



# Garden



Atlantic County Master Gardener Program Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 9



## Current Projects Update

- **Estell Manor gardens:** The weather has kept us from finishing the mulching/weeding activities for the fall. The next work date is Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 to 11:00. All MG's are welcome to join us. Over the winter, we'll work with the Park staff to provide input on future garden planning, MG activities, and more. – Kathy Olsen
- **Forsythe Refuge Native Garden:** Ongoing maintenance continues on Thursday mornings; join the gang anytime between 9 am and noon. – Evonne Kaminski
- **Grape Harvest:** The first batch was harvested on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for the next date.
- **Ocean Life Center in Atlantic City:** We'll be providing input on design and implementation of a high-visibility project at the Atlantic City Aquarium. We'll assess the project and set planning/work dates. If you're interested and didn't get to sign up, contact Mona. – Mona Bawgus
- **South Main Street School:** On October 4<sup>th</sup> & subsequent Wednesdays we'll shift to working directly with the students. If you're interested and didn't get to sign up, contact Mona. (See photos on page 7.) – Mona Bawgus

## Member contact updates

The August *Garden Tales* included a list of current Master Gardeners' names and email addresses.

Please add [esterose@aol.com](mailto:esterose@aol.com) to the email column for Estelle Berkowitz. If you have a changed or new email address, please send it to Anita Wagner at [wagner\\_anita@aclink.org](mailto:wagner_anita@aclink.org).

## Hot Happenings

- Oct 13 MG Association Meeting, 12:30 – 2:30; Mays Landing classroom; bring a bag lunch; see page 3 for details.
- Oct 7 NJ MG Annual Conference, New Brunswick (Saturday; carpool being arranged.)
- Oct 20 Perennial Plant Conference, Swarthmore, PA. (Friday; carpool being arranged)



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# HelpLine News and Info

## Current HelpLine Topics

Get ready for those fall-season questions from HelpLine callers. Over the past few weeks, callers asked about lawns (voles, moss, dethatching, crabgrass, grubs, and when to reseed); oak apple galls; bringing in tender plants like tropical hibiscus; and bagworms.

Over the next few weeks, expect to field more calls about lawns and bringing in houseplants; insects moving indoors as the weather gets colder; and what to do with tender plants like cannas, caladiums, and more. Review your class notes or RCRE fact sheets on fall lawn care (see below) to be ready for those questions, and check out the *Green Thumb* binder for recent *Press of Atlantic City* articles (at right) which can be shared with clients.

## We're getting well known!

Public awareness of what we offer the community is significantly increasing, thanks to all the outreach efforts at fairs, events, and your great work on the HelpLine itself. Take a look at the numbers of clients who've called or walked in, year over year:

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
May	12	82
June	19	137
July	23	98



## Lawn Care Fact Sheets

Now's the time for that all-important fall lawn care regimen and you can expect plenty of HelpLine calls. Brush up on the specifics using RCRE's "September Top 5 Fact Sheets:"

- **Weed control in home lawns**, FS119
- **Renovating your lawn**, FS108
- **Turfgrass seed selection for home lawns**, FS684
- **Seeding your lawn**, FS584
- **Landscape plants rated by deer resistance**, E271

## Recent *Green Thumb* Articles

- The **European Hornet** has been making an appearance in local gardens. See the September 15 article, as well as an extension fact sheet at <http://www.ext.vt.edu/departments/entomology/factsheets/eurhorn.html>
- A white cottony substance on Hemlock needles could be the **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid**; see the September 8 article.
- **Chiggers!** If you've been bitten by chiggers, you understand the very strong feelings people have about them. See the September 1 article to understand where they live, and to counter a few stubborn myths (they do not burrow into your skin).
- **Overwintering Tropical plants:** The September 22 article tells how to manage your bananas, hibiscus, and other plants so they'll be rested and healthy for next Spring.



## RCRE New Fact Sheet

***Diagnosing and Managing Important Cucurbit Diseases in the Home Garden***, E310. (New: 7/2006). Cucurbit crops (cucumber, pumpkin, summer and winter squash, melon, and gourd) are susceptible to several common diseases on an annual basis. This fact sheet reviews common diseases and control methods for home gardeners.



*Pumpkin showing symptoms caused by crown rot phase of Phytophthora blight.*

# Committee News & Updates

## Committee Activities

Each committee is in the process of naming a leader or co-leaders who will provide guidance and report committee activities at Association meetings. Each committee should meet at least once before the October 13 Association meeting. For a description of committee responsibilities, see the August newsletter.

