

# The Colonial Master Gardener

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION &  
VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



## August 2010

### THERAPEUTIC GARDENING

### SYMPOSIUM 9/22

BY PAT CROWE



Plans are well underway for the therapeutic gardening program's *Healing thru Gardening* symposium, scheduled for September 22. Check out the Master Gardener website ([jccwmg.org](http://jccwmg.org)) to download our brochure (which includes a registration form). You'll see many familiar names among our speakers, including Dr. Diane Relf, our keynote speaker. Dr. Relf, founding member of AHTA, founder of the "People-Plant Council", Therapeutic Gardening Workshops, and Professor Emeritus, VA Tech, served as mentor and supporter of those Master Gardeners who formed our award winning therapeutic gardening program in 1999.

We are thrilled to have as a speaker Dr. Pamela Perkins, a member of the American Psychological Association and currently practicing with Jewish Family Services in Richmond. Kirk Ballin of Virginia AgrAbility will speak on the topic, *The Always Able Gardener*. In addition, you'll see the names of 13 of your fellow Master Gardeners who will present workshops on topics such as wheelchair gardening, developing horticultural skills for the workplace and low maintenance ideas for older gardeners. Vendors will be present as well. You might get some new ideas for gardening tools that will make your job easier!

A flyer advertising our workshop can be found on the last page of the newsletter. Please share a copy with friends, neighbors, your church, community newsletters and others who may be interested in attending our symposium. We hope to see many of you on September 22. You will receive Master Gardener training hours as well as the opportunity to obtain .5 CEU.

If you have questions about the Symposium or would like to volunteer, contact Barbara Gustafson or Linda Lucas.



Dr. Diane Relf, Professor Emeritus, VA Tech will deliver the keynote address: *Gardens in Health Care: Healing, Therapeutic and Horticultural Therapy Gardens* at the September 22 *Healing thru Gardening* Symposium.



Dr. Pamela Perkins, will deliver general session remarks: *Herb Gardening with Older Adults*. Dr. Perkins is pictured with Barbara Gustafson and Linda Lucas at the Eastern State Hospital Greenhouse.

### SUPER TURF SATURDAY 8/7 !!

BY BOB WINTERS

Please don't forget the Ninth Annual **Super Turf Saturday** on **August 7**. We will have the following Virginia Tech Turf Team speakers:

Dr Mike Goatley - Extension Turfgrass Specialist  
Dr Shawn Askew - Extension Weed Specialist  
Sam Doak - Research Associate Crop & Environmental Sciences

Also, a new speaker this year is Dr Rory Maguire of the CSES Department. Among other duties, Dr. Maguire is responsible for the Virginia Tech Soil Lab. He will speak on Nutrient Management and Environmental Issues.

We will have a mini trade show featuring, among other things, organic nutrient vendors and our own MG programs - Landscape Love, Turf Love & Bins & Barrels. Just a reminder: We are at the JCC/W Recreation Center this year which opens for us at 8:30 AM. The Program starts at 9:00 AM.

### Next Monthly Meeting:

August 5, 9 a.m.,  
Williamsburg Regional Library;  
Lisa Ziegler, owner of the Gardeners'  
Workshop, "Fall Planting"

Photo credits: Angela Cingale

2010  
MG Board

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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.

## THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

BY CAROL FRYER

During MG College this past June at Virginia Tech, one of the keynote speakers, Jeff Gilman, presented *Myths About Garden Remedies*. Dr. Gilman is an associate professor in the department of horticultural science at the University of Minnesota, where he researches plant production and teaches courses on nursery management and pesticide use. He has a doctorate in horticulture and a master's degree in entomology. He is also connected to cooperative extension at his university.

In his book, *The Truth about Garden Remedies*, he looks at practices various garden gurus have claimed produce better lawns, bigger flowers, and control pests and other cures..... He describes the practice, discusses the theory behind the practice, talks about the research on the topic (the real story), and then discusses *what it means to us*.

