

The Colonial Master Gardener

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

August 2008



ALL ARE INVITED TO A FAREWELL RECEPTION FOR LEANNE



James City County
Virginia Cooperative Extension
&
James City County/Williamsburg
Master Gardener Association

invites you
to
a farewell reception
to honor

Leanne DuBois

Friday, August 1, 2008

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist Church
3051 Ironbound Road
Williamsburg, VA 23185

Leanne DuBois, Horticulture Extension Agent, James City County Cooperative Extension Office has recently accepted a position with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as the Manager of Marketing for Specialty Crops, Direct Marketing and Farmers Markets. She has been with the Extension Office for over five years and has overseen the Master Gardener and Turf Love programs, and worked with environmental consumer horticulture, the landscape professional industry and direct market agriculture and horticulture operations.

Her new position will include developing programs to facilitate the growth of direct marketing opportunities in the state. Leanne begins her new position on July 22, 2008.

*Join us to celebrate with Leanne
Cheese, wine, soft drinks and light hors d'oeuvres will be served
The Williamsburg Unitarian Universalist Church is located on Ironbound Road
between Route 5 and Jamestown Road*

RSVP by July 28th to Carol Fryer, cfryer@cox.net, 757-220-0759

Next Monthly Meeting

August 7, 9:00am,
Williamsburg Regional
Library,
*Selection, Use and Care
of Native Woody Plants*,
by Denise Greene, owner
of Sassafras Farms

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INTERNAL EDUCATION NEWS CAROL FRYER

Well, July has certainly turned out to be a very hot and dry month, but that did not deter several of our members from enjoying our picnic and guided tours through Freedom Park and the Williamsburg Botanical Gardens on the 3rd of July.

I wish to give a hardy thanks to those Master Gardeners who came, and a special thanks to everyone who made this event possible: John Giffin who arranged for the site and speakers; Jean Winters and Angela Cingale who prepared the fruit bowls; Bob Winters who transported all the supplies and coordinated the carpooling from JCC Community Center; Dan Tevlin who brought and set-up the tents and tables; Karen Jamison who allowed us to use the Williamsburg Botanical Gardens; and JCC Parks and Recreation Department who allowed us to use Freedom Park without a fee.

I also wish to acknowledge our tour guides who so generously gave of their time and expertise: Carolyn Will and Donna Ware of the Native Plant Society and our very own Sue Liddell.

The Williamsburg Botanical Gardens are lovely, and a wonderful place to learn about native plants that are suitable for home landscaping. I returned to the Gardens a few weeks ago, to study the numerous species of native shrubs and trees so I can have a visual image of the mature plant when reviewing written lists of recommended native plants for our region.

At our August monthly meeting we will learn about the **Selection, Use and Care of Native Woody Plants** from **Denise Greene**, owner of Sassafras Farms where she grows and is a wholesaler of native perennials. Denise 's nursery is located in Gloucester, VA, not far from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). If you participate in the September field trip to VIMS you will be able to see the marsh garden that was designed by Denise. Besides being a grower of native plants, Denise is a landscape designer for home and commercial natural settings.

The Education Committee looks forward to seeing everyone at the August monthly meeting at the Williamsburg Library!



Emeritus MGs honored at the June MG monthly meeting.

TREE STEWARD TRAINING SUE LIDDELL

Peninsula Tree Stewards are planning a Tree Steward training program for the coming winter. Master Gardeners are eligible for Tree Steward training after they have completed their first year of MG volunteer hours. Classes will probably start in January, 2009 and will be held once a week, starting at 9:00 AM and running until approximately 12:00 noon. The program will last about 14 weeks, and will include a mid-term and final examination, both of which will be take home and open book. The fee for the course will

depend upon the costs of the text book(s) still to be decided, but we will try to keep those costs under \$150. Graduates will be expected to participate in a project of their own design and there is an annual expectation for contribution of service hours. If you think you may be interested in this program, please send your name, telephone number and e-mail to Sue Liddell at sliddellmg@verizon.net.

