

# Garden Tales

## Atlantic County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

### Coordinators Comments:

By *Mona Bawgus*

Hello Master Gardeners:

The peas are planted along with the carrots and collards. Still have to wait to transplant the swiss chard and lettuces but I think we are definitely close to warm weather. This had to been one of the longest and harshest winter's we have had in a long time. Since getting out in the garden I can see all the damage from the heavy snow. I don't think I am alone as seen by fellow Master Gardener Mary Stecher's pictures in her article on page 9.

My houseplants look like they can't wait to get outside as well. The dry interiors of our homes leave most of them looking dehydrated and lanky from trying to stretch to the sunlight. One problem I have been dealing with all winter has taken an interesting turn. My lemon trees in the greenhouse have been infested with cottony cushion scale. Several attempts have been made to eradicate it but it always comes back. This weekend I noticed green lace wings eggs hanging delicately under the leaves. Nature has come to my aid. Take some time this spring to slow down and enjoy the beauty of spring without obsessing over all the work that needs to be down. If we stop to smell the roses we can usually see some pretty amazing things.

~Mona

### Important Dates

- March 25 Hope VI Program – 5 p.m.  
Seed Starting
- March 26 Northfield Community School  
**GreenFair** - 5-7 pm
- April 2 Good Friday – Office Closed
- April 12 Four Seasons Program - Noon  
Starting up Your Garden
- April 14 Pleasantville Library – 5 pm  
Container Vegetable Garden
- April 16 MGA Meeting – 12:30  
Speaker on 'Pruning' to follow
- April 22 FAA Tech Center - **Earth Day**  
10 am -2 pm
- April 25 ACUA – **Earth Day** - 10 am – 3 pm

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New Jersey Agricultural  
Experiment Station

**2010 Plant Sale – Bob Varrelmann (07)** – The 2010 Plant Sale committee has been meeting monthly prior to the regular monthly meeting. The Sale date has been confirmed for Saturday, May 22. Set-up and sanitary inspection will be the day before on Friday, May 21. We will be buying plants from different vendors this year to provide a large selection of perennials and shrubs. MG's are also propagating many different plants for the sale. We should have a very colorful selection of plants for sale this year. We can use volunteers in all areas of the sale. Contact Pat Kennedy [08] if you are interested in volunteering.

**Atlantic City Aquarium – John Collette [07]** – The main project of the aquarium is the renovation of the boat that was donated by the chief life guard. It will eventually be used as a planter. Work on this project will start the week of March 29<sup>th</sup>. Wednesdays and Thursdays are the major work days at the aquarium. If you are unable to volunteer on these days but can on another day, let John know and sign in on a volunteer log at the aquarium. If you are dividing plants this year and find that you do not need some, John is accepting plants for the aquarium.

May 15<sup>th</sup> is "Master Gardener Day" at the Atlantic City Aquarium. Tours of the ground are planned for that day. Master Gardeners will help educate the public and the residents of the area to know which plants are appropriate for the shore and its' environment. Tours will run from 11 am to 3 pm.

**Forsythe Refuge – Evonne Kaminski [05] and Bev Albertson [05]** – There are plans for landscaping 5 to 6 acres of land around a new Visitor Center building at the Refuge. Meetings are every Thursday, 10 am to 12 pm.

**Port Republic School – Janet Longo [04]** – There is an after school program from 3 to 4 pm for third and fourth graders teaching them gardening (planting seeds, mulching, weeding, etc.) The Drug Alliance has donated funds to the school for this project. Several meetings are planned for April and May. Keep an eye out for meeting notices via email.