For example, some 'garden gurus' in old literature recommend beer as a fertilizer. *The practice:* beer has been used on lawns, vegetable and flower gardens in a concentration of 1 tablespoon up to a can of beer in a gallon of water. *The theory:* beer has been recommended as a source of vitamins and minerals that plants need for quick growth. It has also been suggested that it offers food for beneficial microorganisms, such as bacteria. *The real story:* Beer contains water, carbon dioxide, ethanol, carbohydrates and a small quantity of protein and trace elements in very small quantity. The water alone will not promote plant growth and likewise the carbon dioxide is unlikely to affect the plant since there is substantial carbon dioxide in the air. The carbohydrates and protein could possibly increase growth, but the ethanol inhibits growth and can cause plant burn and death. Dr. Gilman tested plants in hydroponic tubs with various quantities and types of beer – light, stout, and alcohol free beer were added to the water, along with a low concentration of liquid fertilizer. A control was done with the fertilizer but without beer. His results indicate that beer is bad for plants, even alcohol free beer. The best plant results were from the controls. The carbohydrates in beer need nitrogen to breakdown and the nitrogen is drawn from the plant. A build up of bacteria was found around roots of the beer-fed plants. The bacteria did not benefit the plants' growth and health.

*What it means to you:* it is better to use compost and/or formulated fertilizers along with watering your plants properly than to use beer as a fertilizer. Dr. Gilman suggests just drinking the beer while watering the plants!

Another interesting fact concerns using gravel in the bottom of containers to improve drainage. Rocks, Styrofoam peanuts and gravel have often been placed in containers filling 1/8<sup>th</sup> to 1/2 of the depth and then soil media is added to fill the rest of the space. *The theory* is that the material at the bottom of the container will not hold much water, and so the soil media will drain better.

*The real story* is that the shape of a container actually has a lot to do with how much water the container holds. A round, shallow container filled with media will hold more water per unit than a container with a similar diameter but is longer (taller). Since drainage has everything to do with how much water a container holds per unit, the taller container will drain better.

When soil media is put on top of gravel, you are effectively making a container shallower than it is intended to be. Although the shortened container will hold less total water than the same container filled entirely with soil media, the top section of soil in the shortened container, where there should be much root growth, will actually hold more water per unit than the top section of an identical pot filled entirely with soil media. In other words, the water table has been raised up in the pot with gravel in the bottom.

*What it means to you:* don't use gravel or other nonabsorbent materials in the bottom of pots to increase drainage. If you need better drainage, buy better draining soil media, or add perlite to the soil for better drainage.

These are only a few of the remarks and studies that Dr. Gilman shared and that are described in detail in his book. So remember, next time you are out on a home visit, don't recommend one of Aunt Hattie's garden recipes. Instead use research-based information from our cooperative extension network.

## LANDSCAPE LOVE

BY ANNE NIELSEN



The Landscape Love website will open August 1st this year in order to serve as many residents as possible. The closing date will be Sept 15th and visits will begin after Oct 1st. Let your neighbors know that they can be visited by a team of MGs who can advise them on BMPs for their landscape. Sign up on our [www.jccwmg.org](http://www.jccwmg.org) website.

If you were not able to join a team in the Spring and would like to be included this Fall, call Anne Nielsen at 259-2455 or email [anne-mail@cox.net](mailto:anne-mail@cox.net).

# The Colonial Master Gardener August 2010

## MG COLLEGE HAPPENINGS

BY JEANNE MILLIN

Ten James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners attended this year's MG College in Blacksburg from June 24 to 27. With such a good representation, we were able to cover many of the different sessions, but not all since there were 6 to 8 offerings each afternoon and a few of us duplicated the sessions, workshops and tours.

The morning general sessions were an opportunity to hear some horticultural speakers and obtain more books for the MG library. Michael Raupp has just completed a new Integrated Pest Management Guide and we now have signed copies of his book in the MG and Landscape Love libraries.