- **Communications Committee:** Current activities include the newsletter, the new “MG News Bits” emails, and a photo directory of all members. Future projects may include communicating other chapters' activities, and electronic updating of timesheets. Going forward, the dozen Association members without email addresses will find a paper copy of Association minutes in their HL Office personal files. – Mary McDermott
- **Community Outreach Committee:** Kathy Olsen and Nancy Jansen will co-lead this committee.
- **Demo Garden** (at MG office): The group reviewed the initial flower bed landscaping plan, and Mona and Mary shared the priorities and feedback with the Rainbow Farms landscapers. Rainbow Farms will return with a modified plan to establish the garden infrastructure so we can work on the different raised bed flower gardens in phases. For the vegetable raised beds, we've been rained out of two work sessions, so we still need to sow cool season vegetables, and pull older summer crops. – Mary McDermott.
- **Finance and Fund Raising:** Debra Sandler will chair this committee.
- **HelpLine Committee:** Leader to be named.
- **Hospitality:** Bev Albertson will chair this committee.
- **Speakers Board:** Leader to be named.

## October Association Meeting

- **Steve Atzert**, the director of the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, will speak about invasive plants. Our meeting will start at 12:30, and Steve will begin his talk about 1:30. Thanks to Evonne Kaminski for arranging this with Steve. You can learn a lot about the refuge at [www.fws.gov/northeast/forsythe/](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/forsythe/) By the way, on their newsletter, you'll see a photo with our own **Bev, Evonne** and **Judith** under the caption, “Our ever faithful and beautiful ladies of the garden.”
- **Plant sharing:** The seed swap was so much fun at the September meeting, that we'd like to extend the fun. If you have extra perennials from your fall dividing, or too many houseplants to bring back indoors, bring them on October 13 to swap with other members.



## MG Association Elections

We'll be electing Association officers this fall. At the October Association meeting, the Nominating Committee (Bev Albertson, Kathy Olsen and current officers) will present a slate of nominees, and voting will follow in the next month or so.

If you may be interested in the role of President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer, please contact the Nominating Committee or the current officers directly. The committee will accept nominees on or before the October Association meeting. Don't be surprised if you get a call – the Nominating Committee will be canvassing MGs to determine interest.



## Home Garden Tips: Things to do now

- **Outdoor houseplants:** Before cold weather arrives, move them out of the garden and onto a deck, patio or porch where you can inspect them closely. Remove damaged, diseased or faded bits. Look for insects, and treat with a blast of the hose and/or insecticidal soap.
- **Mulch with discretion:** It's important to wait until after the ground has frozen before applying your winter mulch around plants. You'll avoid keeping the soil warmer than necessary and you'll discourage rodents seeking a warm place to spend the winter.
- **Start cuttings now of summer annuals** that you'd like to have next spring, including coleus, impatiens, petunias, and others. You'll likely have to pinch back or make cuttings of cuttings over the winter, but that just means more plants for next year's garden. (Also see "The Constant Coleus" on page 6.)
- **Start your cool weather veggie crops,** including kale, garlic, greens, spinach, and more.
- **Start dividing overgrown perennials,** especially daylilies and irises. Cut back peonies once they've gone dormant.
- **Soil Test:** Testing now gives you time to make adjustments that will benefit Spring plantings.
- **Amaryllis:** Plan ahead for a holiday show. Stop watering and fertilizing for eight to ten weeks. After the leaves yellow and wither, you'll see a flower bud begin to emerge from the bulb. When that happens, put the plant in a sunny window, remove dry foliage, and start watering again.



## Anticipating Frost

Predicting the first frost date is an inexact science at best. While the first frost date in Atlantic City may be as early as September 28, **the average frost date** in our area is October 15.

## We're back on the PC!

With the HelpLine computer problems behind us, once again you can find past issues of *Garden Tales* on the HelpLine computer. It's easy to link to the various web sites mentioned in the newsletter to access fact sheets and other sites. You can also find the HelpLine Manual, and the Garden Tales archive. All of these are Microsoft Word documents, so if you're looking for something in particular within a document, you can use the "edit" and "find" functions to search and find key words or phrases. To find these documents on the HelpLine computer, look for the yellow file folder icons on the bottom left of the desktop screen. You'll see them labeled "GardenTales," "Green Thumb," and "HelpLine Manual."

### Want to contribute to *Garden Tales*?

Garden Tales is written and produced by Mary McDermott, following each Association meeting. Send topic ideas, photos, or material to Mary at [mmcddmcm@comcast.net](mailto:mmcddmcm@comcast.net)

## Volunteer Opportunities

There are lots of opportunities to volunteer in the MG community, beyond the always-fun HelpLine. Touch base with Mona or the Committee leaders to find out more about these activities:

- Forsythe Refuge
- MG Demo Garden
- South Main Street School
- Estell Manor Park garden
- Ocean Life Center landscaping
- Speaking at local libraries
- Communications committee
- HelpLine Committee
- Annual Perennial Sale planning
- Event planning (Community outreach)

## The Constant Coleus

by Carol Strahlendorf

Offspring of a coleus bought in 1999 are still thriving in my yard today. Here are some helpful techniques for keeping coleus over the winter:

- In the fall, take a potted coleus indoors, or cut branches to keep in water. One branch per container

avoids tangled roots. Pick off the lower leaves; water as needed.



