

Garden Tales

Atlantic County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Coordinator's Comments

By Mona Bawgus

Hello Master Gardeners:

Spring will be here sooner than we know it. Have you started your lettuce seeds yet? As I begin to make my list of seed purchases I must remember that I am working full time and have three small plots in my backyard. I just can't resist having one of each. There are red leaf, deer tongues, romaines, red romaines, green butterheads, red butterheads, green oakleaf, red oakleaf, iceberg, green and red summer crisps, and then the mesclun mixes. You can actually design your own baby green mixes. I am going to need an acre just for my lettuces.

If you are planning on growing lettuce some new interesting varieties that I have found are a red butterhead called Skyphos and a red summer crisp called Mottistone. Skyphos is a beautiful lettuce with red tinged outer leaves that contrast with a lime green center and the wonderful delicate taste of a butterhead. Mottistone is an unusual speckled lettuce that doesn't mind the warmer temperatures of summer. I didn't even know that there were lettuces you could grow in hot weather.

To everyone involved in the demonstration garden now is the time to think about what vegetables you might want to grow this year. There will be a meeting to organize our plans on February 17, at 10 for all those interested. In the meantime happy planning!

~Mona

Important Dates

- February 1 Help-line re-opens
- February 2 MG Insect Identification Class
- February 5 Plant Sale Meeting 11 a.m.
- February 5 Association Meeting 12:30 p.m.
- February 9 MG Backyard Habitat Class
- February 12 Lincoln's Birthday – Office Closed
- February 15 Presidents Day – Office Closed
- February 17 Demo Garden Meeting 10 a.m.
- February 23 MG Plant Propagation Class
- March 2 MG Garden Design Class
- March 9 MG Houseplant Class
- March 12 Association Meeting 12:30 p.m.
- March 16 MG Eco-Complex Tour

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New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



2010 Plant Sale – **Bob Varrelmann (07)** - The 2010 Plant Sale Committee had its first meeting on January 8th. The Sale date will be Sat, May 22nd. Set-up, delivery and sanitary inspection will be on Fri, May 21st. Volunteers are needed to help in all areas of the sale including set-up & breakdown of the tables, advertising, garden talks, and propagation of our own plants for the sale. Our propagated plants were well received in 2009 and we are looking to expand in this area this year. Some MG's have been propagating since last summer but there is still time to start plants for this sale. If you are interested in propagating plants, please check the Rutgers Invasive Plant List to make sure your plant is not on it. Contact Mona or Bob if you are not sure if your plant is invasive. The annual Plant Sale is our major fund raiser. I hope you will volunteer.

Linwood Arboretum at Belhaven - **Michelle Brunetti-Post (05)** The Linwood Arboretum at Belhaven Avenue is planted and we anxiously await the first spring bloom period. Meanwhile, our collection of witch hazels and winter jasmine has already produced some color. The next step is to hold classes for docents, to familiarize them with all the plants in the arboretum so they can answer questions and give tours. Dates haven't been set yet, but we expect to start soon. The arboretum extends from the main gardens at Belhaven School, down the bike path in both directions, where memorial trees are planted. We will also create a shade garden in the senior park near Seaview School.

Demo Garden – **Gay Pitz (07) and Barb D'Augustine (07)**, co-chairs. The demo garden, located on the north side of the Cooperative Extension Service building, is one of the premier projects of the Atlantic County Master Gardeners. This year we are looking forward to some spirited competition between the Master Gardener classes as we each take on one of the plots and show our best efforts. The Class of '07 has already claimed the large raised bed in the vegetable garden section. (Last fall we weeded, spread newspaper and covered it with shredded leaves to prepare the bed for the winter.) Get together with members of your class and decide which plot you want. Contact Gay and Barb to stake your claim. We want to use the Demo Garden as an education tool and will be meeting is February 17th at 10 a.m. to decide how to get the garden ready to show.

