

"THE LATEST DIRT"

Oct-Dec 2008

Brent Heath of Brent and Becky's Bulbs, Gloucester, VA, was the guest speaker at a special the Master Gardener meeting on October 9. The selection of bulbs he brought for sale were quickly bought out, with proceeds going to the new Fredericksburg park on the site where the Arthur Lee Cossey Jr. Water Treatment Plant once stood. The Master Gardeners are landscaping the Cossey Park as a community project. Brent will donate bulbs to the Cossey project at the end of the season.

Brent had an extensive slide show with photos of over 125 plants. As he displayed the different photos, Brent described the characteristics of each plant - whether it was critter proof or critter resistant, where, when and how to plant the bulb, whether the plans would multiply or naturalize. Typically bulbs that smell bad and taste bad are critter proof, like bulbs from the allium and daffodils families, which have an onion or garlic smell. Not even deer or squirrels will eat the tops or the bulbs of daffodils. Voles and squirrels love tulips and deer love hostas, but moles are good - they eat Japanese beetle larvae. Cats are the most effective against voles and squirrels.

In the fall, bulbs should be planted when the soil temperature drops to 60 degrees so that they can root in before the ground freezes. Daffodils can be planted in lawn and must be planted in full sunlight, not under trees. When the leaves have fallen, it is deceiving and easy to forget that once the trees leaf out in the spring, the daffodils will be in the shade. Instead of digging holes for the bulbs, Brent suggested spreading a layer of good compost and covering the bulbs with another layer. He recommends compost over potting soil, which is usually a combination of peatmoss and vermiculite. Anemone corms should be soaked in water for 24 hours before they are planted.

Once the plants have bloomed, the greenery should be left until it turns yellow or brown. While it is green, it is producing food for the bulb and should not be braided or bound with rubber bands. The beds should be watered with leaf tea and dressed with compost. Brent and Becky's Bulbs does not use chemicals, finding compost and leaf tea to be not only more effective than chemicals, but less expensive too.

Many of the photos showed combinations of plants like allium with hostas or daffodils planted in lawns. By planting bulbs that bloom at different times, gardens can have something in bloom nearly year round. Most bulbs multiply and they can be divided, others actually produce seeds and naturalize. It takes about five years for bulbs to naturalize.

In early December, Brent and Becky's Bulbs will be offering bulbs at a 70 percent discount. For more information, check www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com.

Elizabeth Daly

Some Pictures taken at the sale are in the attachments.



**The following is a note from a new Master Gardener Class member:
Anna Victoria Reich**

Today, September 16, 2008 was the day that began the first day of the Master Gardeners Classes. I would like to say how happy to have signed up. What a great time to stretch the mind and gain a bunch of information from a big chunk of education that one will be receiving in the weeks to follow. Learning a new approach to gardening in Virginia, well, I have to say the change will be big. I can already say that I can not wait to dig my hands in the earth's soil and see something that I planted grow, like vegetation, a bush or a small tree. Just the first day of class, I learned that you need to know the Latin name of plants before making a purchase of whatever one decides to plant in the soil. Just this, is a great knowledge! To me, spending my time in the garden and seeing what I have planted is a blessing from learning what being a master gardener is all about. I like it! I am sure that in the following weeks the education learned will be incredible!

Thank you very much,

Anna Victoria Reich

Comment: Ms Reich has a great attitude about learning!

Sad News:

If you did not receive the information, or even if you did, it's worth repeating.

Mr. Don Saunders, a good friend and dedicated Master Gardener, who contributed many hours of talent and effort to working in the Extension Office, Chatham and a lot more, in addition to his service as president of MGACRA passed away in October. His sense of humor and efforts will be greatly missed.

Approved Minutes of the MGACRA Board Meeting Oct. 8., 2008

Stan Zack called the meeting to order at 7:02pm on Wednesday, October 8, 2008. Members present: Stan Zack, Laura Collingsworth, Anne Kline, Sara Broyles, Laurie Clarkson, George Davis III, Terry Drew Teresa Fisher, Art Florack, Ann Gorrell, Jack Green, Michelle Meyer, Gwen Pote and Tina Will.

Stan presented the minutes. The following corrections were made (underlined in italics) and the amended minutes were approved and accepted.

Linda Dunn reported the addition of John Elkins as vice President and Eileen Charters as the new Secretary for the next year. Betty Marcum will be the Chairperson for Hope House and all other officers will remain in their current positions.

The bulb sale and presentation by Brent Heath will be the main focus at the October 9th general membership meeting. A check will be given to Tina Will to purchase the bulbs and there will be an increase of 20 to 30% in the cost to make a profit. The proceeds will go to Cossey Park for trees, plants, etc.

Treasurer's report - There are a total of 81 MGACRA paid members.

Stan Zack brought up the suggestion that only one Rising Star be nominated for 2008 and recognized at the Gala in January, Laurie Clarkson said that the 2009 State Fair to be located in Caroline County, would be a big affair. Christy Brennan, Master Gardener Coordinator for the State Fair has arranged a planning meeting with the Fair officials.

It may be best that the Henrico Master Gardeners share the responsibility for the 2009 State fair.

Ann Gorrell, on behalf of Betty Marcum, updated the Board on Hope House. They are seeking donations of pine and grape wreaths. A workshop is planned for the end of October or November. Terry Drew proposed that MGACRA members start planning for a plant sale to be held in 2010. He will provide a detailed plan of action.

Laurie Collingsworth presented the Intern Mentorship Program. The concept was introduced by Karen Ehrhard. The objective is to increase the number of interns that successfully complete the MG program. Mentors will contact interns regularly, inviting them to attend events and work on projects. Jack Green has successfully mentored interns from the 2006 class and will provide the details to Laura.

A final note: As a beginner at this computer oriented newsletter, I am still learning. The next issue will be more detailed with ideas that I would like to add, but for now, I am still struggling with the format.

Try to be patient while I work out the bugs.

Thanks, Art Florack