

# The Colonial Master Gardener

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

June 2008

**PLANTS GALORE 2008 PLANT SALE COMMITTEE: REBECCA SUTTON, BARBARA GUSTAFSON, AILENE BARTLETT, LOIS ENLOW, DAN TEVLIN**

The Plant Sale committee would like to thank the many Master Gardeners and friends who made this year's Plant Sale very successful. We started in the late fall with one of several workshops. The first was the Propagation workshop headed by Jim and Nelda Pressly. Jim stressed the point that potting up plants early and in



MG and VNPS volunteers gather before the sale.

clean pots was very important for the health and sale of the plants. We saw the results in a near 90% increase in clean pots and clearly marked tags on many of the donated plants. Thank you, members!

The second workshop, Starting Plants From Seeds by Jerry Babski, Linda Lucas and Debbie Secrist gave us many tips on starting plants, as well as getting us to work as a team with our members fortunate enough to own greenhouses and willing to share them with those of us less fortunate. Jerry, Debbie and Linda had us running out of the workshop and to the nearest seed store to start our seeds. Sally Sissel was the winner with almost 80% success in germination! We did not have enough small pots for all her dill. The vegetables and herbs our members

grew were in great demand at the sale; next year we could probably sell more. We strongly recommend another workshop like this next year; it was a rewarding experience for all involved.

What can we say about Hypertufa except that we had fun and made a mess under the direction of Jim and Nelda Pressly. We thought they were a great asset to the plant sale but our customers did not. Angela Cingale donated two more hypertufas to our five so carrying them around was a workout eventually they all sold and no money was lost on this venture. Perhaps if we had had this in the fall, giving them a chance to age over the winter so we could have displayed them planted, our customers would have been more interested. Something to think about.

We did not have quite as many tallies as last year, but seemed to have made around the same amount, around \$4,000. Not bad for a half-day sale and, as our main fundraiser, more than adequate for financing our projects and programs. We had over 60 volunteers who worked the week before and at the plant sale itself. Add that to those who, by attending the workshops, donated both their time and many seedlings. Plus the dependable assistance of Lise Kline who created the poster and identification pins we all wore; Alice Kopinitz who revamped the plant sale banner she created last year; all who participated in the digs and brought in potted plants from their gardens, and the Native Plant Society members with whom we worked so closely.

Again thanks to all the Master Gardeners and Interns who put in many hours before and the day of the sale to make the 2008 Plants Galore a success.



An interested crowd during the sale.



## Next Monthly Meeting

June 5, 9:00 am,  
Williamsburg  
Regional Library,  
*Water quality in local  
streams and ponds:  
the best (and worst)  
in Williamsburg,*  
Randy Chambers,  
PhD, Biology  
Department,  
College of William  
and Mary

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**EDITORS NOTE:** The deadline for submission of material for the July Newsletter is **June 23**. 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.

2007-2008  
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## Internal Education News Jean Winters

*"Cultivators of the earth are the most virtuous and independent citizens."*

Thomas Jefferson  
(shared by ornithologist Bill Williams)

As our cultivation of flowers, fruits, vegetables and turf moves on, perhaps we can remember our virtuosity and independence as citizens and custodians of our environment.

We enjoy our gardening and treasure all that makes it possible. We're grateful to be living in a part of the world which is relatively safe from the devastation felt in other parts of our planet Earth. All that sadness makes us want to be the best custodians we can be of our environment here. In that vein, our speaker this month will be Randy Chambers from The College of William and Mary. He will address the topic "Water quality in local streams and ponds: the best (and worst) in Williamsburg".

At this meeting we want to honor our Emeritus members and Interns...those who have been with us for a long time and those who have recently joined our fold. Cookies and punch will be served during our intermission time. Please plan to be a part of this celebration.

As my tenure comes to a close, I want to thank our membership for the support and interest you have shared with me. Education is an on-going responsibility of the VP of Education, of course, and I have tried to make it a worthwhile contribution for

all of you. When the new Education committee was formed several months ago, I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the "team". We have met several times and have gradually formulated new ideas for programs and trips. That all takes time, but "many hands have made light work" for me. Many thanks, "team"!

I am sorry to say, however, that I was very disappointed with our May program and have heard that others felt the same. I was responsible for that selection and should have known more about the content. It was, however, gratifying to see so many hands raised when I asked how many of you have worked with our therapeutic gardening opportunities. Bravo!...and my thanks to you!