A most enjoyable and entertaining general session was given by Pearl Fryer who is the subject of a documentary shown on PBS, "A Man Named Pearl". His session on Topiary Gardens was not on the priority list but we attended and it was more than worthwhile. Google his name when you get a chance and you will want to take a field trip to Bishopville, SC to see the wonders that he has produced and the message he transmits. Also, he is going to be featured in the September issue of Southern Living Magazine.

Next year there will be two training opportunities nearby: VA MG College will be June 23-26, 2011 and the International MG College will be in Charleston, WV in the fall. Attending this year's college were Pat Crowe, Carol Fryer, Art and Barbara Gustafson, Nancy Greene, Jeanne Millin, Anne Nielsen, Toni Webb, Pat Wells and Donna Xander. Jeanne Millin attended the Water Steward training which started a day earlier. We hope you will join us next year.



Pat Crowe,  
Anne  
Nielsen,  
Jeanne  
Millin



Pat  
Crowe



Anne Nielsen & Carol Fryer  
With VA Tech mascot

## FARMER'S MARKET SCHEDULE:

### SUMMER/FALL 2010

BY SALLY SISSEL

July 31:            *Therapeutic Gardening*  
August 14:        *Plant Propagation*  
August 28:        *Barrels and Bins*  
September 11:   *Drought Tolerant Plants*  
September 25:   *Composting*  
October 9:        *Trees/Shrubs*  
October 23:      *W&M Homecoming; Turf*  
                         *Plus General A&A*

Tuesday Farmers' Markets:  
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

## VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE MARKET!

BY SALLY SISSEL

Last year, as you will recall, the Williamsburg Farmers' Market was voted the #1 Mid-sized Farmers Market in the country. Now it is time to vote again! Just log on to [www.farmland.org/vote](http://www.farmland.org/vote), follow the links and cast your vote.

It will only take a minute. We as Master Gardeners are actively involved in the local market and know it's the best. Cast your vote to support the Market and help it become the best Market two years in a row.

## WILLIAMSBURG HERITAGE TREE PROGRAM

BY JEANNE MILLIN

On June 10, 2010, the City Council of Williamsburg adopted a Heritage Tree Ordinance which stated purpose is to identify, promote awareness, maintain and protect designate Heritage Trees located within the City. The goals of the program are to:

- Establish a process of designating Heritage Trees located on either public or private property
- Encourage proper maintenance, care and protection of Heritage Trees
- Inform and educate the public regarding the notable tree resources in the City
- Increase public awareness of the environmental benefit of Heritage Trees and trees in general

William Fidler, who is the Landscape Superintendent of the City of Williamsburg, spoke to the members of the Peninsula Tree Steward program at their last meeting which was hosted by Anne Nielsen. He was joined by Katie Ballard, who is an intern working on the wonderful Heritage Tree Program website. Take a look – there is a great map highlighting the trees already designated. It would make a wonderful tour in the fall.

## TREE STEWARD TRAINING



Peninsula Tree Stewards are planning a Tree Steward training program for the coming winter. Applicants must be fully qualified Virginia Master Gardeners. Classes will start February 2, 2011 and be held each Wednesday at the York County Operations Center, from 9 AM until noon (there may be some exceptions for which an afternoon session is required). The program will conclude April 20, 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 books, under \$150. Each graduate will be expected to participate in a project of his or her own design during or after the class, and there is an annual expectation of MG service hours specifically for Tree Steward work. If you are interested in this program, please send your name, telephone number and e-mail address to Tod Allen at [todallen@cox.net](mailto:todallen@cox.net).

