIGT & MARY MILLS

The New Kent Extension Workshop on Raised Bed Vegetable Gardening held on Saturday, March 26 was a great success. Over 70 people attended. Susan Voigt, JCC/W & NKC Master Gardener, Amy Hicks, Amy's Organic Garden, and Stephanie Ripchick, Holly Fork Produce & More were the speakers, followed by a tour of Carole's Garden with Patty Townsend and several Master Gardeners. It was enjoyed by all.



## WILDFLOWER OF THE MONTH

JOHN CLAYTON CHAPTER, VIRGINIA NATIVE  
PLANT SOCIETY, HELEN HAMILTON

### SWEETLEAF/HORSESUGAR *Symplocos tinctoria*

An unusually attractive shrub or small tree in the spring, with clusters of small, fragrant, cream-colored flowers - the numerous stamens make the blooms particularly showy. The flowers have both male and female parts, but the tree is not self-fertile. Requiring cross-pollination, the flowers are fragrant and have nectar glands, and appear closely spaced on the branches of last season's growth, before the leaves emerge.

Sweetleaf forms a short trunk bearing an open crown of spreading branches. The leaves are long, over 5 inches, narrow, and somewhat leathery with a yellow midvein. While the leaves appear evergreen, they may be weakly so, or deciduous, depending upon the climate where the tree grows.

This plant is native chiefly on the Coastal Plain from Delaware and Virginia to Florida and eastern Texas, north in the Mississippi Valley to Arkansas and Tennessee and inland to the mountains of the Carolinas. Scattered in the understory of woods, sweetleaf prefers moist sandy soils, streambanks and bottomlands; it is easily cultivated.



**Photo:** Sweetleaf  
(*Symplocos tinctoria*) taken by  
Phillip Merritt

The common names Sweetleaf and Horsesugar refer to the leaves, commonly eaten by livestock. The sweetness seems variable from plant to plant, and is often reminiscent of green apples. Sweet or not, the taste is distinctive and is useful when distinguishing this tree from other similar species.

The name Yellowwood and the Latin species name allude to a yellow dye once obtained from the bark and leaves. The bark, like others with bitter aromatic properties, was used by early settlers as a tonic. For more information about native plants visit [www.claytonvnps.org](http://www.claytonvnps.org).

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## TOP FIVE REASONS TO GIVE UP BOTTLED WATER

SUBMITTED BY WATER STEWARDS



**5. Disposable plastic water bottles are not meant for multiple uses.** The #1 polyethylene terephthalate (PET) is fine for a single use, but reuse can lead to bacterial growth and leaching of dangerous chemicals.

**4. Bottled water is full of oil.** Making bottles to meet Americans' demand for bottled water requires more than 17 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 cars for a year. To put it another way, the entire energy costs of the lifecycle of a bottle of water is equivalent, on average, to filling up a quarter of each bottle with oil. (Pacific Institute)

**3. Bottled water is expensive!** Drinking the recommended daily amount of water using bottled water can cost an average of \$1,400 per year; drinking the same amount from the tap costs around 49 cents for the year. (NY Times)

**2. Your tap water is fine to drink.** Tap water is more highly regulated than bottled water and over 90 percent of water systems meet EPA's standards for tap water quality. (If the taste or color is a little off from your tap, your pipes are probably at fault—a simple filtration system should do the trick to take both aesthetic problems away.) And Last.....

**1. At least 40 percent of bottled water is tap water anyway.** That's right: you are paying a huge premium on water that you could have just gotten from your tap in the first place. (Natural Resources Defense Council) You probably like tap water more than bottled water, too! Want to test that out? Try the [Tap Water Challenge!](#)

[www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org)

# The Colonial Master Gardener April 2011

## MG LIBRARY BOOK REVIEW

BY JEANNE MILLIN, LIBRARIAN



### How To Grow A School Garden: A Complete Guide for Parents and Teachers

By Arden Bucklin-Sporer and Rachel Kathleen Pringle

This is a new book and the James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners have bought two. One will be in the library as SB55.B83; the second, will be in the kit used by the School Gardens Project Managers, Roger Evans and Genrose Lashinger.