Leaf patterns in Carol's nine-year-old coleus

- Pick off the flowering tips as soon as you see them develop. This may go on for months.

- Potted coleus may become weak looking and the stems may get woody. Keep it watered, pinched off, and in bright indirect light.

- In May, cut healthy branches from the potted plant & place in water. When each branch has a strong root system, plant it.

- For cuttings kept in water since fall, pot them any time after a healthy root system develops.

## Just for Fun: What's in a name?

Trying to identify some interesting fellows led me to the USGS website at <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/insects/cateast/families.htm>. Before you go to the website, take a look at these great names. What kind of critter do you think they are?

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| • Yellow Bear     | • The Laugher         |
| • Silky Sallow    | • Confused Meganola   |
| • Nameless Pinion | • Olive Angle Shades  |
| • Subdued Quaker  | • Confused Woodgrain  |
| • False Sphinx    | • Baltimore Bomolocha |
| • Mourning Cloak  | • Tulip Tree Beauty   |

(Answer: They're all caterpillars found in eastern forests.)



## The Literary Gardener

In Master Gardener Phil Cross's South Jersey Gardening site:

[www.groups.yahoo.com/group/southjerseygardening](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/southjerseygardening)

he recently posted some interesting Shakespeare quotes that could easily apply to gardening. Here are a few amusing gems:

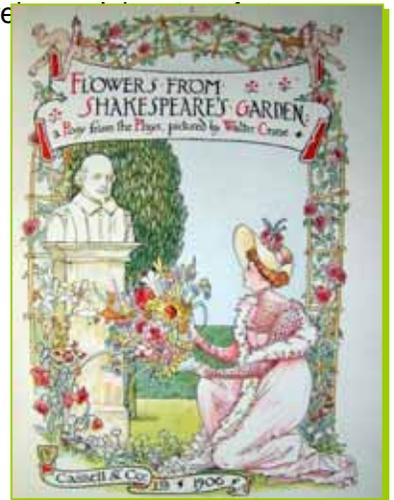
- **Plant clearance sale:** "I did never see such pitiful rascals." – *King Henry IV*

- **Fingernail Test:** There and Cleopatra

- **Gardening:** Ah, what a life were this! How sweet! How lovely! -- *King Henry VI*

- **Leaf scorch:** God save you, sir! Where have you been broiling? - *King Henry VIII*

- **Leaf blower:** 'Tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon – *As You Like It*



An illustration from Walter Crane's 1906 book, *Flowers from Shakespeare's Garden: a Posy from the Plays*

- **Homemade pesticides:** Fillet of a fenny snake, In the cauldron boil and bake; Eye of newt and toe of frog, Wool of bat and tongue of dog, Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting, Lizard's leg and owlet's wing, For a charm of powerful trouble, Like a hell-broth boil and bubble. – *MacBeth*

- **Pollination:** Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo? – *Romeo and Juliet*



Mona is eager to harvest "Sugar Baby" watermelons from the Demo Garden

## South Main Street School

Gloria Perakovich, Kathy Olsen, Michelle Brunetti-Post, Mona, Evonne Kaminski and Nancy Jansen thought they were in for a bit of light weeding, and moving mulch and compost at the S. Main St. School project in Pleasantville. But then they found out that the "root of all evil" resided in those garden beds. They spent the morning digging, pulling and cutting out what seemed to be locust tree roots with tiny sprouts coming out all over.



### A big "Thank you" to...

- **Gerel Pereborow** donated about a dozen beautiful hardcover, like-new gardening books at the Association meeting. Instead of selling them online, we're adding them to our library. (And don't forget the delicious biscotti!)



- **Bunny Mason** led a fantastic seed harvesting / seed saving presentation at the Association meeting.
- **Anita Wagner** redesigned the MG brochure and the help line cards to make them even more attractive (and more likely to get picked up by potential clients). Those new HelpLine cards practically jump into your hands!



### Heirloom Tomato Seeds

In the Demo Garden, "Matt's Wild Cherry" tomatoes are ripe and ready. MGs are encouraged to practice some heirloom seed harvesting with these tomatoes. To date, Debi Baker-Capille, Ann Fox, Michelle Brunetti-Post, and Mary McDermott have begun harvesting seeds. Get a handful of tomatoes and give it a try – the simple "how to's" are in Bunny's seed saving info package.

By the way, "Matt's Wild Cherry" heritage is a wild tomato found in eastern Mexico. The plants are highly productive, providing hundreds of dime-sized fruit, each with an exceptionally full, sweet flavor. It's almost too great a temptation to eat the tomatoes before we can harvest the seeds!



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Mona Bawgus  
Program Associate - Agriculture

**Want to continue  
receiving this newsletter?**

We're streamlining our distribution list, so if you want to get *Garden Tales* each month, call Anita at 625-0056. (Note: This request does *not* apply to Atlantic County Master Gardeners or Interns.)



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