In closing, I know you will support Carol Fryer as she takes my place. The committee members have agreed to continue with their contributions as well. It is my hope that favorable, and perhaps not so favorable, reactions to programs, etc., will be made known to Carol and/or members of the committee. Such responses help to keep us on track. We learn from our mistakes. We don't want the rows to be too hard to hoe!

Our July 3rd meeting will be held at Freedom Park. We will see and hear about native plants in the Botanical Garden and environs. We suggest that you bring bag lunches and drinks, folding chairs and hats. We will provide a refreshing dessert! More details to follow.

Happy gardening and remember your virtuosity!

## A Very Special June Meeting

A celebration will be held during our June 5 meeting. During the break, a reception will be held where we will honor not only the Class of 2008 but also our most experienced Master Gardeners. We hope everyone will attend to recognize our most experienced members as well as the newest members of our organization.

The twelve emeritus Master Gardeners in the James City/Williamsburg Master Gardener Organization who will be honored are:

Jean Barter  
Carl Brown  
Don Demmert  
Hildegard Demmert  
Dale Firestone  
Audrey Hoitsma  
Duane McSmith  
Jack Rascoe  
Rudy Roberts  
Courtney Strang  
Robert Strang  
Virginia Warren

# The Colonial Master Gardener June 2008

## WATER WORKSHOP KUDOS

Congratulations to the Water Workshop team. Great job everyone! Larry Foster, the General Manager of JCSA, was in attendance and passed along this congratulatory statement:

*This is a belated congratulation on the very successful Water Quality/Conservation Seminar held on Saturday. What a GREAT job by all.*

*You guys are a great example that we can make a difference!!!!*

*I had an old, wise friend – my best friend's father-in-law - who told me that its our respon-*

*sibility to leave our community better than we found it. Saturday's efforts was a wonderful demonstration of that philosophy. On behalf of all of James City County – and beyond – Thank You to all.*

*When I grow up I want to be just like you guys.*

Larry Foster  
General Manager  
James City Service Authority

## VMGA NEWS ANNE ODLE

The 21st Annual Master Gardener College will take place at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg from June 17-22. Land Care Steward training will be featured this year.

Visit

[www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardner/mgcollege.htm](http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardner/mgcollege.htm) for registration info.

Congratulations to Susan Giandomenico for receiving our unit's \$100 scholarship to MG College. Susan, from the class of 2008, has already completed all intern hours, and is a role model to all MG's.

Way to go Susan!

Donations of garden items are still needed for the MG College Silent Auction benefiting the VMGA Endowment Fund.



VMGA memberships expire in May. Current VMGA members will receive email notification. Visit VMGA for benefits of joining for \$12 annually/\$120 Lifetime.

If you are interested in caravanning to Blacksburg for the MG College, please contact Anne Odle at [anneodle@cox.net](mailto:anneodle@cox.net) or 259-9025.

## OF INTEREST TO VA MGS

The Virginia Gardener newsletter is still available and is published bi-monthly. A one-year subscription costs \$5.00. If you would like to subscribe, send a check made payable to Treasurer, Virginia Tech to:

The Virginia Gardener Newsletter  
Department of Horticulture  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0349

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

While at the Water Workshop in May, several people asked for the name of the book I used for listing my herb listings. The book was "Your Backyard Herb Garden" by Miranda Smith. I told to go into our website and I would put it there. Now I hope they will.

Caryl LeFever

## 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.

## SPIDERWORT Helen Hamilton

*Tradescantia virginiana*  
Virginia Native Plant Society's  
Wildflower of the Year 2008

The first gardener to grow this plant in cultivation was John Tradescant, gardener to Charles the First of England and a subscriber to the Virginia Company – this is the origin of the plant's name. John's son traveled to Virginia in the 1630s and sent spiderwort back to England where it became part of the English cottage gardens.

Spiderwort can be a good indicator of environmental problems since a high sensitivity to pollution and radiation causes it to mutate quickly. The hairs on the stamens have long been used in botany classes, because the flow of protoplasm can be viewed through a microscope. These hairs give the plant the common name, "wort" being the old England word for plant. Also, the sap from the broken stem forms filaments like a spider's web or the angular leaf arrangement suggest a squatting spider.

