



# The Garden Gate e-Newsletter

August - September, 2007

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

## Association Meetings

**August 8, 1:00PM**

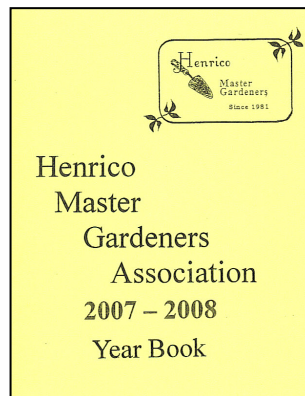
Master Gardener John Coe discusses birds and gardening. Don't miss out on one of our resident experts. If you have a question about birds, John can probably answer it.

**September 12,  
1:00PM**

September's meeting is a field trip. Susan Estes and Beverly Cochrane will open their gardens for tours. See page 8 for details and directions and don't be late!



From Beverly's Garden



## Did you get your little yellow book?

The association Year Book is a great reference for meeting dates, phone numbers and other information about your association. Pick one up at the next meeting. And thanks to Peggy Lowry and Joyce Brannon for their hard work in

putting it together again this year!

# President's Message

**Top 10 facts and lessons learned At Master Gardener College,  
June 19-24, 2007, Blacksburg, Virginia**

10. Spending 6 days with other "plant Geeks" like me is a lot of fun.
9. The New River Valley Master Gardeners work hard, long hours to host MGCollege in their "neck of the woods".
8. The Portland cement for making hypertufa planters does not come in bags smaller than 90 lbs.
7. The Virginia Beach Master Gardeners brought a group of 32 and they had a loud, good time.
6. Our MG secretary, Holly Hartley is now trained as a Water Steward after 40 hours of classes and hands on activities (more from her in a later newsletter).
5. People from all over Virginia know our fearless unit coordinator Karen Carter.
4. Gardening in the New River Valley is often done on a 45 degree incline.
3. Keynote speaker Tony Avent, owner of Plant Delights in Raleigh, NC is hysterical. And I now know what an Aroid is.
2. Next year will be the 21st annual Virginia Master Gardener College and each of you should consider attending.
1. Dorm rooms are much smaller than I remember and cafeteria food is much more delicious-alone worth the trip.

For further details just ask me. Mary E Vetovec 320-4349 mevetovec@aol.com



## Mini Tiramisu Eclairs

- 1/3 cup hot water
- 2 tsp instant coffee granules
- 2 tbs sugar
- 24 lady fingers, split
- 1 8 oz. pk mascarpone cheese  
(cream cheese can be substituted)
- 1 ½ cups powdered sugar, divided
- 2 tbs chocolate syrup
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tbs butter
- 1 tbs heavy cream

Stir together the hot water, coffee granules and 2 tbs sugar until sugar is dissolved. Set aside 2 tbs. Brush cut sides of ladyfingers with remaining coffee mixture.

Stir together the cheese, ½ cup powdered sugar and the chocolate syrup. Spread or pipe



mixture evenly onto 24 cut sides of ladyfinger halves and top with other halves.

Microwave chocolate chips, butter and cream on high for 30 seconds or until melted, stirring once. Drizzle over eclairs. Let stand until firm.

Stir together reserved coffee mixture and remaining one cup powdered sugar. Drizzle over eclairs

Makes 24

*Note:* I found that brushing the bottom halves of the ladyfingers with the coffee mix made them a little soggy. If you use cream cheese instead of mascarpone, the eclairs will not taste as good.

These eclairs freeze well.

-Peggy Lowry

## Getting To Know New Board Member Suzanne Pericle

*By Peggy Lowry*



I became a Master Gardener in 2006. I enjoy Smart Lawns, like to do the Speaker's Bureau and enjoy the hotline. I enjoyed every minute of MG class time and still like to go back and learn from the experts. My favorite flowers are tulips. My favorite shrub is the hydrangea—growing up in England it was everywhere, and I thought it was very old fashioned and was disappointed the bloom didn't have a fragrance; but now I love it. My favorite tree is river birch—I love the bark and the leaves in the wind. I enjoy flower and herb gardening the most—my husband plants the vegetables.

I grew up in London, England, where I developed a love for green things. My mother was a fantastic gardener and turned our yard into an oasis. We spent many summers digging the yard, amending the soil and planting. It wasn't until my late teenage years that I learned to enjoy it. I also served a mission for my church in British Columbia, Canada, where I lived in the city of Vancouver and in Victoria on Vancouver Island. Both of those areas have the most beautiful vegetation and gardens, and I was hooked on gardening.