2008-2009
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Dear Friends,

It is truly bittersweet saying goodbye to you as your Extension Agent. It's been a pleasure and I have thoroughly enjoyed working together with you all. We have accomplished so much in the past five years and I'm sure you will continue to serve your community with unfailing loyalty and commitment.

With grateful admiration for making my job so much easier, I wish you all the best and continued success. Leanne

*How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.
~Carol Sobieski and Thomas Meehan, Annie*

From Leanne DuBois, Extension Agent, Horticulture

The New Kent Master Gardeners presented a garden plaque to Ralph Ashton designating the New Kent Demonstration Garden as "Carole's Garden" in memory of Carol Ashton's contribution to the Master Gardener Association. Both Ralph and Carol contributed greatly to the efforts in New Kent County as well as to James City County. Ralph was "speechless" and honored to accept the designation in her memory.



RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS

Recently there was a mention of Fire Ants in the Virginia Gazette under the Last Word section. This prompted calls to the Extension office especially from those who have moved from areas of the Country where fire ants pose a problem, i.e. Texas and South Carolina. Luckily Fire Ants are not as prevalent in our area although there have been a few sites positively identified. Red imported fire ants are very small and aggressive. They have a venomous sting causing pain and itching and occasionally have caused fatal allergic reactions. Recently, fire ants were introduced to Virginia through contaminated nursery stock and have been reported in Tidewater Virginia, most notably in the Virginia Beach and Chesapeake areas. Since they

are a federally regulated pest, any suspected Fire Ants must be reported to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and an inspector will visit the site to make a determination. The site indicated in the *Last Word* was inspected and concluded to be negative for Red Imported Fire Ants. They were identified as Alleghany Mound Ants; the ants are known to bite if the Colony is disturbed. To learn more about the Alleghany Mound Ants see:

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/entfactpdf/ef015.pdf>

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.

EDITORS NOTE: The deadline for submission of material for the September MG Newsletter is **August 18**. Please send to Lise Kline, newsletter editor, at legskline@cox.net or call 757-259-9477. Comments and questions about the newsletter are also welcome. Thank you.

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News from E² Kari Abbott

As the middle of summer arrives, school has been out for a bit, and things are still hopping.

The field trips to York River State Park again this year were just grand. The children had fun learning types of bark, names of trees, ferns, and they loved all the different mosses. The wildlife participated again this year, which made the trip fabulous for the children. Thank you to all of the fifteen volunteers. They worked hard and made this a most memorable field trip for the children.

The Dedication of the Lawrence E. Walk Conservation Classroom has held on June 2. Thanks to the *Greenworks!* Grant E² received this year the conservation classroom space is shaping up nicely. Training for the teachers is ongoing. One class was held just before school ended. Another one is going on this month. The tree tags and copies of the *Common Native Trees of Virginia* will provide loads of outdoor educational moments. A “supplemental” guide developed by E² is for the teachers, to highlight the trees

Incredible Edibles at Child Development Resources Linda Lucas

The MG Incredible Edibles project has undertaken a new program this year at Child Development Resources (CDR). The goal of Incredible Edibles is to promote the growing and use of vegetables, herbs and fruit in home gardens. One of the goals of CDR, a long-standing non-profit agency in our community, is providing services to disadvantaged children from birth to age three and their families. Parent groups meet each weekday morning while their children are in playgroup at the facility in Norge.

In May, Incredible Edibles volunteers met with each parent group to talk about and plant vegetables and herbs at



In June, MGs and Parent Group members planted the containers.

around the school, and common trees in the area, which children might bring to school to share. There will be lots of environmental education going on at D.J. Montague this fall! As you learned at the general membership meeting, the E² Program was selected by the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents as the Natural Resources/Environmental Stewardship entry as the National Winner for 2008. Thank you all for voting to pay the conference registration to attend the Galaxy III conference.