## LIBRARY'S MISSING BOOKS

BY JEANNE MILLIN

A recent trip to the Master Gardener office in Toano revealed that the five of the books mentioned in the members e-mail last month have still not been returned to the office. Please check your home and cars to see if these books somehow made it into your collection:

Roedale Book of Composting  
Childrens Gardens: A Field Guide for Teachers, Parents,...  
The Pruners Bible  
Roedale's All-New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening  
Turfgrass Pest Management

## CALLING ALL BOXWOOD EXPERTS OR "WANT-TO-BE"S

BY SUSAN VOIGT

There is a wonderful collection of boxwoods on a small residential property across from Phi Beta Kappa Hall on Jamestown Road. John T. Baldwin, botany professor at the College of William and Mary 1946-1974, created a vast collection of trees and shrubs across the campus and also experimented with boxwood propagation. He was a founder of the American Boxwood Society and left a legacy of boxwood varieties in the garden of his colleague and good friend, Dr. Bernice Speese.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church purchased her property a few years ago, and we would like to catalog the plants, particularly the boxwood hybrids. If you are interested in helping, please contact Susan Voigt at 804-966-8487 or [svoigt1@cox.net](mailto:svoigt1@cox.net).

## NATURAL INSECT REPELLENT

BY AILENE BARTLETT

Have you heard of *Mentha pulegium*, a.k.a. Pennyroyal? If you have, then you know it as a member of the mint family, but not one that is mildly-scented and good in a glass of lemonade or iced tea. This one is pretty strong, and with good reason - it makes a good insect repellent!

Pennyroyal is a (slowly) spreading perennial with quite small leaves; it produces spikes of tiny lavender flowers in summer. One can use it as an insect repellent on one's self, on one's animals, and if necessary on the dog's bed and such. Just pluck stems and rub them around your neck, up and down your arms, and around your ankles as you go into the garden, and voila! Bugs stay away! Dogs can be helped by rubbing their faces and ears.

It's not easy to find in local nurseries, but I am taking on the task of talking to local nursery owners to see if they will stock it. It can also be raised from seed; once you get a plant and it has grown, the prostrate stems root at intervals and you can propagate it from those shoots. TRY IT - YOU MIGHT LIKE IT! Guarantee: deer flies and mosquitoes don't like it...

### FOR SALE !!

I have 2 extra men's polo shirts for sale in size medium with our JCC/W logo. One is white and the other is dark green. If you are interested in either, contact Carol Fryer, [cfryer@cox.net](mailto:cfryer@cox.net).



Dark green

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## MULCH, MULCH, MULCH

BY HELEN HAMILTON

Several beauty-berry (*Callicarpa americana*) shrubs are growing in the Williamsburg Botanical Garden, the Ellipse Garden in Freedom Park. Can you guess from the photos of the plants which have received six inches of leaf mulch, and which are growing in essentially bare soil?

We are using fresh leaf mulch in the Ellipse Garden to hold in moisture, keep the plants cool, and suppress weed growth. While any mulch is much better than none at all, the ground-up leaves serve to mimic the natural environment in which the Garden exists, with heavy leaf fall from the surrounding deciduous trees. Several companies in the area will sell the fresh leaf mulch at about \$25/cubic yard.



## BOOK REVIEW-MANAGING INSECTS AND MITES ON WOODY PLANTS: AN IPM APPROACH

BY JEANNE MILLIN

This Manual was released last year by the University of MD by two Entomologists, one of whom is an Extension Specialist. Mike Raupp spoke at the VA MG College meeting in June. He is an interesting speaker and knowledgeable about the IPM approach to insect control. This manual has a couple of informative additions to the literature that make it a useful reference guide for MG's. The front has a Pest Monitoring Timetable letting us know what pests to look for during each month and good lists of insect and mite pests and their preferred host plants. The remainder of the manual is an alphabetical list of pests by name and a two page chart for each with a list of approved pesticides, damage symptoms, monitoring techniques and control strategies. This is a manual that should be helpful to both our diagnostic and help desk volunteers. Two copies have been purchased, one for reference by the Landscape Love program volunteers, the other will remain for reference in the library. The call number for this manual is SB5907 D.