I attended Brigham Young University, earning a degree in Journalism. I lived in Washington, D.C and then moved to the central valley of California with my husband. Where we lived you could practically stick anything in the ground, water it and it would grow—the topsoil is said to be 10 feet deep in the valley. No wonder it's called the "bread basket of the U.S." We moved to Richmond in 1995. The first thing my husband did after we closed on our house was rent a rototiller and dig up an area for a vegetable garden. We soon learned that gardening in this humid climate is quite different from the dry California heat, and we have made every mistake possible but we are learning through trial and error. I discovered Andre Viette's horticulture radio show on Saturday mornings, and that was the beginning of my education on gardening in Virginia.

My husband, Tony, and I have five children ranging in ages from 7-16 – the oldest is a boy and then four girls. We have two in elementary school, one in middle and two in high school. I am attempting to teach them to love gardening—my younger ones love to plant vegetables and sunflowers—the teenagers are a little less enthusiastic. Whenever I point out beautiful trees or plants and they roll their eyes, I tell them, "When your mother is long gone, remember how she loved plants and trees." In 2003 we moved into a new home. Half of our back yard was trees, the other half bare soil. I had a wonderful time planning and planting the bare half. My husband keeps asking me if we're "done" and I just tell him, "With gardening you are never 'done,' just enjoy the journey."

Suzanne is our second vice president.

## *Help Wanted: Name This Event*

For those of you not able to attend the June or July Association meetings there was idea put forth for an event to be planned for the fall of 2008. The “Extension Helping Hand Extravaganza”, “The Color Fest”, or maybe **you** have a name.

An adhoc committee is studying the possibility of holding this event for the citizens of Henrico County. Virginia Cooperative Extension Service is a hidden jewel for the citizens of Henrico County. This will be a family event showcasing all services the Extension office provides: 4-H, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Horticulture will be featured.

Sub committees have been formed in the following areas.

Risk Management, Classes & Speakers, Children’s activities, Donation of Supplies, and Food. Some of the classes planned are, Native Plants, Planning for Spring Plantings, Wildlife Friendly Habitat, Plant Propagation and many more.

The date and location of this unnamed event has not been finalized yet, but we are considering Henrico County’s newest Parks and Recreation facility named Armour House as a potential site. A tentative date of October 18, 2008 is also possible.

We want and need lots of help and this will give everyone a chance to apply his or her talents. Maybe you would like to be a speaker, a planner or help to advertise? So save some of your 2007/2008 volunteer hours to put toward making this event happen.

All suggestions wanted and accepted. Everyone’s participation is needed to make this a successful event.

*-Sally Stockslager*

## **Annual Dues Notice Reminder**

Don’t forget to pay your dues for the coming year if you have not done so already!

This is your last issue of the Garden Gate if you do not renew your membership with the association. Please complete this registration form 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 (Beverly Cochrane) at a meeting.

### Henrico Master Gardeners Association Membership Registration Form

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail me the newsletter

I prefer my newsletter be sent by email. email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to: Henrico Master Gardeners Association

#### Mail To:

Henrico Master Gardener Association

P.O. Box 27032

Richmond, VA 23273-7032

# International Master Gardener Conference

*By Beverly Cochran*

The first week of May I attended the International Master Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. Until I discovered the registration information for this conference on the internet, I had no idea such an event existed, and the “international” tag intrigued me. So, I used frequent flyer miles to arrange to get there and booked the hotel and registered for the conference. Never having been to Little Rock, or Arkansas for that matter, I had no idea what to expect. The airport was small (think RIC just a few years ago) with only two baggage carousels. The area that was set up and manned with seven Arkansas Master Gardeners to greet us as we arrived was larger than all of baggage claim. By the time I had met the welcoming committee, my baggage had arrived and a shuttle was outside to carry me to the hotel. Good start.

On the shuttle, I met Master Gardeners from California and Ontario, Canada (the international component). In fact, I learned that there are only a total of ten Ontario Master Gardeners and seven of them were in attendance. The conference was at the beautiful and historic Peabody Hotel and Conference Center in downtown Little Rock. This hotel has four Mallard ducks that live in the hotel and spend the daytime hours playing in a pool in the lobby of the hotel. Every morning and evening, the Duck Master escorts the ducks down to the lobby and then back to their home on the second floor via the elevator. It is quite a sight to watch.

After checking in, I went to the conference registration area and experienced a fast, efficient and friendly group of volunteers. During the first evening there was a reception, dinner and keynote speaker, after which I collapsed into bed, exhausted from a day of travel.



