

# The Colonial Master Gardener

PUBLICATION OF JCC/WMASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION & VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

July 2009



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

### SPEAKERS' BUREAU

BY MINOUCHE ROBINSON



- ◆ Therapeutic Gardening
- ◆ Lawn Care
- ◆ Gardening in Virginia
- ◆ Water and Soil Conservation

In 2005, the VA Cooperative Extension agent and the Master Gardener Board decided to form a Speakers' Bureau to be available to the general public. Increasing inquiries from community organizations, schools and youth groups, garden clubs, and assisted living institutions for speakers to address a variety of horticultural topics led the Board to organize a group of master gardener volunteers who were knowledgeable and felt comfortable speaking before the public. A two-day public speaking workshop was arranged for those interested, given by an instructor from Thomas Nelson Community College.

Today, using the guidelines of the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners utilize their expertise, knowledge, and awareness to educate the public on topics including:

- ◆ Ask the Experts – a question and answer session on horticulture topics
- ◆ Children and Youth Gardening – how to set up gardens for schools, how to encourage youth participation, etc.
- ◆ Demonstrations on Container Gardening
- ◆ Landscape Design – an overview of the design process and how to determine the best plantings for the site.
- ◆ The Master Gardener Program – How to apply, explanation of the curriculum, what is expected from new interns, membership and recertification requirements.
- ◆ Specific and Related Horticulture Issues

Typically, requests for speakers are heaviest in the late winter and early spring season. Most groups need a talk to last between 45 minutes and an hour. The majority are morning or evening meetings. We average about 5 requests a month during this time and then throughout the rest of the year there are about 1 or 2 a month.

At this point in time, there are about 15 master gardeners participating in the Speakers' Bureau. **We need more.** Many have developed power point presentations for their topic and are willing to share. The JCC/W website lists quite a variety of topics, but in all honesty, we do not have speakers that can address all these topics.

Interested MG's are welcome to accompany one of the members of Speakers Bureau to get a feel for how easy it really is. Remember, **you** most likely know more that your audience.... they have come to us for help and guidance. With that in mind, all programs must use the guidelines of the Virginia Cooperative Extension. It's a wonderful way to fulfill our mission: Learn, educate, and communicate environmentally sound horticultural practices to the community.

If you are interested, please contact Minouche Robinson, Speakers' Bureau Chair at 258-3467 or [minouche@cox.net](mailto:minouche@cox.net).

## **NO JULY MEETING!**

### **Next Monthly Meeting:**

**August 6, 9 a.m.,  
Williamsburg Regional  
Library.**

**Helen Hamilton, JCCW  
Master Gardener, will  
present:  
Tidewater Plants.**

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## SUPER TURF SATURDAY



Super Turf Saturday will be held on August 15 at Lafayette High School. Registration is at 8 AM with program starting at 8:30 AM. The Virginia Tech turf team will cover all pertinent topics on the general theme of Sustainable Turf. Sessions will go until Noon followed by a panel of the entire team answering any turf question. We will wrap up at 1:00 PM. There is no charge this year. We are asking folks to pre-register by contacting Barb Foley on 564-2179.

2009  
MG Board

*President:*  
Linda Lucas  
565-0335

*VP Projects:*  
Jeanne Millin  
258-4724

*VP Internal Ed:*  
Carol Fryer  
220-0759

*VP Administration:*  
John Giffin  
345-5209

*Secretary:*  
Pat Janot  
221-0289

*Treasurer:*  
Linda Wever  
566-0286

*VMGA Reps:*  
Jim & Nelda Pressly  
220-1858

*Past President:*  
Dave Banks  
258-8632

*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.

## MESSAGE FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

BY LINDA LUCAS

Greetings to all...

On behalf of your JCC/W MG Association Board—those continuing to serve and those of us who are brand new—I'd like to thank members who are going off the Board after their years of service. Pat Crowe, Class of 2005, has been our association's dedicated secretary for the past 2 years, diligently taking notes on her laptop and getting them out to members, plus handling all the other association correspondence as well. Pat Janot, Class of 2007, will be taking over Pat Crowe's duties. Sarah Dougherty, Class of 2006, might not have expected to put her math skills to work when she became an MG, but she stepped right up to the challenge of handling our association finances for the past two years and has done a great job. Linda Wever, Class of 2008, is stepping into Sarah's shoes. Charlie Clapper, Class of 2002, has worn many hats since becoming an MG...newsletter editor, Board VP of Programs, President and Past President. He's no doubt looking forward to cutting back on the number of meetings to attend each month after all his years on the Board. Many thanks go to Pat, Sarah and Charlie for their dedication to our association.

