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The Latest Dirt



Aug /Sept/ Oct 2006

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

One of my favorite authors, Gladys Taber, describes September at her Connecticut home this way: "From the picket fence I look up the hill to the mailbox and see the wave of goldenrod, accented with the purple of wild asters. It gives me a sense of sadness, lovely as it is, for goldenrod is the forerunner of autumn. The bright cooler weather is a joy, and soon the valley will blaze with glory. And yet I find myself saying, "Stay a little, Summer. Do not go!""

A

There is something about September that makes me feel that I must now DO something! There are perennials to be put out and spring bulbs to plant. This is our first fall on our property and there are flower beds to be put in and seasoned over the winter, and projects too numerous to be listed. In other words, I must get out there while the weather is cool and DO something!

C

There are those of you who are lucky enough to have potting sheds. I hope to have one someday also and here are two phrases I am going to stencil somewhere in that potting shed: "Carpe Ritula" ("Seize the Spade") and "How lovely is the silence of growing things." This is from an article in the April issue of "Better Homes and Gardens."

R

Our MGACRA board welcomes three new members: Beth and John Elkins, King George representatives; Anne Kline, Stafford representative, and Alma Withers, Fredericksburg representative. Our MGACRA board contains some truly dedicated hard workers. Here are a few I want to especially thank: Stan Zack, who takes over as "The Latest Dirt" editor; Ann Gorrell, who does so many jobs I would probably leave something out and Tina Will, who has come up with interesting speakers for our general meetings every month. A big thank you to our entire MGACRA board!

- Linda Dunn

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER MGACRA BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

August

The MGACRA board met on August 2, 2006 at the Stafford County Extension Office. Some changes in board officers were announced. Cori Heden is stepping down as editor of The Latest Dirt, and Stan Zack will be taking her place. Ann Kline will be replacing Stan as area representative for Stafford County. Vacant positions for area representatives have been filled by Beth and John Elkins for King George, and Alma Withers for Fredericksburg.

MGACRA had an exhibit at the Fredericksburg Fair this past summer. They are already planning for next year's exhibit with a theme of what plants were present to greet Jamestown settlers. Next year is the 400th anniversary of Jamestown's founding.

Planning was begun for the 2007 budget and nominating committee for 2007 officers.

Guy Mussey announced that classes for new Master Gardeners will begin September 12 at the Extension Office. He also announced that Regina Prunty will be beginning a Master Naturalist Course in the fall.

There were reports from various area representatives. One item of note is that Caroline County has harvested 130 lbs of cukes and squash, 33 lbs of potatoes, 27 lbs of tomatoes, 10 lbs of butternut squash, and 5 lbs of eggplant so far. They provide food for the Food Bank.

September

The board met on September 6, 2006. Plans were made for the 2007 nominating committee and budget. Committee chairs are to submit budget requests for consideration at the October board meeting.

General meetings were discussed. October will be a plant exchange.

November and December meetings will be held at the Fredericksburg Regional Library. November program will be a talk by Holly Schemmer on 18th century gardens, and will include the election of officers and a silent auction. The December meeting date has been moved to December 13 and will be a reception for new members.

Betty Marcum announced that the Hope House Tree Festival will be held at the new Expo and Conference Center from November 30 to December 10. MGACRA will be decorating a tree for it.

First Saturday in the Garden programs are continuing.

Laurie Clarkston reported that the wreath making workshops will be held in December. She is also planning a topiary workshop for later.

- Joan Levendar

FREDERICKSBURG FAIR 2007

Gee, summer has just finished, and while the Fredericksburg Fair 2007 seems like such a long way off, even now, we're already planning for next year's Fredericksburg Fair 2007 design. Laurie has previous commitments so I'm taking over. In light of the Jamestown 400th year celebration, our next year's theme will be "The Natives Who Greeted The Colonists" (Plants that is!).

I'm having a planning meeting on Oct. 25, 7pm, at the Rowser Building. Please, if anyone is interested,

please come, especially those who are into native plants! I have lots of ideas, but I do need help. Again, it's a great opportunity for those that need hours to fulfill your yearly Master Gardener hours. Research time on native colonial horticulture counts as well. I'd really like to get the Native Plant Society involved!! Does anyone have any pull there? I know you want to help make our Master Gardeners fair entry shine again, so please contact me at

jal22407@adelphia.net or call me at 540.786.8703.

