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[www.co.henrico.va.us/agent](http://www.co.henrico.va.us/agent)

# The Garden Gate e-Newsletter

April - May, 2006

## Association Meetings

**April 12, 1:00PM**

**Virginia's Anniversary Gardens**  
Leanne DuBois, VCE-James City  
and New Kent Counties.



Virginia Cooperative Extension has developed the America's Anniversary Garden to help individuals, communities, and groups mark America's 400th Anniversary with a signature garden planting. Leanne will discuss her role and that of the MG in America's Anniversary Garden project. Come and find out how you can participate. Check out <http://www.ext.vt.edu/americasgarden/>.

**May 10, 1:00PM**



## Member Plant Exchange

Dig them, buy them, grow them and bring them!

Come to the plant exchange with your plants and some information to share about them.

# President's Message



I have mentioned in previous Newsletters and at our monthly meetings, our plan to start two new projects; a Teaching Garden on the grounds of the new Tuckahoe Library and a Heirloom Garden at the recently restored Walkerton Tavern on Mountain Road in Glen Allen. These projects are now underway.

Carol Colby is the coordinator, along with a group of M.G. volunteers, for the Library Garden. This is in the early planning stages now that the exact location has been determined. The site will not be ready for spring planting so the group has time to work on the design and will start the garden with bulbs planted in the fall. They also plan to incorporate the Anniversary Garden concept next spring.

Holly Hartly is coordinating the Walkerton Tavern Garden. This garden will be located behind the Tavern. Beds will be established on two sides of an out-building that was used as the kitchen on the property. Planning for this project is just getting underway.

The purpose of the Garden as defined by the Tavern staff is to plan a garden that can be used for horticulture programs the staff will conduct with children in the spring and summer. They will be requesting assistance from Master Gardeners for their programs which will provide additional volunteer opportunities.

These projects could not have materialized without the MG response we received from those of you who volunteered to be involved in new ventures.

Jack Kelzer

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## Cheddar Bits

Simple, tasty, and fool-proof

½ cup butter or margarine, softened  
8 oz sharp Cheddar, grated or finely shredded  
1 ¼ cups flour  
¼ tsp salt  
¾ tsp onion powder

hour. Shape into very small balls and bake at 350 degrees on ungreased baking sheets for 15 minutes. You should have 50 to 60 bits. They can also be frozen.

Variation: Wrap pinches of cooked, crumbled bacon in the dough balls before baking.

-Peggy Lowry

Have the grated cheese at room temperature.  
Mix all ingredients, cover and chill at least an

# Special Perennials

By Debbie Wilson

The Perennial Plant Association (PPA) selects a special perennial every year. The Perennial Plant of the Year program promotes the use of perennials. PPA members nominate selections, and four are selected by the Perennial Plant of the Year Committee. Members then cast their vote for one of the four selected plants with the following attributes:

- Suitable for a wide range of climate types
- Low maintenance
- Easily propagated – easily comes true from seed or vegetative propagation
- Exhibits multiple seasonal interest

The winner for 2006 is *Dianthus gratianopolitanus*, 'Feuerhexe' (Firewitch). Cheddar pink is the common name of this sun-loving perennial. It is an evergreen with bluish-gray, silvery foliage and purplish-pink fragrant flowers in mid-spring. Rebloom can occur in the summer and into the fall. This cheddar pink is hardy from zones 3 to 9. Mature mats have foliage 3 to 4 inches tall and 6 to 12 inches wide. Flowers will reach 6 to 8 inches high. Best performance is in full sun, well-drained soils.



(From the PPA release) Place Dianthus in full sun locations or in light shade in extremely hot climates in well-drained, neutral to slightly alkaline soil. Do not mulch with deep layers of organic matter. After flowering in late spring, the spent flowers should be cut back to promote rebloom later.

Unique Qualities: The enticing clove-like scent of this low-growing ornamental makes it the perfect choice for use in a border near the walkway. The blooms offer lingering fragrance. Placement near the walkway allows extra scent as passersby brush fragrant blossoms. Pert, bright blooms make Firewitch a perfect choice for the rock garden or for planting in wall crevices. The perennial quality creates a good ground cover on a sunny slope.