Estell Manor Greenhouse – Anita has received a schedule for the greenhouse help requested by Helen Biggs. We have many dates in February, March and April. Volunteers will be sowing seeds, making cuttings, spotting seedlings, cleaning pots, mixing soil, & transplanting young plants. Various plant propagation methods will be used: seeds, cuttings, leaf divisions, grafting, air layering, etc. As the season progresses spotting plugs, pinching, pruning, designing planters, baskets, and large containers, and outside bed maintenance will be included. **Please note** that only 2 volunteers are needed per available shift and we would like to have at least one master gardener who has participated in the past and one master gardener that has not yet had the opportunity to participate in this project. Contact Anita to sign-up.

Garden Tales Newsletter - Anita Wagner '06, Gay Pitz '07, and Barb D'Augustine '07 - Garden Tales, the newsletter of the Atlantic County Master Gardeners, is published bi-monthly. Anita, our publisher, does the layout, printing, and distribution of the newsletter. Gay and Barb are the editors and are looking for reporters and a photographer. Some regular features will appear in each edition as well as some timely items of interest. Looking to see your name in a byline? Contact Gay or Barb.

Atlantic City Aquarium - We are looking forward to the 2010 season at the Aquarium and will start sometime in March. This year's projects will include landscaping the lifeboat and a new garden area; enlarging and improving the present landscape, and some interesting educational projects. We will need all the help we can get.

Topics to look forward to on Help-Line in February/March:

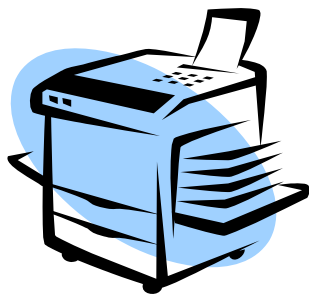
Houseplant insects
Soil Testing
Starting seeds indoors
Hedges (pruning, planting)
Garden Pest
Oak Gall

New or Updated Fact Sheets

- E327 - Best Management Practices for Nutrient Management of Turf in New Jersey
- FS1117- Detecting Bed Bugs Using Bed Bug Monitors

Recent Fact Sheets searched on Web related to program

- FS787 - Starting Vegetable Seeds Indoors
- FS002 - Brown Marmorated Stinkbug - A Non-native Insect in New Jersey
- E271 - Landscape Plants Rated by Deer Resistance



When printing factsheets for a homeowner please check to see if a PDF version is available. If one is not available please make sure printer settings allow all information to print so that information is not cut-off.

“Green Thumb” Articles

Look to use the following Green Thumb articles as resources for clients while volunteering for the help-line. The articles are located in the “Green Thumbs” binder on the bookshelf in the help-line office:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| December 4 | Mistletoe |
| December 11 | Hollies |
| December 18 | Propagating Rex Begonia |
| December 25 | Keeping Evergreens Fresh |
| January 1 2010 | Ornamental Peppers |
| January 8 | Dishwashing Soap |
| January 15 | Top Soil |
| January 22 | Wood Burning Stoves |
| January 29 | Watercress |
| February 5 | Birds & Squirrels |

Helpline Committee Report –

Pat Kennedy (08)

The Helpline will come out of hibernation and be up and running February 1. This is a great way to get your hours in, use your knowledge, learn something new. Sign up for at least once a month, or better yet, sign up with a partner.

Before you leave the Helpline, be sure to complete the **Helpline Record** form with date, number or calls and walk-ins, and briefly describe the problems of the day. Be sure to call the next day’s volunteer(s) and note it on the Helpline Record form. Don’t forget to turn off the computer at the CPU located under the desk, as well as the printer and/or microscope, if used.

2010 Master Gardener Class/New Officers

Welcome Class of 2010!!!

The class of 2010 began on January 5, 2010 with 23 new students. We would like to welcome everyone and look forward to meeting you in the Spring!!!