- Judy Little



Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

Master Gardener Class Facilitator

I would like the names of some of you volunteers to serve substitute facilitators for the on-going Master Gardener Class. Every once in a while a signed-up volunteer will have an emergency or the like and can't attend the day as planned. The facilitator job is very easy: you will need to arrive about 8:30, set out the drinks (coffee, tea, juice and water), make sure everyone remembers to sign in, help handing things out if needed, put out the snacks for break and clean up. Your time will count towards your volunteer hour commitment. Please email or call me at the office. gpote@vt.edu or 540-658-8000 ex. 24.

First Saturday in the Garden-October 7

Location: University of Mary Washington, Jefferson Square (in front of Comb Hall), located just inside the college main gate off of College Avenue.

Time : 9:30—noon

Topic: *12th annual "In a Virginia Garden" Plant Exchange and Tree Care Clinic*

Presentations: At 9:30, your labeled plants will be put on a table for those involved in the exchange to examine. The exchange will follow about 45 minutes later. Come early so you don't miss out! Then at 10:30 am, join local professionals for information on tree care and a demonstration of the air-spade. We also invite you to take a self-guided tour of the trees found in this lovely arboretum.

Hope House 'Festival of Trees'

Each year Master Gardeners get

together to decorate a Christmas tree and donate it to Hope House for their "Festival of Trees" to benefit homeless women and children in the area. Last year's event raised \$60,000 for much-needed programs for the less fortunate in helping them make a transition into independent living in the community. I received a letter and instructions from the Hope House Events Coordinator announcing the Festival of Trees for 2006. The annual festival has grown into such a huge success over the past eight years that they are required to move to a larger facility. This year it will be held at the new Fredericksburg Expo and Conference Center on 2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway. The dates will be November 30th through December 10th, a week later than usual and an additional three days. Trees will be judged by area decorators, certificates awarded, and the winners announced December 1st. The winners will be posted at the Hope House web site www.hopehouse1@verizon.net web site and also posted in the local papers.

Here is your big opportunity to participate in these fabulous festivities and earn Master Gardeners' hours! But, the biggest satisfaction you can have is to know that you are helping to break the cycle of homelessness! Our theme this year is "Wild Things In The Garden" This will be an Educational Tree full of fun ornaments of wild birds, bugs, and other critters.

We need all Master Gardeners to donate items for our theme this year. We cannot put edible items on the tree. No bird seed. Here is a list of items we can use: wooden, already painted artificial bugs, turtles,

birds, bees, rabbits, deer, skunks, smooth shiny lizards, rubber spiders, bugs, and the like, and wooden beads for garlands or other garland ideas pertaining to the garden. We need to have all tree items by November 1, 2006.

Betty can be reached by -mail, sam_betty@hotmail.com or by phone, 540-898-8627 and Ann Gorrell at anngorrell@cs.com or phone 540-972-7613 Let us know that YOU can help trim the tree before it goes to the conference center. We look forward to working with you. Happy gathering!

-Betty Marcum

2007 Fredericksburg Fair

Judy Little is heading up our 2007 Fredericksburg Fair project this year and is going to need lots of help!!! This year our theme will be "The Natives who Greeted the Colonists" (Plants that is!). We'll need a nice display of native plants, and what can be done with them, landscape wise as well as easy care, etc. We also want a kids table for touching, smelling, and what ever else we can come up with, and of course, some tobacco, corn, squash, gourds and beans. A planning meeting is tentatively scheduled for the end of October. Please contact Judy at jal22407@adelphia.net or call or email me at the office if you are interested.

-Gwen Pote

Horticultural/Gypsy Moth Technician

KAY KIMMELL'S KORNER - Spotsy Master Gardeners

August:

Joe Metz, Tina Eisenhart and Glenna Witter kept the Spotsy Master Gardeners' desk afloat during August. By the time the next edition of The Latest Dirt is published, Tina, an intern in the 2005 class, will have fulfilled her service hours contract and will have become a full bloomin' Master Gardener.

Supporting the Spotsylvania Plant Clinic during August were Eileen Charters, Tina, Glenna, Julie Kay, Kay Kimmell, and Joe and Susan Metz. Through Tina's creativity and initiative the Plant Clinic resource boxes were put on wheels, making transport so much easier for all of us.

Founding member and past President of the Fredericksburg Area Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Anita Tuttle, presented "Organic Gardening" to the August general meeting of MGACRA. Anita's gardener friendly and amusing observations pushed the education hour along at warp speed.

Master Gardener and current president of the FACVNPS, Linda Chaney, will be announcing shortly the availability of potted Virginia bluebells and iris cretata as the Fall fund raising project. A potting workday is scheduled for the end of September.