A decade of previous Perennial Plant of the Year winners:

- 2005 *Helleborus x hybridus*
- 2004 *Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum'
- 2003 *Leucanthemum* 'Becky'
- 2002 *Phlox* 'David'
- 2001 *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
- 2000 *Scabiosa columbaria* 'Butterfly Blue'
- 1999 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldstrum'
- 1998 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Magnus'
- 1997 *Salvia* 'Mainacht' (May Night)
- 1996 *Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red'

*Follow-up note* from my last article about lighting for plants – For anyone who was wondering how the kitchen renovation lighting decisions turned out, both my husband and the African violets are happy! We used halogen lighting with dimmers in the new kitchen design and moved the violets to a nice wide shelf in the study along with a fluorescent, wide-spectrum lighting. The kitchen looks great without counters cluttered with pots of flowers and with flexibility in the amount of lighting available, and the violets have never looked so good. -Debbie

## Attention all Mentors

Have you “had a chat” with your MG trainee/mentee recently? Now might be a good time to contact him/her as they have completed the classroom portion of their training and they are planning ways to meet the 50 hour volunteer requirement. Sharing your experiences and expertise at this time could be most helpful.

Thanks for your willingness to be a Mentor this year. Members of the Class of 2006 have expressed appreciation for the Mentoring program.

Cynthia Seal, Training Committee Chairman

## Volunteer Opportunity

Julie Abbott, our Lewis Ginter Liaison, has information about volunteer opportunities at Lewis Ginter doing educational tasks in the **Childrens Garden** and with the Garden Cart

For more information, please contact Julie (jda55@erols.com). To schedule volunteer time at Lewis Ginter contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Kelly Riley (262-9887 ext.336). To get Henrico MG credit for hours volunteered at Lewis Ginter, hours should be above and beyond the required 20 hours for recertification and please wear your MG nametag at Lewis Ginter.

## Spring Gardenfest

The Goochland-Powhatan Master Gardener Association (GPMGA) in cooperation with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (JSRCC) will host the Second Spring Garden Fest on Saturday, **April 29 from 9 am to 4 pm**, at the Western (Goochland) Campus of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. Classes can count for up to a maximum of four hours.

The event offers 25 different classes. Included among the speakers are Andy Hankins (VCE expert from VA State), Robert Harper (former VCE agent), Sam Barkley (Virginia Forester), Art Chadwick (Chadwick's Orchids), and many other GPMGA and local speakers of note. There will be sessions for youth 6-12 hosted by the local 4-H coordinators, vendors, food, plant sales, weed id booth, and many other educational displays, some hosted by horticultural students from JSRCC. Cost is \$5.00 for preregistration and \$8.00 at the gate, children's program is \$1, and some programs will have additional materials fees. For more information and to pre-register please contact the Goochland VCE office at 804-556-5841 or visit their web site at [www.gpmga.org](http://www.gpmga.org).

# Getting To Know Betty Fahed

Betty grew up in Red Springs, North Carolina and earned a degree in business at Meredith College in Raleigh in 1969. She joined the Federal Reserve that same year, moved to Richmond and continued her education to receive a Master of Commerce degree at the University of Richmond. She spent 36 years with the Federal Reserve in management responsibility for statistics, accounting, financial planning, budgeting and strategic planning. She was also an advisor to the president for four years. She retired as a vice president in January 2005 and immediately began her training as a master gardener. “— a wonderful way to kick off my retirement!”

Betty has worked on the Helpline, in plant clinics, and has especially enjoyed helping with the Junior Master Gardeners at Crestview and the Friendly Garden Tour. She is now chairman of the Finance Committee.

Betty met her husband, Tom, here in Richmond; and the two of them restored a couple of old houses in Church Hill where they lived for 22 years. They love animals and adopted several stray cats and a dog. Two cats are still with them. Tom is an active board member of the Historic Richmond Foundation.

Flowers and shrubs are the main plants in Betty’s shade garden. She loves peonies, aucuba, Southern Magnolia and the Dogwood. She now enjoys volunteering at Lewis Ginter, the Kiwanis Club and helping people make financial plans in her volunteer works with Wills Financial Group.