## WHEN IT'S HOT OUTSIDE...



BY AILENE BARTLETT

If you're a TV nut, like I am sometimes, then you probably know that there are a few programs which are of interest to gardeners. On Saturday at 12:30, on WHRO-TV, there's "Victory Garden". It's not as good as the original Roger Swain edition, but still interesting, and it is followed at 1 p.m. by "P. Allen Smith's Garden Home". Smith is a landscape designer, and this centers around his new farm in, I think, Arkansas. Good shots of the gardens, buildings, and old breeds of animals and fowl.

On Sunday at 1 p.m. on WCVE is "Virginia Farming", hosted by Jeff Ishee who is, I think, a former Extension agent. He covers all sorts of farming activities, markets, exhibits, etc. He's followed by "America's Heartland", which covers farm and home activities nationwide, and is a good feeler for what's going on among gardeners and farmers all over the country.

On the last Tuesday of the month, on WCVE again, at 8 p.m., is "Virginia Home Grown", hosted by Richard Nunnally, a former Extension agent. He and his co-host visit several gardens/farms in the State, and also entertain calls from viewers. You get to view some interesting private gardens, as well as public ones like Maymont and Ginter.

TRY 'EM - YOU MIGHT LIKE 'EM! (Nice break, too, from weeding, etc. - sit yourself down with a glass of iced tea and ENJOY!)

# The Colonial Master Gardener August 2010

## E2 TRAINING

BY KARI ABBOTT



E2 training for the upcoming school year (2010-2011) will be held Tuesday, 24 August 2010. This training is highly recommended before you go into the classroom for ANYONE WHO WANTS TO VOLUNTEER WITH E2. We go through the hands on materials you will be working with and the lesson plans, so it is a busy and fun day.

Training will be at the Health and Human Services Building, in the front conference room. Training will begin promptly at 9am and will last until 3pm. Advanced Training credit is awarded for this class. [Everyone is welcome!](#)

It would help to know who is coming, as you will receive materials, and make things at this workshop. Please RSVP to Kari Abbott, Project Chairperson E2 at [bearsbaskets@cox.net](mailto:bearsbaskets@cox.net).

## RISK MANAGEMENT VIDEO

If you are having trouble viewing the risk management video from our website, go to the Master Gardener website: [www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener](http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener).

Click on the *Resource tab* on the top bar, then click on *Videos* on the submenu.

Once the video screen is on your computer, you can increase the video to full screen by clicking on the symbol in the lower right corner of the bottom bar.

### *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.*

## 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.

## MELISSA'S MEADOW

BY GRACE RAYMOND

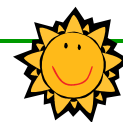
We will not be working in the meadow in August but I do hope you will come by for a visit with the birds and butterflies.

### NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

The deadline for submission of material for the [September Newsletter](#) is [Monday, August 23.](#)

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

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Aug. 5 Monthly Mtg. @ WRL; 9 a.m.; Lisa Ziegler, "Fall Planting"
- Aug. 7 Super Turf Saturday
- Aug. 23 Sept. Newsletter Deadline
- Aug. 24 E2 Training, 9 AM–3 PM
- Sept. 22 Therapeutic Gardening Symposium
- 6/21-6/26 MG College 2011

# VCE & JCC/Williamsburg Master Gardeners present...

## Healing thru Gardening

... a symposium designed for professionals, allied professionals,  
community volunteers & all caregivers for persons with special needs

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

8:00a.m. –3:30p.m.



**LOCATION:**  
James City/Williamsburg Community  
Center  
5301 Longhill Rd.  
Williamsburg, VA 23188

**COST: \$20 (includes lunch)**

**CONTINUING ED. CREDIT:**  
0.5 CEU available  
upon completion for extra charge

**PRE-REGISTRATION  
REQUIRED**



**Brochure/Registration Form available on [www.jccwmg.org](http://www.jccwmg.org) website  
For more information call Barbara Gustafson at (757-564-1888)**

If you are a person with a disability and desire assistance or other accommodations to participate in the above program, please call Virginia Cooperative Extension—James City County Office at (757)564-2170 ten days prior to event. Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



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