**P. Allen Smith's Garden**

The next two and a half days were filled with interesting speakers and beautiful gardens. The speakers included P. Allen Smith, who is a well-known gardener, author and star of a PBS show. He was charming, informative and very down-to-earth. There was also a gentleman who came from Scotland, in his kilt, just to speak to us about the beautiful gardens of his country. The tours were all of private gardens, including Mr. Smith's in-town garden that was overflowing with plants on a beautiful, but small city lot. He also has a large property outside of town that was available for touring, but I didn't get to fit it into my schedule. The conference also featured a silent auction and garden marketplace. The silent auction had over one hundred items, including a “Jamestown 400” cap donated by Dave Close, and the

marketplace had over forty vendors, all with gardening items.

The most difficult part of registering for this conference was in deciding among the many classes and garden tours offered. They were all informative and enjoyable. My favorite class was on using tropicals in the non-tropical garden. The speaker was from LSU and he gave us all small variegated Tapioca plants--a beautiful little plant that actually made it back to Richmond in my carry-on bag and is now growing well on my patio.

On Friday evening, we were treated to the “Taste of Little Rock” event. There were two large tents within walking distance of the hotel filled with food and beverage vendors. I assumed that this was an annual event that just happened to occur at the same time as the conference. Wrong. This event was arranged just for the MG Conference, and it was excellent. It also included a tour of a museum/historic village in the city and ended with ice cream at the old state house which was next door to the hotel.

Saturday morning I exchanged phone numbers and email addresses with new friends and listened to three final speakers before heading back to Richmond. I arrived home tired, but also energized by the adventure, the new friends, and the new gardening knowledge.

This was one of the most well organized conferences that I have ever attended, and the only one I've ever been to that was staffed almost completely by volunteers. They had over four hundred Master Gardener volunteers from the state of Arkansas who worked tirelessly to ensure that the experience was outstanding. I can now understand why these International Conferences are only held every other year and are planned six to eight years in advance. It must take that long to get everything together. The next international conference is in Las Vegas, March 22-26, 2009 and the one after that is in Charleston, WV in 2011. There is also a Southern Regional Conference in Oklahoma City, June 18-21, 2008 ([www.mastergardener2008.com](http://www.mastergardener2008.com)). Maybe we can get a group to go to one of these. If the conference in Little Rock is any example, it will be well worth our time.

## Getting To Know New Board Member Holly Hartley

Holly grew up in Florida and Virginia Beach, with one year in Maryville (pronounced Muhrvul if you are a native), Tennessee. She graduated from Virginia Beach High School in 1960 with a major in sand, from JMU in 1964 with a major in Elementary Education and a concentration in Psychology, and from U of R in 1980 with a Master's in Guidance and Counseling. In 1998 she graduated from her career of 34 years in Henrico County School System having taught elementary school, middle school math; and the last 11 years she was a counselor. Holly has had several part time jobs: pool attendant, school librarian, summer school teacher, bank teller (including being held up in a robbery) and bartender.



After leaving the school system she volunteered with the Henrico County Police as a Motorist Assistant for five years. During those five years she also helped train Communications Officers, worked with a fingerprint investigator for one year, flew in the surveillance plane for about 8 months (boring!), taught in the Police Academy for two and a half years and did several police presentations to the public.

During her stint at the Division of Police, Holly started volunteering at the Science Museum of Virginia, has been there about six years and is on the SMV Volunteer Association Board. She also volunteers for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and has been trained as a wish interviewer.

Holly graduated as a Master Gardener in 2005, has been doing Smart Lawns ever since and attended the Master Gardener College in June. She attended the Water Stewardship classes for four and a half days and plans to continue imparting her newly gained knowledge about water quality to the public as much as possible.

Gardening is her favorite hobby as well as taking piano lessons. She enjoys landscaping; however, needs a bit more practice. Becoming a Master Gardener has been a challenge, and she enjoys learning from other Master Gardeners.

Her favorite trees are river birch and hollies; favorite plants are the easy ones like camellias. She hopes some day someone will invent a way to include the holes with the purchase of a plant.

Holly is our recording secretary.

*-Peggy Lowry*

## A Little Bit about Amaranth

By Peggy Lowry

The amaranths are old fashion plants that are becoming popular again not only as ornamentals but also as food. Most of us are familiar with globe amaranth (*Gomphrena*), loves-lies-bleeding and summer poinsettia. Wyman's lists the western tumbleweed as an amaranth. There are about sixty species of this plant, some of which produce highly nutritious grain. The name, "amaranth," comes from the Greek meaning "not withering" probably because the flowers of some of this species retain n their bright colors long after being gathered and dried. They became a symbol of immortality in ancient Greece, and the early Christian church later adopted them also as an immortality symbol. The flowers were planted in monastery gardens to repeat the reds, purples, and golds of the stained glass windows. The globe amaranths still play a part today in religious ceremonies in rural Spain and Portugal.