This book is primarily directed to parents who are the inspiration behind many school gardens, especially in California where the authors who are from the San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance originated. However, the tips for creating the projects and the lessons learned can be used by anyone involved with school and community garden projects.

The book is divided into two parts; the first half is about creating and developing the garden space or "outdoor classroom", while the second half provides guidance for school garden learning programs. As the authors point out, building a school garden program is a very achievable project. The harder part is developing the strategies that sustain the garden over time. They include suggestions for dealing with both areas.

Scattered throughout the book are to-do lists for raising funds, promoting the garden in the community, and stocking the tool shed. The book should provide inspiration to all Master Gardeners who are involved with school and community gardening.

#### **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.*

### **NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:**

The deadline for submission of material for the **May Newsletter** is Wednesday, April 20.

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

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Apr. 13 Landscape Love Training Day
- Apr. 16 Environthon, New Kent
- Apr. 20 Newsletter Deadline
- Apr. 28 Training Day for E2 Field Trips
- 4/29-4/30 2011 Plant Sale (Rec. Center)
- 6/21-6/26 MG College 2011
- 10/11-15 International MG Conference, WV

## SUNSHINE NOTES



Get well wishes were sent to Linda Wever following surgery.

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 of the organization. Pat may be reached at 221-0289 or [janotap@verizon.net](mailto:janotap@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.

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James City County / Williamsburg Master Gardener Association Presents:

# PLANTS HUZZAH!

*The Master Gardener Plant Sale*

**April 30, 2011**  
**Saturday**  
**9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

 **Rain or Shine** 

**James City / Williamsburg  
Community Center**

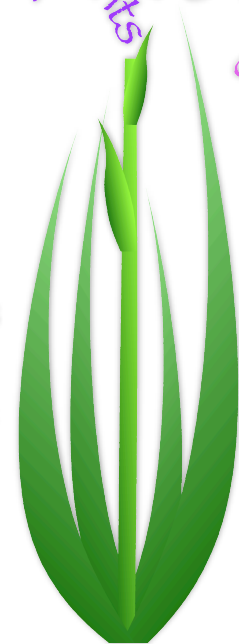
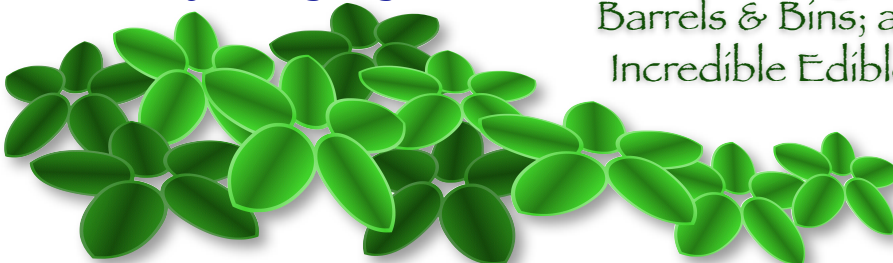
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**Native & Ornamental Plants**  
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**For more information:**  
**[www.jccwmg.org](http://www.jccwmg.org)**

Presentations by  
Master Gardeners on:  
Landscape Love; Turf Love;  
Therapeutic Gardening;  
Seeds of Learning for Kids;  
Barrels & Bins; and  
Incredible Edibles

Bluebird Houses  
Small Trees  
Flowers  
Houseplants  
Gardening Books  
Herbs  
Garden Supplies  
Shrubs  
Vegetables



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If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Doris Heath, James City County Unit at 757/564-2170/TDD\*) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event. \*TDD number is (800) 828-1120.



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# Envirothon Earth Day



Saturday, April 16, 2011

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

A day of activities for all ages designed to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's environment.

Join us at the New Kent Extension Office  
11809 New Kent Highway, New Kent, VA

Featuring: Critter's Don't Need Litter  
With Two Performances: 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

Earth Friendly Educational Demonstrations  
& Informational Booths For The Whole Family

Call (804) 966-9645 the Extension Office for more information.



New Kent  
COUNTY · VIRGINIA



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A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University

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New Kent Clean County Committee