That pesky urban wildlife interface confrontation between the "come heres" and the native inhabitants generates questions for the Master Gardener. Choosing

the right plant for the right place, accessing an integrated pest management program, taking the Masters Naturalist course may help you with whatever is bugging you. If you can't "do the time" then read anything you can find by Pulitzer Prize winning naturalist author Edwin Way Teale. Teale carries on the tradition of mentor with his small band of companions observing and understanding nature with a keener eye. You'll get the botanical names and the literary references that warrant the New York Times Listing of Nonfiction Books Most Likely to be Read 25 years hence.

September:

Master Gardeners who supported the Spotsylvania Farmers' Market Plant Clinic Booth clearly made a significant contribution to Extension program support within the greater Rappahannock area community. The Plant Clinic Booth represented 60% or greater of our monthly community contact totals. Our zip code tracking system showed local residents and recreation visitors from DC, Northern Virginia, and counties to the west and south using the information booth. Those of you who need service hours should call the Spotsy Master Gardener Desk, (540) 507-7570, for opportunities to fulfill your service contract. We are negotiating with Salem Church Library for a time to have a Plant Clinic information table in the lobby. The information table needs to be reliably manned with volunteers so that library clients

can reasonably expect to find a Master Gardener volunteer to help them. Last year we had an information table on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 8:45. A better arrival time is 6:00 PM. Requests for Virginia Tech laboratory service can be placed in the mail before noon on Tuesday and reach the university refrigerators before Friday. Thank you again for your hours of service to the community and Extension program support.

Halfway through the first decade of the 21st Century a new motto has begun to show up for us to ponder. Virginia Cooperative Extension "*A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University*". Virginia Tech "*Invent the Future*" and www.vt.edu is showing up on coffee mugs. "*Invent the Future*" infers action, purpose and determination. This phrase is definitely more proactive than "*Knowledge for the Commonwealth*" of the last century. Besides Commonwealth gets you redlined on the computer screen. It's time to move on with purging files that have that old century tired look. It's time to find smarter, cheaper, and easier ways to garden and pass the information on to others. Call (540) 507-7570 at the Spotsy VCE office.

- Kay Kimmell

Kay Kimmell is one of a growing number of gardeners using the Master Gardeners' desk at

WHAT TYPE OF GARDENER ARE YOU?

Ever wonder what type of gardener you are? For instance, are you a relaxed gardener with a spontaneous and casual attitude that is reflected in an evolving garden where no plans are required. Or, are you an orderly gardener who prefers to plan your garden on paper before planting. Maybe you are a principled gardener who bases your design on particular gardening practices. In a recent edition of "Fine Gardening" I ran across this quiz that I thought you might find of interest. It helps identify some of the reason we do what we do in our gardens. Enjoy!!

PART I

1. I prefer to ...
 - a. garden by myself.
 - b. garden in the company of others.
2. The garden that provides me with joy is...
 - a. a private, contemplative garden.
 - b. a garden for sociable gatherings.
3. My garden is a place that I ...
 - a. prefer to enjoy by myself.
 - b. prefer to share with family, friends, and neighbors.
4. The use of plants and objects in my garden.....
 - a. is understated.
 - b. reveals the wilder side of my personality.
5. I prefer...
 - a. a terrace that's just big enough

for an intimate twosome.

- b. a large patio for entertaining and having social gatherings.

PART II

6. I keep track of my garden by...
 - a. taking careful records and notes.
 - b. memory.
7. I prefer things that are...
 - a. tried and true.
 - b. cutting edge.
8. I am more likely to...
 - a. lay a brick path by myself.
 - b. have others install a brick path for me.
9. If money were no object, I would prefer to...
 - a. plant and maintain my garden by myself.
 - b. hire help to do the work with me.
10. I prefer to stay well informed about...
 - a. plant introductions.
 - b. design trends.

PART III

11. When I'm locating plants in my garden, I tend to place them...
 - a. where they will grow the best.
 - b. where they will look the best.
12. When I garden, I feel more comfortable...
 - a. following expert advice.
 - b. finding my own way.
13. I prefer to...
 - a. place plants in rows or geometric

patterns.

- b. choose my own whimsical pattern.
14. When I purchase a plant I...
 - a. research it ahead of time.
 - b. buy it on impulse.
15. I garden...
 - a. according to sustainable principles.
 - b. by breaking the rules in order to make it work.