**Demo Garden – Gay Pitz [07] and Barb D'Augustine [07]** - This year, we are really going to strive to make the demo garden really take off and grow. The concrete blocks in the vegetable garden area need to be realigned and capped. MG classes from 2005 through 2010 will each have a veggie bed to take care of with succession plantings in spring, summer, and fall. We also want to create a woodland garden by cutting a path through the back of the garden toward the fence and creating beds to be planted with native perennials. A map of the garden will be drawn and made available to the public in a box to be mounted on the trellis. Extensive labor will be needed but we know MG's are up to the job. And we have some fun rewards planned so make sure you come out and help. Any questions, please contact Gay Pitz or Barb D'Augustine.

**Galloway Community Garden – Mona Bawgus and Maggie Smith [09]** - The Master Gardener's will have a bed in the community garden again this year. We will be planting lettuce, kale, swiss chard and radishes to begin.

**Galloway Butterfly Garden – Mona Bawgus** - There will be a meeting at the garden to do some transplanting Friday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm. This year we will expand our perennials, concentrating on butterfly attractors.

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

Soil Test Interpretation  
Starting Vegetables from Seed  
Transplanting seedlings  
Hedges (pruning, planting)  
Oak Gall  
Lawns  
Moles/Voles  
Bagworms

**Soil Kits  
Are Now \$20.00**

## New or Updated Factsheets

- E329 - Rain Barrels Part I:  
How to Build a Rain Barrel
- FS1118 - Rain Barrels Part II:  
Installation and Use

## Recent Fact Sheets searched on Web related to program

- FS787 - Starting Vegetable Seeds  
Indoors
- FS678 - Growing Tomatoes in the  
Home Garden
- FS992 Growing Hops in the  
Backyard



## “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:

February 5	Birds & Squirrels
February 12	Salt Build-up
February 19	Tree Damage
February 26	Transplants
March 5	Hydrangeas
March 12	Spring Lawn Care
March 19	Container Gardening
March 26	Ramapo Tomato

## Helpline Committee Report – Pat Kennedy (08)

The help-line is up and running and the number of calls/walk-ins are expected to increase as the weather warms up. Please be sure to complete the following tasks while working the help-line:

- Report on the back of the “Problem/Inquiry Log” the solution or recommendations given to call-ins when the case is closed.
- Be sure and indicate when a case is closed by checking and dating the appropriate section on the front of the “Problem/Inquiry Log”.
- On the “Help-Line Record” sheet please indicate the number and type of problems that were handled on the day that you volunteer.

# Estell Manor Greenhouse



Photos courtesy of  
MarvAnn Howell



## **MaryAnn Howell [08]**

Today, I reported for work in "Helen's Heaven" for the first time ever. For various reasons in the past two years, I have not been able or just not driven to go down there. My time was to be from 12 until 2. I got there about 11:30 and Helen was really on her lunch break but she didn't miss a beat and dove right in showing me what to do and making me feel welcome and needed.

We were thinning and transplanting seedlings and I was extremely glad to be there on a sunny day among the beautiful bounty she has propagated. Helen does not hesitate to tell you how she has come to rely on the Master Gardeners who give their time to help bring the plants to maturity and the end result in the planting around the County.

I learned so much there today and felt really grateful to her for all the wisdom and knowledge she willingly shares. Her plant language is one that is fun and easy to understand even for a garden novice or children. Helen is very excited about the school children she has had and will have coming to learn, hands-on about planting.

Thank you Helen for all you do for us and the County, you are a blessing.

# Demo Garden



The demonstration garden cleanup has begun. We met on Wednesday and began to clean out the beds, cut back the asparagus, and prune back the perennials. We have also started many new transplants that will go into the garden in the next month or so. These include Swiss Chard, Kohlrabi, Kale, and various lettuces. The tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and others have been started and are slowly getting bigger under our grow lights. Check back ever so often on our website to see their progress.



Pictures provided by Mona. Top picture and picture above are from the demo garden clean-up that took place on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The pictures on the left show some of the transplants that will be planted in the demo garden for educational purposes.