Below is a list of upcoming classes still available if any of our graduated Master Gardeners wish to “refresh” themselves. If you wish to attend a class, please contact Anita via email or phone!!

2-Feb	Insect Identification	Joe Mahar
9-Feb	Backyard Habitats	Pat Sutton
16-Feb	Native Plants/Invasives**	Bruce Barbour
23-Feb	Plant Propagation	Mona Bawgus
2-Mar	Garden Design	Bruce Crawford
9-Mar	Houseplants	Mary Eklund
16-Mar	Eco-Complex Tour	Dave Specca
23-Mar	Plant Pathology	Rick Buckley
30-Mar	Arboriculture	Mickey Riffin
6-Apr	Earthwise Lawn Care	Bill Hlubik
13-Apr	Help-Line	Mona Bawgus
20-Apr	Waldor Orchids Field Trip	Mona Bawgus
27-Apr	Vegetables I	Richard VanVranken
4-May	Vegetables II/Field Trip	Richard VanVranken
11-May	Small Fruits I	Gary Pavlis
18-May	Small Fruits II/Field Trip	Gary Pavlis

2010 Atlantic County Master Gardener Association Officers

President	– Grace Wagner (06)	Vice President	– Patricia Cassidy (08)
Secretary	– Anna Mae Maslinski (08)	Treasurer	– Bob Varrelmann (07)

2010 Chairpersons

Helpline	– Patricia Kennedy (08)
Hospitality	– Bessie McGowan (08)
Demo Garden	– Barb D’Augustine (07), Gay Pitz (07)
Garden Tales	– Anita Wagner (06), Barb D’Augustine (07), Gay Pitz (07)
AC Aquarium	– John Collette (07), George Lonkart (07)
Linwood Arboretum	– Michelle Post (05)
Forsythe Refuge	– Evonne Kaminski (05), Bev Albertson (05)
Galloway Butterfly Garden	– Maggie Smith (09)
Estell Manor	– Anita Wagner (06)
Plant Sale	– Bob Varrelmann (07)
Trips	– Barb D’Augustine (07)

Mary Ann Howell (08)



What committees are you involved in? None, but I would like to be if there's a need for my areas of interest or knowledge.

Favorite time of year? Spring and early Summer

Least favorite plant? Petunias

Favorite plant? Roses

What is your most embarrassing gardening moment?

I Propagated what I thought were daylillies and they were actually weeds.

What most MGs do not know about me is... I am a 68 year old teenager. I will never grow up and act my age. It would be too scary!

If I had a farm I would grow... Jersey Corn and Tomatoes and raise chickens

My favorite garden tool is... my short and long handle Cobrahead weeders

My family thinks my gardening is... a blessing

My favorite MG class was... Plant Propagation

Getting To Know You will be printed in each newsletter. Please submit your answers to the above questions to Gay Pitz, Barb D'Augustine or Anita Wagner. Don't be shy folks!! This is the best way to get to know one another!!! We look forward to hearing from you!!

Pat Kennedy (08)



What committees are you involved in? I am chairing the Helpline Committee this year. I was on the Plant Sale committee last year.

Additionally, some of the projects I have volunteered for are: the Demo Garden, Estelle Manor Greenhouse, Estelle Manor Ecofair, Green Day Festival in Hammonton, Earth Day at the Northfield School, and the Somers Point Bay Fest

Without a doubt, **my favorite time of year is** spring. It is exhilarating to see dormant plants awakening and newly plant seeds poking their heads into their new worlds.

My least favorite plants are all the lawn grasses.

I'm hard pressed to select a favorite plant – I'm going to choose snow peas.

My most embarrassing gardening moment occurred when I attempted to smell what I thought was a mint plant and discovered that it was stinging nettle!