Dave Banks and I did our MG training under Sally Sissel and are both Class of '03. Dave got right to work organizing our MG website. He then served as Board Treasurer for two years and President for two more. Fortunately for all of us, he's still our webmaster, and he'll continue on the Board as Past President to give us "newbies" guidance.

I'm looking forward to working closely with all of you in conjunction with VCE to keep us focused on our mission of learning and sharing our knowledge of sound horticulture practices with our community. It's a challenge, but the mission is important; and, with the variety of programs we have and the wealth of talents that you all bring to our association, we're up to that challenge! See you in August!

## NEW KENT VCE MOVE

Later this summer, the New Kent VCE will be moving to the old NK Middle School in New Kent Courthouse, off Route 249. After the move, the new address will be:

11809 New Kent Highway, Suite 1  
New Kent, VA 23124

Carole's Garden will remain at 4301 Olivet Church Road, Providence Forge, until the end of the summer so we can continue to harvest, but then we will be relocating the garden to the new location as well. MGs will be invited to help in the garden relocation, probably in the early fall.

## GARDEN TOUR

BY SUE LIDDELL

Fourteen George Reid/Shields volunteers met with Laura Viancour in front of King's Arms Tavern recently for a tour of nearby gardens. Laura gave us some background on how the gardens were first laid out by Arthur Shurcliff and how the perception of Colonial gardens has changed over the years. We visited the Alexander Purdie Garden which is an authentic Colonial garden but not appropriate to the owner. The formal garden, based on English gardens such as those at Hampton Court, was appropriate for the gentry, but not for a printer and newspaper publisher. The four-square garden with brick walk and yaupon holly topiaries is a high maintenance garden. An interesting feature is the Service Berry, so named because it was one of the few trees in bloom when the ground thawed in the spring and graveside services could be held. It is also called Shadblow because the Shad are running at time of blossoming.

We moved on to King's Arms, where Laura explained how the typical Colonial lot was divided with a work yard behind the house, a kitchen or pleasure garden, an orchard and paddock, all divided by fencing to keep animals in their place. At the King's Arms the work yard has become an eating area with an arbor over the tables. The kitchen garden is a little more elaborate than that at Shields. The peas are held up by an ornamental teepee rather than sticks, and fruit trees are espaliered on a low fence. The garden is divided into five parts, four squares with a circle in the middle. A Chokeberry is the center of attraction. This versatile plant can take sun or shade, dry or wet soil, has delicate white flowers in the spring turning into red berries and finally beautiful fall color.

At the gardens of Weatherburn's Tavern and Orlando Jones, we saw the difference in plantings of the working man and the gentry and learned more of the methods used to accurately present Colonial life to the public. The tour was a break from the vegetable work day and especially helpful to those in the Meet the Gardener program.



Garden Tour

# The Colonial Master Gardener July 2009

## “AND THE WINNER IS...”

BY PAT CROWE AND DIANA NOLAN

For several years we have been on a special mission; at times, we considered our assignment a “mission impossible.” This has been one of the best kept secrets: a VCE project under the auspices of our former extension agent, Leanne DuBois, and carried out by the two of us. Little did we know when we became Master Gardeners we might find ourselves recruited for “the bench.” In other words, judges.

One of our well-known communities in Williamsburg decided to conduct a contest for the “Yard of the Year.” The Chair of their Landscaping Committee approached our extension agent for assistance from a few Master Gardeners. “Would you be the judge?” he asked. After our initial enthusiasm for a new project lapsed into the reality of the challenge ahead, we began to plan our criteria for selecting a well-landscaped yard among 170 properties, in addition to finding a mutual gap in our schedules to meet and to keep abreast of the ensuing hot weather.

Armed with ideas from our extension agent, the community themselves, and numerous websites, we compiled a list of criteria we felt suited not only this community, but most others in the area; one we felt could be used again and again, based upon a system of points awarded for each item on the criteria list. We were off to a good start.

We compared our calendars and finally came up with a day we could work together. Check off chore number one. This was to be a drive-by judging, observing only the front yard. We quickly realized

we would need a map of the streets since the roads intertwined and looped around with streets of the same name crossing themselves. The only way to identify the homes were by the house numbers, which were not easy to distinguish. On our first drive-by we selected about 25 yards as finalists. This was not so easy since many yards are beautiful.

