



The Garden Gate Newsletter

August–September, 2008

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SMART Lawns
Teddy Martin

Special Events
John Simmonds & Judy Burton

Websites
www.co.henrico.va.us/agent
www.henicomga.org

August Association Meeting

August 13, 1:00pm

Reblooming Bearded Iris

Mike Lockett will discuss reblooming bearded irises. He started the Joyce Lockett Memorial Garden in Powhatan County and he propagates and grows many varieties of both irises and peonies. He was featured in the May 3 Home and Garden section of the *Richmond Times Dispatch*.



September Association Meeting

September 10, 1:00pm

The Bruce Peninsula

Pat Brodie, the membership chair of the local Pocahontas chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society will show slides and give a presentation entitled:

“The Bruce Peninsula: Ontario’s Botanical Treasure”

President's Message

The essence of Master Gardening is education. We are very privileged to be trained by such outstanding persons in the field of horticulture. Our role now is to be a channel of that wealth of information by sharing it with people in our community.



2008 is a special year for Henrico Master Gardeners. Our Henrico Harvest Fair on October 18 provides a wonderful opportunity for educating the public in proper and successful horticultural practices. The fair is a vehicle through which we can share our horticultural knowledge on a much broader scope than some of our regular outreach events.

There are still opportunities available to help with the fair; so if you have not done so already, sign up! Not only is it a great educational outreach but lots of fun as we work together to make the fair a success. We also get lots of work hours! This is truly a win – win event!

-Ann Dutton annforddutton@mindspring.com 740-2514

Annual Dues Notice

To join the HMGA, or renew your membership, please complete the form below and return it along with your check for \$12.00. Dues may be dropped off or mailed to the extension office or handed to the Treasurer at a meeting.

Henrico Master Gardeners Association Membership Renewal Form

Name: _____

Please check one:

_____ I prefer my newsletter to be sent by **Email**

Email Address: _____

_____ I prefer my newsletter to be sent by **USPS mail**

Address: _____

Make checks payable to: **Henrico Master Gardeners Association** and mail to:

Henrico Master Gardeners Association
P.O. Box 27032
Richmond, VA 23273-7032

No Bake Strawberry Cheesecake

Crust:

2 cups graham cracker crumbs
¼ cup sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
6 tbs melted margarine

Mix thoroughly and press into the bottom of a 13 X 9 inch pan. Refrigerate while preparing the filling.

Filling:

4 pks (8 oz ea.) Neufchatel cheese, softened
½ cup strawberry preserves
2 ½ cups fresh strawberries, chopped
8 oz. whipped topping, thawed
¾ cup sugar plus 2 tbs.



Mix the cheese and ¾ cup sugar until well blended. Stir in the preserves. In another bowl mix the strawberries and 2 tbs. sugar and mash slightly with a fork. Stir this and the whipped topping into the cheese mixture. Spoon over the crust, cover and refrigerate at least 4 hours. This cheesecake tastes better the next day.

- Peggy Lowry

Insect Watch: The Emerald Ash Borer

by Peggy Lowry

Probably brought into the Great Lakes area via wooden crates aboard cargo ships, this borer was first detected in Michigan and Canada in 2002. It is a native of eastern Russia and northern Asia and has made its way across seven states. It kills ash trees that, among other things, provide timber for millions of baseball bats. Scientists are working on a way to control this pest, and the federal government has imposed a quarantine in six states. The most recent infestation (2007) is close to us – Fayette County, West Virginia.



Emerald Ash Borer (Adult)

Forestry Images: www.forestryimages.org
photo by: David Cappaert

A Little Bit about Yarrow

Yarrow, *achillea millefolium*, is regarded today as a roadside weed, but it has been used for a variety of cures for thousands of years. In Greek mythology, Achilles was taught by the centaur, Chiron, that yarrow leaves could staunch the blood from wounds – hence the name Archillea; *millefolium* meaning 1000 leaves. The Romans used these leaves to stop blood flow and sterilize wounds as did the barbaric tribes that later invaded the Roman empire and carried the plant home to central Europe. For centuries it was carried in battle for its magical as well as medicinal properties. Yarrow is a native of the Orient, and mountain wanderers there believed that neither tigers nor wolves would be found where yarrow grew.