PART IV

16. I design...
 - a. on paper and then plant exactly according to plan.
 - b. pretty much by intuition.
17. I tend to ...
 - a. prepare my beds before shopping for plants.
 - b. buy plants and prepare ground as I install.
18. I like my garden...
 - a. to be neat and well kept.
 - b. a little wild.
19. I tend to work on...
 - a. and finish up one project at a time.
 - b. several projects at once.
20. On a weekend morning I ...
 - a. get right down to work.
 - b. stroll around my garden to enjoy how it looks.

Check your points, below for your gardening type.

PART I

5 – 7 points: You're a Reserved Gardener.

You like to create a garden that offers calm, quiet solitude where you can meet friends on a one-on-one basis. You appreciate garden spaces that help you recharge away from the workday world.

9 – 10 points: You're an Expressive Gardener.

You prefer to create a garden with terraces, patios, decks, and porches where your gregarious personality can flourish. You express your enthusiasm and interests in your garden, and love introducing others to what you've created.

PART II

5 – 7 points: You're a Practical Gardener

You're a realist who likes facts, sensible information, and tried-and-true ideas. You are interested in creating a garden with utilitarian value, such as vegetable

and herb gardens or landscapes that attract birds and wildlife.

8 – 10 points: You're a Conceptual Gardener

You're an abstract thinker who loves the imaginative, conceptual world of unconventional ideas. Your garden shows your interest in things inventive and new. You tend to start things with zest and move on to another idea before completing the first. You stay open to change.

PART III

5 – 7 points: You're a Principled Gardener

You're a person who prefers logical ideas over flights of fancy. You prefer a garden based on scientific principles, appreciating clarity of form and structure. An environmental ethic may inform your gardening decisions.

8 – 10 points: You're a Personal Gardener

You garden through your feelings, rather than through preconceived principles. You want a harmonious space that is enjoyable for others. You try to include everyone's ideas in your designs and are unafraid to express your own.

PART IV

5 – 7 points: You're an Orderly Gardener

You prefer an organized, structured life that includes careful planning. You design your garden on paper and follow the plans. Your garden tends to be well groomed and maintained at all times.

8 – 10 points: You're a Relaxed Gardener

You prefer a casual approach to gardening, where decisions are made spontaneously, and you love to design as you go. Your garden follows no particular structure. You like a leisurely pace and enjoy being surprised.

MGACRA EXECUTIVE BOARD 2007— ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Bylaws of the MGACRA define the election of new executive board members as follows:

Article IV

Election and Duties of Officers

Voting members of the Executive Board

Section 1

The elected officers of MGACRA are the President,

Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. To serve on the Executive Board, hereinafter referred to as the “Board”, one must be an Active MGACRA member.

Section 2

The elected officers shall serve for one year. Officers shall be eligible for re-election. The officers will be elected at the November General Membership meeting preceding their term of office beginning 1 January of each year. In addition to the

Slate of Officers presented by the Nomination Committee, additional nominations may be taken from the floor and voted on the same night. Advance notice of the slate of officers must be mailed or listed in the newsletter at least 15 days before an election is held.

Nominations for the 2007 MGACRA EXECUTIVE BOARD POSITIONS ARE:

POSITION

CANDIDATE

President

Linda Dunn

Vice-President

Joe Metz

Secretary

Joan Levendar

Treasurer

John Davis

PORTER PLANT CLINIC CLOSES FOR THE SEASON

Master Gardeners held their last Plant Clinic of the summer, Tuesday August 29th, at Stafford's Porter Library. Every time I worked the clinic I learned something new and hope our customers did too! We enjoyed repeat visitors that were waiting for us to set up our tables and we had many new visitors who were just coming to the library and we engaged them in some plant banter as they passed by.

I especially enjoyed hanging out with other Master Gardeners and catching up on what they were planting in their yards and gardens and finding out about other projects they were becoming involved with.

At our last clinic I had the wonderful opportunity of volunteering with Margaret Pavella and Stan Zack. Margaret shared a beautiful design for a Memory Garden she had worked on with a student at Mountain View HS. This garden will provide a quiet peaceful area with benches and lovely plantings. This will become a place to remember Mountain View students who have passed away but are not forgotten.

I hope that any new Master Gardeners will consider volunteering at next year's plant clinics. It really is a wonderful way to use the knowledge you have gained and give back to your community. You are always paired with experienced Master Gardeners and are provided with many resources to use at the clinics. As I said before, I learned new things every time I volunteered!

Until Spring....

-Anne Kline

The Latest Dirt

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C/O Virginia Cooperative Extension
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