On our second drive-by we narrowed the field to five. The third drive-by a few days later produced our winner and runner-up. The winner receives the “yard of the year” award in the form of a sign to be placed on their front lawn for the coming year, as well as a cash prize of \$100.

This community has designed a method (using the contest) to encourage all homeowners to improve their yards, use drought-resistant plants, maintain their property, and take pride in their neighborhood. Many homeowners have gone a few steps further, tackling drainage problems or dealing with overgrown shrubs.

To provide guidance to the homeowners, we prepared a list of common landscaping mistakes which was posted on their website. As Master Gardeners who are proponents of these steps, we are pleased to have been involved in this community activity, and feel confident that the community benefits from their enthusiastic efforts, while encouraging other neighborhoods to learn and profit from this achievement.

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*

## MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE

BY SUE LIDDELL

Angela Cingale, Carol Fryer, Barbara and Art Gustafsen, Carlotte Kline, Linda Lucas, Anne Nielsen, and I attended MG College last month. After spending a day working with all sorts of insects I would like to have a bug’s view of the week’s events. Using the compound eye of the dragonfly would be the only way I could keep track of everything. Linda attended the Coordinator’s Classes. Anne, Carol and I were on the same tour of the Arboretum but after that I saw them only at the general meetings.

Insects were on the menu one morning, along with flowers and of course trees, since Tree Steward Training was highlighted this year. It was a treat to hear Bonnie Appleton in general session and again



as part of the Arboretum tour. Poisonous plants and more trees completed my schedule. We had two evenings where the wine flowed freely and hopefully money flowed as freely into the Endowment Fund. Brag night posters were on view, not only posters but three dimensional displays and changing photo screens. Talking with MG’s from other jurisdictions gave us new ideas to bring back. We all learned much that will be helpful in our MG activities. It was a great experience on a beautiful campus. See you there next year.

MELISSA’S  
MEADOW

BY GRACE  
RAYMOND

We will gather early (8 a.m.) on July 16. Bring drinking water along with your clippers and weed buckets. See you there!



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## FARM TOUR A SUCCESS

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Taking Root Farm Tour in New Kent on Sunday, June 28 was a big success, thanks to many JCC/W Master Gardeners! The New Kent Virginia Cooperative Extension Office thanks all the JCC/W MG volunteers who helped. Over 200 people visited five sites along Route 106 from the vineyards at New Kent Winery to the giant greenhouse at Atlantic Growers, with stops in between at Poplar Springs Farm, Cedar Grove Stables, a Buy Local Market and the MG help desk at the New Kent Visitor's Center.

The NK VCE staff (Paul Davis, Patty Townsend and Mary Mills) organized the event and many MGs provided information, parking assistance, and general support at all 5 sites. Thanks go to Teresa Coyne, Rosemarie Brennan, Marcia Bailey, Margene Hartsough, Sue Voigt, Nancy Harris, Jeannie Gilman, Dwight Johnson, Don Bowman, Carol Fryer, Ailene Bartlett, Anne Zepkin, Ray Mindrup, Kathryn Nice and Sandi Gauthier, plus friends and supporters of the VCE John Yatshe, Jack Lee, Dona Skinner, Dick Harris, Kenny Gilman, David Mills, and Will Townsend.

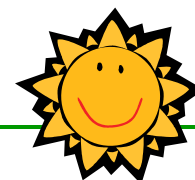


**EDITORS NOTE:** The deadline for submission of material for the July MG Newsletter is [July 20](#). Please send to Cathy Lohwater, newsletter editor, at [cathy.lohwater@cox.net](mailto:cathy.lohwater@cox.net) or call 757-259-1133. Comments and questions about the newsletter are also welcome. Thank you.

## Upcoming Dates to Remember

- **July 11** Farmers' Market: Pruning
- **July 20** August MG Newsletter Deadline
- **July 25** Farmers' Market: Incredible Edibles
- **Aug. 6** Monthly MG Meeting @ WRL; Helen Hamilton, "Tidewater Plants"
- **Aug. 8** Farmers' Market: Therapeutic Gardening
- **Aug. 15** Super Turf Saturday
- **Aug. 22** Farmers' Market: Plant Propagation

## 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).

## 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.