The Saxons used it in amulets to protect them from all sorts of things including blindness and barking dogs. They called it *gearwe* of which our modern word, yarrow, is a corruption. During the Middle Ages, yarrow was grown in every castle and monastery garden. It was often mixed with beef or mutton tallow for salves and ointments and steeped in wine or water to cure various ailments including melancholy and fevers. The green, fern like leaves were chewed to soothe toothaches and applied in shampoo to control baldness. Witches were said to use yarrow to make incantations and cast spells. It was also used to make love charms. If you wanted, you could wrap about one ounce of yarrow in a little flannel, put it under your pillow and recite:

“Thou pretty of Venus’ tree,
Thy true name is yarrow.
Now who my bosom friend must be,
Pray tell me thou tomorrow.”

Next morning you would see your future spouse in a vision. Yarrow was called by many names – staunch weed, thousand weed, soldiers woundwort, knight’s milfoil, and field hops.

Yarrow was among the many plants brought to America by the early colonists as a dependable blood coagulant. It was also used to clarify and flavor beer before the importation of hops. It was said to make the beer much more potent than the beer flavored with hops.

In the 17th century, yarrow was a popular vegetable. For generations, young leaves were cooked as we cook spinach and sometimes added to soups. The leaves were also chopped and steeped for ten minutes or more as a remedy for digestive disorders. American Indians in the east used it for earaches, toothaches and to soothe swellings and bruises. Yarrow traveled west with the settlers and was carefully planted and used by many tribes. The Navajo called it “life medicine,” the Shawnee used it as a pain relief, the Chippewa inhaled it in a steam for headaches, and the Cherokee drank a tea made from the leaves to reduce fevers and unsure a restful sleep. The flowers have a mild stimulant effect and were sometimes dried and used as snuff.



The Shakers planted it in America’s first commercial herb garden in Lebanon, N.Y. They grew lots of it, packaged and sold it for generations. Today herbalists value it mainly for its action in colds and

influenza and for its effect on the circulatory, digestive, and urinary systems. It is reported to be used in association with treatments for many ailments including blood clots, colds, cystitis, fevers, dyspepsia, stomach sickness, ulcers and various aches and pains. One herbalist claims that yarrow tea can clear up a cold within 24 hours. It does intensify the medicinal action of other herbs used with it.

Some birds, especially the starling, use yarrow leaves to line their nests probably to inhibit the growth of parasites. It also has value as a companion plant. It improves the quality of the soil and can repel some unwanted insects while attracting lady bugs, some predatory wasps and hover flies. The leaves are also a beneficial addition to compost. Experiments have shown that in the vegetable garden yarrow is an agent against blight and seems to encourage the size and quality of vegetables.

Today it grows in almost every state along roadsides, in fields and wastelands. It tolerates many types of soil – poor, dry, and sandy, and performs well in heat and drought. Another plus is that it is not a favorite of deer. Nurserymen have considered these qualities and have produced a number of hybrids. They have become an all time favorite for the sunny garden having a long bloom time, and being durable and dependable. The delicate flowers are flat clusters of jewel toned cherry reds, apricot, salmon, pink, cream, white, and some two tones. The foliage has a pungent scent and stays attractive all summer. Although it is a hardy perennial, yarrow is not long lived and should be divided to prolong its life. The seeds need light to germinate and temperatures of 65° to 75°. Germination takes place in 10 days, and if started early, it will bloom the first season. Bloom time is late spring to early fall. Yarrow needs full sun and well-drained soil to avoid mildew and root rot. The color of the flowers doesn't fade, and they are attractive additions to dry arrangements.

Yarrow's gift to the modern garden is its durability and the spicy odor it retains when dried for winter bouquets.

By Peggy Lowry

Henrico Harvest Fair

Join 70+ Master Gardeners at the Armour House on October 18. Our Harvest Fair is an event showcasing the Henrico Extension Office services and how the Master Gardeners volunteers can help the community.