# *A Word from your President, Grace Wagner*

Writing this blurb about what I would like to do while president of the Master Gardeners is unexpected because last spring/summer I wasn't sure how much more gardening I was going to be doing, let alone heading up this organization, due to a neck injury I incurred on myself while gardening. Gardeners beware!! By the way, we have very competent officers working with me this year in the event my neck goes whacko on me again.

I have entertained many ideas for the Master Gardeners of Atlantic County. First, I'd like to focus on keeping our volunteers joyfully "active" in hopes that we will be able to help each volunteer to find their particular niche within which to spend their hours happily volunteering. I want to promote "healthy" volunteerism where it isn't a drudgery but a time well spent both for the gardeners and the recipients of our efforts and we get less burn out all around. Since the inception of the MG program, Mona and Anita have worked arduously in this area in boosting the MG morale. So now I feel we need to do more on our part to encourage and help each other as we garden together.

Secondly, I'm hoping we can expand our Demo Garden into our "signature" garden for the purpose of bringing the public in to visit where we will offer educational tours. I'm also looking forward to seeing our various projects gearing up their sites with identification of plants and educational materials for the public to read about the different planting seen in our gardens around the county.

Third, I'd like to see us create more "packaged" programs which we can take to various locations (ie. libraries, schools, venues) for educational purposes such as defining what the Master Gardener program is all about; how to design/plant different types of containers; how to compost...well you get the idea (I hope).

I'll wrap this up by saying; I look forward to working with all of you in these capacities and welcome new and fresh ideas that will move our volunteers forward.



To find valuable information on growing tomatoes in the home garden visit <http://njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/RamapoTomato.htm>.

## **Ramapo Tomato Seeds**

The Ramapo Tomato was developed at Rutgers NJAES in 1968 by Dr. Bernard Pollack. Many years ago it disappeared from seed catalogues. Seed companies were favoring varieties that produced higher yields for commercial growers. Despite its disappearance, Rutgers continued to receive many requests for this tasty tomato and produced small batches throughout the years.

Atlantic County Master Gardeners have seed packets available for purchase through Anita. Each packet is \$4.00. Master Gardeners are also starting plants from seed to use for ACUA's Earth Day Celebration. Come visit our exhibit on Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup> from 10am - 3pm.

## John Drexel [09]



**Favorite time of year?** Although I like the change of seasons my favorite time of year is summer. "Green" is good. If you doubt that take a ride in January; "grey" is not good.

**Least favorite plant?** Any plant that needs to be "staked." Plants that do not need extra-ordinary attention are to be admired.

**Favorite plant?** Tropicals like Bougainvilleas are among my favorite plants. 'Zone denial' is only limited to how many plants can be camouflaged in the house.

**What is your most embarrassing gardening moment?** When you have a 'calling' you cannot be embarrassed.

**What most MGs do not know about me is...** While working full time and attending MG classes I also attended The Morris Arboretum at the University of Pennsylvania in the evenings studying landscape design.

**If I had a farm I would grow...** Actually I would like to have a vineyard and grow grapes.

**My favorite garden tool is...** Hori-Hori digging tool, a Japanese knife; about 12" long with a serrated edge on one side. Great for digging small holes, loosening roots from plants and weeding, a true multitasker.

**My family thinks my gardening is...** A bit obsessive, a little over the top, all-consuming but they love the results.

**My favorite MG class was...** 'Small Fruits' with Gary Pavlis. His class on grapes was educational, very entertaining and worth an admission fee.

**New Directories** will be coming out in June. If any of your information has changed (ie: email, address, phone number) please let Anita know.