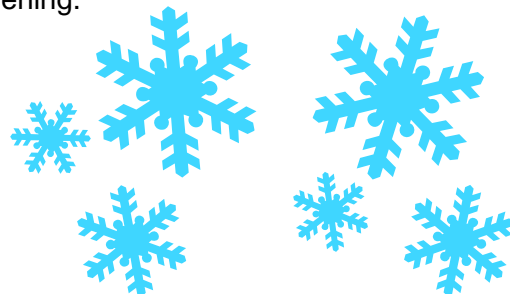
What most MGs do not know about me is that I take tap lessons.

If I had my own farm I would grow all kinds of herbs.

My favorite garden tool is a very old, very sturdy trowel.

My family thinks my gardening is obsessive.

My favorite MG class was "Vegetable Gardening."



34 Annual Home Gardeners School

March 20, 2010

For 2010, we have reunited the SPRING and FALL sessions into **ONE** expanded program! Featuring more workshops, 10 **NEW** topics to choose from, and a new, lower price!

The 2010 Spring Home Gardeners School will feature an expanded format that allow you to choose among 36 informative and entertaining topics! Learn from some of the top instructors in the Garden State on topics that range from **Amazing Annuals** and **Organic Berries** to **Proper Pruning** and **Proper Planting** techniques. Visit www.cpe.rutgers.edu for more information



Bee-ginner's Beekeeping

May 6, 7 and 8 2010

This two and a half-day program is designed to provide the necessary information needed for new beekeepers to start and care for a honey bee colony.

Whether you have little or no experience in beekeeping, or you are a veteran already working with bees, you will gain valuable insights on disease and mite prevention, hive management, and honey production.

For more information or to register for the above mentioned classes please visit www.cpe.rutgers.edu/bees

Master Gardener Enrichment Classes 2010

Offered by RCE of Cape May County

The 2010 Master Gardener Enrichment Classes are at an advanced level and prior knowledge of the topic is required. The classes are free to currently certified Master Gardeners and first year volunteers and are open to the advanced gardening public for a fee of \$40.00. Pesticide credits are available for all classes excluding Landscape Design and Pruning.

February 23rd , 6:00-8:00

Session 1: **Pruning**

Dr. Warren C. Stiles

Location: Rutgers Cooperative Extension

February 27th 10-12

Session 2: **Hands on Pruning**

Location: TBA

March 30th , 6:00-8:00

Native Plant and Landscape Design

Stan Sperlak

Location: Rutgers Cooperative Extension

April 27th, 6:00-8:00

Organic Farming

Jim Hazlett

Jenny Carleo

Location: JC Hazlett Farm in Goshen

May 25th, 6:00-8:00

Soils of South Jersey and Advanced Composting

Dave Riley

Location: Rutgers Cooperative Extension

June 29th ,6:00- 8:00

Disease Diagnostics

Andy Wyenandt

Location: Rutgers Cooperative Extension

(Please feel free to bring any samples to the lecture.)

Master Gardeners outside of Cape May County are responsible for a \$20.00 fee. For more information please call 609-465-5115.

"Garden Lunacy a Growing Concern" by Art Wolk

Anna Mae Maslinski (08)

This book came to me by way of the "cut-throat pollyanna" at the MG Holiday party at Smithville Inn this past December. It is a delightful, light-hearted book "not about gardens or how to garden, but about gardeners.... especially, the looney ones." The author Art Wolk, is a South Jersey resident (Voorhees) and an award winning writer, lecturer, photographer, Grand Sweep Stakes winner at the Philadelphia Flower Show as well as the recipient of the Quill and Trowel award from the Garden Writers Association.

These few chapter titles will give you some idea of the fun read this book provides :

"Will I Ever Get Out Of This Lady's Bedroom Closet Alive ?"

The author's actions are really innocent. He is on assignment taking photographs of African Violets but needed a dark room to replace a roll of film that was partially used.

'An On-Death - Door plant Society" or" Annuals on First, Perennials on Second"

The author explains his preference for annuals over perennials to the horror of a member of the "Hardy Plant Society". He likes their long lasting blooms and the ease which a small garden can accommodate annuals.