Be a part of this day at the beautiful Armour House and Gardens at Meadowview Park. Bring your friends, family and neighbors and take part in this event. We still need help in demonstration booths and class room facilitators. We plan to have a bake sale - so warm those ovens and we are looking for a coordinator for the sale.

---Sally Stockslager

Getting To Know Caryn Coombs

Caryn joined the Extension Office staff this year on May 28. She grew up in Painsville, Ohio, the youngest of five children (3 brothers, 1 sister). She was fortunate to grow up knowing her four grandparents. Her paternal grandparents lived in Little Rock, Arkansas, and her maternal grandparents lived in Ashtabula, Ohio. The family had great times together at least once a year.

Caryn earned an Associates Degree with a major in Correspondence Secretary at Lakeland Community College in Kirkland, Ohio. She moved to Richmond in 1982 when the company she worked for (Figgi International, Inc.) moved here, and she has taken classes at the University of Richmond over the years. In 1985 Caryn began working for Crestar Bank and stayed with them until July 1991 when she became a stay-at-home mom for 8 years. Then she returned to Crestar/Sun Trust Bank. Her son, Peter, will be a senior at Douglas Freeman next year.



In 2004, Caryn married Morgan Coombs who owns and operates his own car repair shop here in Richmond.

As she was growing up, she always helped in the garden and also helped canning and freezing vegetables the family grew. She still enjoys working in her flower garden, reading, traveling, and attending her son's football games. She tries to see her family members who live in Ohio and Florida as often as possible. Welcome, Caryn!



Hi All,

I am the **Green Elephant** and I am relaxing in my library. Thank you for donating the many plant and gardening books. I am just itching to begin a garden. I am going to plant perennials, annuals, bulbs, vegetables and of course peanuts. My feet are so big I am afraid I will compact the soil trying to dig and I don't have very long nails.

O how I wish I had some garden tools! Please help me and bring any used tools you no longer need to the Help Line room. I promise to share my harvest with you.

Thank You!

Greening the Urban Landscape is Fundamental

I was fortunate enough recently to be invited to hear Lynden B. Miller, a NYC public gardens designer, speak at the Commonwealth Club, hosted by Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens. Her plant & design knowledge and passion for public spaces has transformed New York City and other locations. She talked about the magical powers of greening public spaces and making them beautiful.

As a landscape painter for eighteen years, she studied horticulture and English garden as well as worked in her own back yard. Beginning with little experience or resources she used her personal style to plant a mixture of shrubs, evergreens & perennials in many New York City parks. She feels people who live in cities need to feel a connection with nature, to see and enjoy the changing of the seasons.

“If you make it beautiful, they will come,” was Miller’s message. Her principles of design are simple: gardens should be beautiful, inviting and surprising in all seasons. Well-planted public places have a huge impact on the surrounding neighborhoods, attracting visitors, reducing crime and raising surrounding real estate values, while creating better air to breathe. Property values rise as flowers bloom.



When people stop going to parks, bad things happen. She saw that happen in New York City in the 70’s and 80’s when unmaintained parks were abandoned by the public and became havens for drug dealers. They were not necessarily dangerous, but they looked it because they were so run-down.

Her message about fixing up public spaces and making them beautiful is “we did this for you and you’re worth it.” In turn, the public responded by picking up the trash, by being courteous to each other and returning again and again, which makes these spaces safer. It’s wonderful that gardens have even inspired perfect strangers to start talking to one another, “Did you see that hummingbird?” or “My grandmother used to have a plant exactly like that one.”

She as well as all Master Gardeners know, beautification is not a frill... it is essential. Everyone, rich or poor, loves being surrounded by nature and beauty. Plants have an ability to transform people’s lives. To see Lynden B. Miller’s before and after pictures of what she’s created and read more about her you can visit: www.publicgardendesign.com. I think you’ll agree it’s simply amazing.

-Jo Ann Cardwell

Meeting Date Reminders

Board Meetings

August 6, 1:00pm
September 3, 1:00pm

Association Meetings

August 13, 1:00pm
September 10, 1:00pm

Please submit your contribution to the newsletter
By **September 20** to Jody Taggart
jody.taggart@comcast.net 360-2680