Along with lilacs, ribbon grass and some shrub roses, spiderworts are often found in abandoned gardens. Each flower lasts only a day, but new blossoms appear over a long period of time. The spent blossoms do not fall to the ground – they seem to melt off the plant, due to enzyme activity. The three petals are usually shades of purple and blue, but today even rose, pink, and white cultivars are offered by the nursery trade. Narrow, sword-shaped, but floppy, leaves arise from succulent stems, and plants range between one and two feet in height. After flowering is over, the leaves become even more floppy; they can be cut almost to the ground for a second show of flowers. Propagation is by division or seed. Flowering occurs April-July.

Although able to take full sun, spiderworts will adapt to

partial shade and are not only handsome border plants, but very effective when planted against walls. This plant adapts well to cultivation and is easy to grow in somewhat acid fertile loam, tolerating dry to moist conditions. Very adaptable, it has been seen under deep shade of oaks, on a sandy bank that gets scorching afternoon sun, and in moist, peaty soil near ferns. In the wild, spiderwort inhabits dry upland forests, rocky open woods, and wood edges, so providing the plant with a similar habitat will help establishment in the home garden. The plant can become aggressive, but thinning and pulling unwanted seedlings keeps it under control.



Unless acquired from a wildflower nursery, the plants sold today are usually a series of hybrids. Natural hybrids do occur. Today there are more than 30 cultivars: 'Snow Cap' has pure white flowers, and 'Valor' bears deep reddish purple flowers, both on 20-inch stems. 'Pauline' is pink-flowered on 12-inch stems, and 'Concord Grape' grows 18 inches high with dark bluish-green leaves contrasting with the beautiful purple flowers.

Three species of *Tradescantia* occur throughout much of eastern North America. In Virginia, *T. virginiana* is found in counties west of Richmond, and

southeast of Tidewater; *T. ohiensis* grows in Virginia Beach and the western mountainous counties; *T. subaspera* has been located in the southwestern counties. These three species differ in the length and appearance of the leaves and flower color. (See [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org) for a full botanical description of *Tradescantia* species.) Spiderwort ranges from New England to Georgia, Minnesota, and Missouri.

Species of *Tradescantia* appear on lists of both edible and poisonous plants; minor skin irritations have resulted in some people from contact with the plant. Although the leaves and flowers have been reported edible, caution is advised before ingesting any wild plant.

Bumblebees are the principal pollinators for all three species of spiderwort.

What happened to all you wildflower lovers out there? Not many workers bees showed up at **Melissa' Meadow** on the third Thursday of May (15th). I look forward to seeing lots of folks on the 19th of June. Go write it on your calendar now, before you forget. Come around 8:30 and stay as long as you like. Weeding and deadheading will be our main jobs.

# The Colonial Master Gardener June 2008

## NOTES FROM OUR HORTICULTURE EXTENSION AGENT LEANNE DUBOIS

### Pathology Clinic



The Plant Pathology clinic began on May 12 and will run until June 16. The clinic is held on Mondays with an average of six volunteers taking part each week to diagnose plant problems and learn about plant diseases. This is a trial year for the clinic but gauging the

available space on my desk this spring, I think we have another winner. Thanks to all the MG pathology “specialist” team who have volunteered this year.

### Bees in Turf

One of the samples that came into the clinic was a bag of dirt (aka *dirt bag*, as it was affectionately called). This sample stumped the clinic participants but after questioning the client revealed that the clumps of soil on her lawn were from the Ground Nesting or Solitary Bees. This is a common problem this time of year and a temporary nuisance in lawns. The female bees excavate the ground to form a nest where a single egg is laid. The turf is usually only minimally disturbed. The ground they choose is usually low in organic matter and well drained. As with most all bees, they are excellent pollinators so we don’t recommend destroying them and they typically will not sting. To discourage their nesting, heavy watering the area will help.

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/lawn/note100/note100.html>

### New Kent County Happenings Judy Hansen, Vice President Projects

In late April, I drove out to see the New Kent County office of Virginia Cooperative Extension, to see what was happening there. Leanne Dubois had told me about the demonstration garden there and I wanted to see it for myself. I was greeted by three of our enthusiastic Master Gardeners, Jeannie Gillman, Mary Mills, and Sue Voigt.

They showed me the wonderful vegetable garden, all in raised beds with deer fencing around the outside. The strawberry bed looked full of blossoms and fruit.