E² has held another workshop for the teachers at DJ Montague, so now there is a representative in every grade to learn new lessons, and kindergarten teachers had their own workshop! For the rest of the summer E² will be working on grants and curriculum. September is not too far away, and your help will always be appreciated and welcome! Best wishes for a wonderful summer!



In July, MGs and Parent Group members chopped and tasted the fruits of their labors.

CDR. Each group also learned, from MG interns Jack Gross and Dennis Wool, how to construct an inexpensive container with a water reservoir to use at CDR; and some parents replicated these to use at home. Three raised beds (4' x 4' each) were constructed by Frank Messina, Art Gustafson and Jack. Parents planted the containers and raised beds with veggies and herbs and have been caring for their garden and sharing the harvest. MGs meet with each group once a month to see the progress of the garden, talk about garden pests, and even help cook up simple recipes that make use of the produce. (CDR staff members tend to migrate to the kitchen to sample as well.) Interns Susan Giandomenico, Harriet Parsons, Edith Schoenig and Mandy Miller-Doggett have also been helping with this program along with several other MGs.

The five parent groups are keeping a journal on their garden this year—and there's plenty of room at CDR to expand next year if the current enthusiasm continues!

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7TH ANNUAL SUPER TURF SATURDAY AUGUST 16, 2008, LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL, 8:30AM-3:00PM

The entire Virginia Tech Turf Team will speak in the morning sessions on topics relating to lawns and the environment. These four sessions qualify for Continuing Education credits. The afternoon sessions consist of the Virginia Tech Panel of Experts and, yes, *Moles, Voles and Critters* by Jim Williams will be back after a two-year absence.

Volunteer openings are available for Registration (8:00-8:30), Snacks, Lunch and Prize Drawings. We will supply lunch for MGs who are volunteering for the day. Please call Jean Winters at 564-1662 if you are interested in volunteering.

If you are interested in attending the program (other than volunteering), please register in advance by downloading the flyer from the MG website and mail it to the Extension office with your \$12 check. We look forward to seeing you at another Super Turf!

VISIT MOUNT VERNON (HOME OF GEORGE & MARTHA WASHINGTON) WITH THE VMGA ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008 CONTRIBUTED BY JIM AND NELDA PRESSLY

The VMGA Education Committee has planned an exciting program at Mount Vernon. Your experience at **Mount Vernon will begin at 9:00 a.m.** in front of the souvenir shop with Dean Norton, Director of Horticulture. His presentation will be on the history of the estate and George Washington as a farmer is really special. We will then have a guided tour of several gardens and learn about George Washington's innovative methods. After the morning tour, you have several options for lunch including the charming Mount Vernon Inn, the new cafeteria with many food courts located in the Orientation Center, or bring a lunch and picnic on the grounds.

After lunch, you can self-tour the new Orientation Center and the new Museum and Education Center. Visit the meticulously restored mansion and see the outbuildings such as the smoke house, wash house, carriage house, slave quarters, and many others. If your feet can stand it, mosey down the hill to see George and Martha's tombs. There is so much to see at Mount Vernon, you may want to consider making a weekend out of this opportunity.

Cost: VMGA Member \$20.00
Non VMGA member \$32.00

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- August 2 The Williamsburg Botanical Garden's monthly Learn and Grow educational series from 10-11 AM. Denise Greene, owner of Sassafras Farm will present "Butterfly Gardening." Rain date for the program is August 9th. (Note: This program is rescheduled from April, 2008.) The WBG is located at 5535 Centerville Rd. (corner of Centerville & Longhill) in Freedom Park. Admission is free. For more information call (757) 229-1995 or log onto www.williamsburgbotanicalgarden.org.
- August 16 Super Turf Saturday (see this page)
- Sept 4 monthly MG meeting, Williamsburg Regional Library
- Sept 6 The Williamsburg Botanical Garden's monthly Learn and Grow educational series from 10-11 AM. Helen Hamilton, a James City County Master Gardener and Virginia Native Plant Society Board Member will present "Drought Resistant Plants for Homeowners."
- Sept 16 The Williamsburg Botanical Garden presents a Learn and Grow evening lecture from 7:30-8:30 PM. Brent Heath, owner of the world famous Brent & Becky's Bulbs will present "Pest Resistant Bulbs." The lecture will be held at the Williamsburg Community Building at 401 North Boundary Street. Admission is free.
- Sept 19 VMGA trip to Mt. Vernon (see this page)