## Getting to Know You

## Bessie McGowan [08]



**What committees are you involved in?** Hospitality Committee

**Favorite time of year?** Spring

**Least favorite plant?** Black Eye Susan

**Favorite plant?** Canna's

**What is your most embarrassing gardening moment?** Not recognizing Poison Ivy

**What most MGs do not know about me is...** That gardening is very new to me

**If I had a farm I would grow...** Cannas and Lillies

**My favorite garden tool is...** My Tiller

**My family thinks my gardening is...** My family loves my yard which is a work in progress

**My favorite MG class was...** Most all MG classes were because gardening was so new to me

**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!!



## Spring Bloomers from Mona

If you are looking for something a little different in spring bloomers you might want to try one or all of the following three plants. This year my Mahonia was beautiful. I had five clusters of hanging yellow flowers with the added surprise that they are fragrant. I know Hellebores are some of your favorites but here is a newcomer called Kingston cardinal. It loves the shade and seems to demand little attention. Lastly, during our field trip to Sawyer gardens the guide spoke about his favorite tree called the Parrotia persica. After planting this tree 10 years ago it finally produced flowers this spring. This tree has four season appeal. It is very comfortable in our acid soils and infrequently has problems. I hope you enjoy the pictures and maybe decide to try one of these plants in your garden.



## PLANT OF THE MONTH by Barb D'Augustine



***Tiarella cordifolia* L.** (Heart-leaf foamflower, Heartleaf foamflower)

**Saxifragaceae (Saxifrage Family)**

**USDA Symbol: TICO**

**USDA Native Status: Native to U.S.**

Long, slender stamens give heart-leaf foamflower's spikes of white flowers a frothy appearance. The small, star-shaped flowers occur in compact racemes on 6-12 in. stalks rising above a mound of attractive, lobed leaves. The flower stalk lacks leaves in the northeastern part of the plant's range, but bears heart-shaped leaves in the South. Mature plants send out runners, creating sizeable colonies with time. This is a perennial plant. Small, white flowers are in a feathery, somewhat elongated, terminal cluster. This attractive wildflower, which spreads by underground stems, forms colonies, and makes excellent groundcover for shady, wooded sites. The tiny flowers and fine texture of the stamens resemble foam and account for the common name. The genus name is from the Greek tiara, designating a turban once worn by the Persians, and refers to the shape of the pistil.

From: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin  
[http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=TICO](http://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=TICO)

## Fallen Arch - Mary Stecher [07]

I suffered some losses in our garden. One was an arch. I love arches and I trained some ivy and grapevine that I found in our garden around this inexpensive arch. The snow and the wind blew it over...I hated the thought of losing the ivy and grapevine because I like them. I decided I may try to see how it does as a little hedge around my statue....and I plan to plant some tall flowering bushes behind the statue. It looks a little sad right now...but I am going to give it a try and plant some colorful flowers inside the new little ivy hedge.



## Birds at the Feeder - Ann Cinquina [05]

Two birds visited my feeder this past month that I have not seen before. One was a Warbler (so cute with a bright yellow tuff just above his tail and in between his wings). The other is a Flycatcher (the least) which is the greyer of them. Unfortunately, they were too far away from my kitchen window for me to snap a picture but close enough to use my binoculars. The Warbler is so cute and the Flycatcher was being patient with my red-bellied Woodpecker. Even the Blue Jays respect the Woodpecker. Actually had a fight with one another in January and the Woody won.

## Flooded Back Yard – Anita Wagner [06]

Over the past winter I had many opportunities to take pictures (like the one to the right) of my backyard being either snow covered or flooded. This past weekend was so beautiful that I thought I would venture out to see what kind of damage may have been done. Believe it or not I am still unable to walk in some areas because it is still extremely soggy.

To my pleasant surprise, though, I did find some daffodils had popped their pretty little heads up. Unfortunately, though, I am going to have to strap on those aerating shoes to increase the oxygen flow in the lawn. I also had to push back my tilling for the vegetable garden for possibly this weekend. Thank goodness for Spring!



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**Happy Birthday  
Master Gardeners!!**

April 1	Bunny Mason
April 20	Kathy Olsen
May 20	Janice Sykes-Heisler

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

Send topic ideas, photos, or  
material to Anita at  
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Atlantic County Master Gardener Program  
Newsletter