"A New Jersey Yankee in Robert E. Lee's Court."

A love affair with orchids has brought this woman on an expedition to find a rare orchid. This expedition landed her in jail. (This story is fictitious but it will keep you reading.)

The other nice thing about this book is you do not need to read it from cover to cover. You can pick out chapters that interest you.

This book is published by AAB Book Publishing LLC, P.O. Box 749, Voorhees, N.J. 08043.

"Sleepless in Seattle..." by Rachel Bogatin (07)

I just returned from a fantastic 5 days in Seattle, the purpose of which was to bring home a new Cavalier King Charles Spaniel puppy named Harry. I decided to combine the acquisition of the puppy with a much needed vacation. Seattle is a wonderful city-clean, vibrant, and most importantly, focused on sustainable locally produced food. Pike Place Market is the centerpiece of Seattle-a farmer's market founded by farmers for farmers as a result of unscrupulous middlemen. The market is overflowing with fresh fruit, produce, fresh flying fish at Pike Place Fish (they throw the fish when someone buys it), antiques, crafts, coffee shops and restaurants. The original Starbucks is located in the market, with a much different looking logo-the original Starbucks woman is actually naked from the waist up. There is also a large Asian fresh fruit, produce, fish, and gift market called Umajimaya to serve the Asian population of the city.

The smallest coffee shops and restaurants are also focused on providing local sustainable products. Additionally, all of the coffee cups, tea bags, etc are made of compostable materials. The Hotel Monaco where I stayed had separate trash and recycling containers in the room, and also left cards in the room asking to only change towels on request in an effort to save water.

Public transportation is easily accessible and free buses run in the center of the city during business hours to encourage useage. Surrounded by islands, many commuters take the ferry to and from the city and then walk to work. Did I mention the hills that nobody bothered to tell me about????

Sustainable food practices, recycling, compostable products and public transportation are all interconnected and have become a way of life for Seattle. While we on the East Coast have a couple of centuries on the Pacific Northwest, we are light years behind them in terms of preserving our resources. We can all learn from the folks in Seattle.

As for Harry, he is adjusting well. While my other dog was a sissy and hated the rain, Harry, being from Seattle is used to it-I think he really enjoyed the torrential rain we had this week. There is no accounting for taste...

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Mertensia virginica

Pronounced

(mer-TEN-see-ah vir-GIN-ee-ka)

Common Name:

Virginia cowslip; Mertensia;
Virginia bluebells

Life Cycle: Perennial

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Flower/fruit: Nodding, trumpet-like 1 inch light blue flowers with five petals; pink buds

Flowering Season: Spring into early summer

Foliage: 2 to 8 inch oval, smooth, strongly veined, alternate gray-green basal leaves: smooth, succulent stems

Site: Rich moist woods, bottom lands

Above information courtesy of NC State University

Our very own MG Barb D'Augustine (07) comments:

The USDA website show 40 native species of *Mertensia*. The *virginica* species is native to most of the Eastern U.S. This is an ephemeral plant; it becomes dormant in the summer. Use it in the garden to replace non-native spring bulbs such as daffodils, tulips, and crocuses. It is beautiful when planted in broad stretches under trees.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

CREAM OF BROCCOLI SOUP

By Gay Pitz (07)

Sauté in Butter:

1 green pepper; chopped
1/3 cup onion, chopped

Add:

3 cups finely chopped broccoli, fresh or frozen
2 cups chicken broth

Cover:

Bring to a boil and simmer until broccoli is tender
Blend in blender. Return to pot and heat to serving temp.

Stir In:

1 cup sweet cream and enough milk to thin soup
1 ½ tsp. Curry powder
Salt and pepper to taste

Garnish with:

Dollop of sour cream
Chopped Scallions



Can be served hot or cold.