Farmers Market 2008 Schedule

August 2	Pruning
August 23	Propagation
August 30	Therapeutic Gardening
Sept 13	Drought Tolerant Plant plus the Enviroscope
Sept 27	Composting
October 11	Second Annual Herb Day
October 25	Trees and Shrubs

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

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GARDENING TIPS FOR AUGUST HELEN HAMILTON

When modern methods fail, or to save money on commercial products, try some of these old-time methods:

Willow water. Scientists and researchers have recently confirmed what herbalists and gardeners have known for centuries. Tips and leaves of willows contain powerful hormones that stimulate the growth and development of plants.

Collect twigs and leaves, cut them into 1-inch pieces, and drop into a bucket filled with water. After the mixture steeps for a week, strain and decant the tea-colored liquid into small jars and store in the refrigerator. Or, for a quicker product, bring one gallon of water to a boil and turn off the heat. Drop the willow into the pot, cover, and let the mixture steep overnight. Then strain, decant and store.

When propagating plants, dip the fresh cuttings into the willow water, let them soak for a few minutes, then place in a hole into potting soil and water thoroughly with the willow water.

Potato cradle. Shrubs that are difficult to propagate can be started in a potato. Cut a slip from the plant on the diagonal and place into a hole in a small potato. Set the potato into prepared ground and cover it completely, leaving only the cutting above the surface. Water carefully as with any newly propagated plant. This is reported to be a nearly foolproof method to start stubborn woody plants.

Green glass for rosemary. Reportedly, rosemary cuttings will root after a few weeks in green glass bottles filled with water.

Roses. A researcher in Ohio has found that fresh rose cuttings root faster when kept in total darkness for the first 4 or 5 days. They can be placed in a brown paper bag with

a ripening apple; the ethylene gas from the apple speeds up the process.

Bare root roses will benefit from soaking overnight in willow water before planting. And when placing the roots in a hole, snip some tiny pieces of banana peel and add to the hole. The banana is high in the nutrient minerals potassium, phosphorous, and magnesium.

Fool the Clematis. These attractive vines prefer to have their heads in the sun and their feet in cool shade. Without the necessary shade, place broad, flat stones at the base of the plant to cool the roots.

A Living Fence. Willow branches planted in damp ground will sprout. Use this quality of the willow to create a screen around a compost pile, or other unsightly areas in the garden. Dig a narrow trench 12 inches deep around the area to be screened and fill with a good aged compost. Stick a line of rods, about 8 inches apart and a few inches deep into the trench at a 45-degree angle, then lay another line the same distance apart in the opposite direction, making a crisscross pattern. At each end of the screen, sink a wooden or metal pole into the ground to strengthen the structure. Cluster at least 5 rods around the pole, tie them loosely together, and add a rod across the top. Water as necessary, and watch the screen sprout!

Weed-free solutions. As alternatives to commercial herbicides such as Round-up, try vinegar. The low concentration of vinegar solutions offered in grocery stores may not be adequate – ask a pharmacist for a stronger solution. Or, use equal parts water and isopropyl alcohol (70% solution). This works in areas of stone or brick patios. Be sure to protect desirable plants nearby.

(From Trowel and Error, by Sharon Lovejoy)

SCENES FROM THE JULY MG MEETING/PICNIC/GUIDED TOURS AT FREEDOM PARK, WILLIAMSBURG BOTANICAL GARDEN (MORE PHOTOS AT WWW.JCCWMG.ORG)