## Orange Brownies

1 ½ cups flour  
2 cups sugar  
1 tsp salt  
2 sticks butter or margarine, softened  
4 eggs  
2 tsp pure orange extract  
1 tsp fresh grated orange zest

Glaze:

1 cup confectioners’ sugar  
2 tbs orange juice  
1 tsp fresh grated orange zest

Cream the butter and sugar. Stir in the salt, extract and zest. Beat in the eggs, one at a time. Stir in the flour and beat by hand or hand held mixer until well blended. Pour into a well greased 9 x 13 inch pan. Bake at 350degrees for 30 minutes. Test with toothpick. Remove from oven and pierce top of entire surface.

Mix glaze ingredients and spread over warm brownies.

Cool on racks before cutting.

Peggy Lowry

## Behind the Shed

This is a new section of the newsletter where members can exchange plants, cuttings, seeds and other garden items with other members. You could also find a partner for a trip or maybe someone to help with a special project. Send in your contribution!

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☀ From Mary E Vetrovec 320-4349 or Mevetrovec@aol.com

### Strawberry Begonia

A low evergreen ground cover with insignificant blooms. It has variegated, textured leaves, spreads with runners and seems to flourish in sun or shade.

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☀ From Nancy Penick, Nrpenick2500@aol.com

Black-eyed susans, Japanese aster, 'she fields pinks' mums



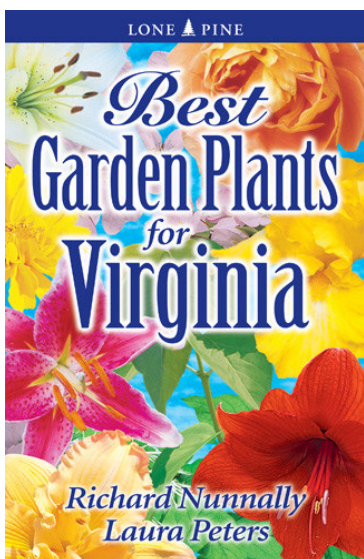
## Designing and Growing Kitchen Gardens

Join Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden as David Hirsch, author of the recently re-issued Moosewood Restaurant Kitchen Garden and Amy Hicks, organic gardener and well-known Farmer's Market vendor, offer tips on designing kitchen gardens, growing successfully, harvesting, and culinary uses. David will discuss design and culinary uses. Amy Hicks will discuss heirloom and Asian vegetable varieties for the Richmond area. **Thursday, April 6, 4:30 – 6:30 pm**

This is not a cooking demonstration, but some recipes will be shared.

\$30 members / \$40 non-members. Master Gardeners receive the member price. Be sure to mention that you are a MG when you register and where your MG nametag.  
RSVP TO: 804-262-9887 ext. 322 (Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden)

## *Richard Nunnally to Speak About New Book*



You are invited to a free, special, limited seating hour and a half gathering with Richard Nunnally, author of the newly released Best Garden Plants for Virginia. Sponsored by Prime Time Advisors, a private senior-services company. For more information: [www.primetimeadvisors.com](http://www.primetimeadvisors.com)

Spend a spring morning with Richmond Times Dispatch columnist and host of WCVE-Channel 23's Virginia Home Grown Richard Nunnally. Enjoy light refreshments and meet some of the Prime Time Advisors. Don't miss registering for the great door prizes! Richard's newly released Best Garden Plants for Virginia will be available during the event.

April 22, 2006, 9:30 am  
Spring Arbor Assisted Living  
9991 Ridgefield Parkway  
Seating is limited Admission is free but  
**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED call 754-8700**

# A Little Bit about...Camassia

*By Peggy Lowry*

**F**or centuries the camassia (ka-mas'i-a) has been one of the most highly prized plants in the Pacific Northwest. Its small but nutritious bulb was a significant food source for both the Indians and the pioneers who later entered the territory. Every year the coming of summer was heralded by the camassia flower stalks that changed the mountain meadows and creekside food plains to seas of blue. The common camassia has a long history of use as a food for both man and animal in North America. The trappers and first homesteaders were taught by the Indians to dig and eat the bulbs. They were eaten raw, roasted, boiled or dried and stored. For the Indians, they were a primary source of carbohydrate. Access to digging areas was so important that battles were fought over ownership of the fields. It was when the Nez Perce Indians left their reservation for their traditional camassia gathering that the long and bloody Chief Joseph War began.