Gardening in February by Barb D'Augustine (07)

- If you haven't already, start using your journal to plan this year's garden.
- Purchase any seeds you will need. Organize the packets to create a sowing schedule
- Sharpen your garden tools with a file then clean and oil them. Buy replacements, if needed.
- Clean up the greenhouse to prepare for a new season
- Avoid the spring rush. Get a soil test kit from the Atlantic County Extension Service.

DON'T FORGET TO FEED THE BIRDS

By: Marie A. Frost (09)

I feed the birds year round, but make an extra effort especially from November to late April, when food is not as plentiful. It's important to keep food consistently available during the winter months, especially when snows blanket food sources. For daily feeding use feed that has no corn in it. When the kernels drop to the ground, often corn stalks grow. I also buy one or two bags of a nuts and berries blend and dole it out in handfuls every so often for an extra treat and added nutritional sustenance. I mix it with the daily feed in the feeders. Remember to put feed on the ground for ground feeders like Mourning Doves. It's nice to see the variety of feathered friends who come and dine.

Suet cakes are very good for providing extra nutrition in cold weather. Hang two or three suet cages at a time and refill them, as they become empty. You can use the shepherd's hooks; you hang your flower pots on in the summer. I was delighted to see a Wood Pecker, having a grand time enjoying the suet. Walmart has reasonable prices on all supplies.

Remember to keep a water source available. The frigid weather has made this a challenge, but it can be done. You can still utilize your bird bath. Fill it half full, and every day that it freezes add a little more water. Once a week use enough water to let the ice cake loosen, so you can remove it. The important thing is to keep some sort of water source available. There are solar and other heating gadgets available, but since they can be costly, I just do my "Nannuk of the North" routine.

I've learned that cedar or other wooden feeding stations are more durable in harsh weather and squirrels don't seem to destroy these hardier structures, as readily as the plastic versions. They are more expensive, but pay for themselves over time. I have one feeder that is five years old. Be sure to hang your feeders in close proximity to shrubs or trees. It gives the birds protection from predators like a Cooper's hawk, which I saw lurking in wait during this past snow storm. You will know when a predator is present; there will be no birds.

And finally, the squirrels!! Unlike most folks, I don't mind them. Well let's just say they're never going away. Provisions are made for them away from the house at the back of the garden, where the birds are fed. They seem to appreciate cobs of corn. They swing off of the feeders and chase each other up and down the wooden post. Their antics are fun to watch. This year to our delight we discovered a sable brown squirrel. All in all our small backyard habitat brings my husband and me great joy, as we peer out the window on a frosty winter's day.

Happy Nurturing!



'Stain Glass' Begonia Grace Wagner (06)

Pictured to the left is a 'Stained Glass' Begonia that Mona propagated a couple of years ago. It hung on my garden fence in the shade this summer, and obviously enjoyed the spot. It really put on some growth. It is sitting in a corner in my living room, and gets very little sun.

**Atlantic County
Master Gardener Newsletter**

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Edited by:

Mona Bawgus

Mona Bawgus
Program Associate - Agriculture



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

Garden Tales is written and
produced by Anita Wagner.
Send topic ideas, photos, or
material to Anita at
wagner_anita@aclink.org

Happy Belated Birthday to:

Estelle Berkowitz	Jan 3
Evonne Kaminski	Jan 9
Janet D'Allessandro	Jan 15
Bessie McGowan	Jan 26

Happy Birthday to:

Mona Bawgus	Feb 6
Grace Wagner	Feb 10
Linda Risser-Hawn	Feb 20
Robert Varrelmann	Feb 21
Marie Benoit	Feb 25
Raven Ahmed	Feb 29
John Collette	March 1
Carla Glass	March 2
Anita Wagner	March 13
Bev Albertson	March 16
Morgana French	March 29

Did we miss your Birthday?

Please let Anita know if you are not on the list and....

Happy Belated Birthday!!!



Cooperative Extension
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
88 Lipman Drive
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8525

Official Mail



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