They gave me a tour of the grass plots; there are five of them which show different fescues, zoysia grass and Bermuda grasses. There are also some long plots of wildflower mixes, some with red clover. These are experiments by Paul Davis, the Agriculture Extension Agent and the Soil and Water Conservation District. It was very interesting.

The demonstration vegetable garden has been well documented with an excel spreadsheet with the name of each plant, its family, companion plants, spacing and planting needs, disease and pest controls and other notes. I have put their spreadsheet on our website if you would like to view it. There is also a layout of the fenced vegetable garden which is also on our website.

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

The garden will be written up as a proposed project for your future consideration. It is hoped that it will give people in the New Kent County area a place to learn about vegetable gardening. The upcoming Farm Tour will have a stop at the New Kent County office and the public will have a chance to see this wonderful garden. I encourage you to stop by when you are in the area to see what is happening in New Kent County.



MGs Sue Voight and Mary Mills working in the strawberry bed at New Kent County VCE.

## **Milestone Awards** 500 Hour Milestone ( MG College Discount: \$50 )

The commitment of all our dedicated Master Gardeners to community outreach is truly amazing. Last year our MG volunteers contributed 18,965 hours with over 40,000 contacts reported. The community benefits greatly from your outreach and I know you all gain personal satisfaction from helping others who appreciate and grow from the experiences you share.

Below is a list of all Master Gardeners who have earned milestone awards in 2007. Please note that some have earned dual awards. When you receive such an award you are qualified for a discount at MG College. The amount of the discount varies with the size of the award and can be used in the year succeeding the award or the second year. Also, if you attend MG College you will be recognized for your efforts at a special milestone ceremony. I hope you will consider attending Master Gardener College to receive your award in person. This is the largest group of recipients I have ever seen and it would be great to share our enthusiasm with other MG's across the state and have a large representation this year to show our JCC/W MG pride. Congratulations to you all.

### **JCC/W MG Hour Awards for 2007**

#### **4000 Hour Milestone ( MG College Discount: \$100 )**

Kari Abbott  
Ann Deforest  
Barbara S. Gustafson

#### **2000 Hour Milestone (MG College Discount: \$100 )**

George Anderson  
William Baetz

#### **1000 Hour Milestone ( MG College Discount: \$75 )**

Richard Bunger  
Mary Ann Carlson  
Dale Firestone  
William Hopkins  
Jim Kearns  
Mary Ann Kimminau  
Genrose Lashinger  
Linda Lucas  
Robert Winters

Patricia Crowe  
Leanne Dubois  
Lois Enlow  
Carol Fryer  
Elizabeth Fugate  
Claire Gross  
Judy Hansen  
James Jenkins  
Kim League  
Ruth Murphy  
Lyn Natanski  
Richard Strenkowski  
Toddy Voorhees  
Helen Walter

#### **250 Hour Milestone ( MG College Discount: \$ 25 )**

Beverly Baker	Ruth E. Schultz
Marv Braman	Barbie Siegel
Susan Burkart	Jacqueline Winther
Jarl Christensen	Robert Winther
Nancy Cornwell	Donna Xander
Jane Davis	
Leanne DuBois	
Carol Fryer	
Marv J. Gilman	
Nancy Green	
Nancy Harris	
Reba Hazelwood	
James Jenkins	
James F. Kavitz	
Lise Kline	
Judy Mays	
Denis M. Mehigan	
Ruth Murphy	
Anne Nielsen	
Sheila Nigro	
Diana C. Noland	
Anne Odle	
Donald Parker	
Susan Quick	
Catherine Ripley	
Jean Ripley	
Thomas Rodgers	
Mary Liz Sadler	

### **JCC/W MG Hour Awards for 2006 who did not receive an award in 2007**

#### **4000 Hour Milestone**

Ailene Bartlett  
Sue Liddell

#### **1000 Hour Milestone**

Jean Barter	Charlie Clapper
Angela Cingale	Lynn Flood

#### **500 Hour Milestone**

Ralph Ashton	Alice Kopinitz
David Banks	Becky Morgan
Helen Hamilton	Pat Rathke
Rebecca Sutton	

#### **250 Hour Milestone**

Virginia Banks  
Carol Conner  
Linda Merslich  
Martha Millhouse  
Susan Powell