The camassia quamash bulb, about an inch in diameter, is starchy, nutritious and potato-like in flavor. But the camassia cusickii bulb grows to several times that size and is fowl-smelling and inedible. The common camassia quamash bulb was prized because it stored so easily – uncut bulbs retain their freshness for at least six months. With long slow cooking, its starchy chewiness changes to a flavor and texture similar to a baked sweet potato. Some Northwestern Indians made a molasses-like syrup by boiling the bulbs in water for many hours. Bulbs were also eaten raw or sliced and dried. The carbohydrate in camassias is an unusual one: a bonded fructose complex carbohydrate known as inulin that rarely occurs in nature. Slow cooking breaks the inulin down into its fructose components, making it sweet. Camassia bulbs also helped sustain the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806).

Luther Burbank was one of the first to recognize the potential of this member of the lily family. For more than twenty years he grew, crossed and compared five camassia species until at one time he was growing over 20,000 of these bulbs in his nursery. He tried to develop both the beauty of the flower and the palatability of the bulb. By crossing several species he was able to increase the size of the bulb from that of a walnut to that of a large turnip. Under his direction, the flowers grew larger and the colors ranged from the native blue to deep purple and to almost white. Few people have continued his work since he died; however, several organizations are dedicated to preserving native plants including species of the camassia and its cousin, the sego lily. Because the areas where camassias still grow are ideal for human use, such as housing developments, grazing and cultivation, the range of this native plant is now only isolated pockets; and some strains are lost forever. They can be found from British Columbia to southern California and east to Montana and Utah. Although native to the northwest they are hardy to Zone 5 and can be planted from Pennsylvania to Alabama and southwest as far as Texas.

Today many bulb catalogs offer them to be planted in the fall. The bulbs send up tall, grass-like leaves and one to two foot flower stalks from blue to white. They should be planted about four inches deep in good, well drained soil. Planted singly or in small groups the blooms are not impressive, but they are spectacular in large drifts. Plant them in sun or partial sun. They prefer moist soil during the winter but can completely dry out in the summer. The flowers bloom along with daffodils and are excellent for cutting. The bulbs are also good for forcing. Propagation can be by division or by seed. If you let a few of the flowers go to seed, they will dry and turn brown in late summer. At that point, small black seeds can be gathered and planted indoors or kept to be planted outdoors in the spring; however, if not planted soon after collection, the germination rate declines rapidly. Camassia from seed will bloom in four to five years. They are also called Kamas, Camas, Camash and Quamash. An interesting plant – a pleasure to look at, easy to grow, a cause of wars, and a valuable food source. Luther Burbank predicted in 1914: “In the end, the camassia will prove to be an ornamental plant of distinct value, highly prized for its flowers. But it will also be prized for its bulb which, in the developed and selected hybrids, is assuming satisfactory proportions and which has undoubted food value, surpassing the potato even, both as to nutrients and flowers.”

## Southern Women’s Show

Henrico Master Gardeners will have a display booth at the Southern Women’s Show Friday April 7 - Sunday April 9 at the Richmond Raceway Complex. For more information about the show, see their website:

[www.southernshows.com/wri/](http://www.southernshows.com/wri/)



### In Memoriam

Master Gardener Judith McGowan died on February 14. Judith became a MG in 2005. She was a painter, gourd artisan and founded the Southern Roots Gourd Network. She will be missed.

# Meeting Date Reminders

April, 2006						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
3	4	5 <b>1:00 Board Meeting</b>	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 <b>1:00 Association Meeting</b>	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	20	21	22
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
					Spring Gardenfest	

## May 2006

1	2	3 <b>1:00 Board Meeting</b>	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 <b>1:00 Association Meeting</b>	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Please e-mail your contribution to the newsletter  
 By **May 20** to Jody Taggart  
[jody.taggart@comcast.net](mailto:jody.taggart@comcast.net)