By Elizabethan days, various amaranths were growing all over Europe, especially in cottage and castle gardens. John Gerard praised them, especially Joseph's Coat, in his herbal (1597) saying, "It farre exceedeth my skill to describe."

In 1519 when Cortez arrived in Mexico, he found the Aztecs growing not only potatoes, pumpkins and corn but also amaranth – a six foot tall version of the common Mediterranean roadside weed. Montezuma had been collecting a tribute of 200,000 bushels of amaranth seeds annually from all of the seventeen provinces of his empire. The Aztecs made idols by mixing the grain with honey and human blood, carried them in religious processions – and then ate them. Today in Mexico there is a confection called "Alegria" (joy) made from popped amaranth seeds and syrup and eaten on saints days and at certain festivals.

Cortez soon realized that amaranth grain was a staple crop and ordered all of the fields burned, and anyone who attempted to grow it was to be severely punished. This action was one of the main causes of the downfall of the Aztec empire.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, amaranth was considered an essential herb, and so the seeds were carried to the new world by English colonists. The Spanish were already cultivating it in Central America, and it spread throughout all of North America. Pioneers and Indians alike gathered and cooked it. The flowers one of the species were used by the Hopi Indians to make a deep red dye. Amaranth, commonly called "flower-gentles," were planted at Jamestown and Williamsburg as well as many of the plantation gardens in Virginia and the Carolinas including the Governor's palace and the gardens of Custis, William Byrd, Washington and Jefferson. The glove amaranth was a favorite of Jefferson and was used in dried arrangements at Monticello as well as many southern homes. In time it became popular in New England and Pennsylvania, and by Victorian times was planted in parks and various public properties. But, by 1900 amaranths were considered gaudy, vulgar common plants – quite unfashionable.



After a century of being in the back ground, amaranths are coming back into their own. Amaranths of one kind or another are indigenous to the Americas, Africa, parts of Europe, Asia and Australia. All are tough plants – some edible and some not. They are not fazed by heat, drought or pests; however, they do not tolerate cold. All gardeners are familiar with prostrate pigweed, the only amaranth strictly native to the U.S. Pigweed is also called Goosefoot, Wild Spinach, and Lambs Quarters. Long ago, the country folk in Great Britain observed that their form of pigweed bloomed around the first of August or the beginning of the harvest quarter called Lammas. Lammas is the "slurred" form of Loaf Mass referring to the gain harvest. In time, this Lammas Quarter herb became "Lambs Quarters." When gathered young, the leaves contain more vitamins and minerals than chard or beet greens. Most edible amaranth greens do not have much taste but are quite palatable mixed with stronger tasting greens or cooked with bacon or ham hocks. They are richer in vitamins A and C than spinach and are high in calcium and iron. In the past, certain amaranth leaf infusions were used as astringents to staunch bleeding and swelling, and to treat boils and hemorrhoids. Some infusions were taken internally for bronchitis.

The seeds of the grain amaranths are one of the few grains that contain all of the amino acids – an ideal source of protein. The seeds taste better if roasted before being ground. They can be mixed with other flours

when making quick breads and pancakes, in hot cereals, and as a soup thickener. Some of the grains can be popped for snacking like popcorn.

More than most plants, amaranths absorb minerals and some toxins from the soil in which it grows. If one wanted to grow it for food, it should be planted in a place far away from polluted sites or septic tanks. Seeds should be started indoors or sown directly outdoors about the same time as you would plant beans or corn.

For eating, plant in rows about 8 inches apart and thin plants to 8 inches apart within rows if you want grain or 2 inches apart if you want leaves. Leaves can be eaten about a month after planting. No single species or variety of amaranth will give you the tastiest leaves, showiest flowers or the largest yield of grain. Yield per acre of seed amaranth is relatively high, but plants need close supervision, and the seeds must be harvested by hand. Because it is easy to cook and well suited to human nutritional needs, interest in grain amaranth has revived, and it is being commercially cultivated. So amaranths are staging a comeback not only as ornamentals but also as a food crop. Grain amaranths are relatively pest free, and today's plant wizards will probably develop hybrids to fit the needs of the world's hungry people.

## September Association Meeting Field Trip

Okay, Garden Fans, we have a great association meeting planned for Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. We have been invited to tour not one, but **two**, fabulous gardens.

Susan Estes, who completed the Hanover Master Gardener program, has agreed to share her cherished acre of "outdoor rooms," each of which features its own plants and flowers. Annually, Susan and her husband plant 500 bulbs, and the more than 3,000 varieties of flowers, trees, and shrubs make her garden beautiful in all seasons. You may have seen Sylvia Wright's article featuring the Estes' garden in the June/July issue of *Housetrends*.

Additionally, our own Beverly Cochrane has invited us to her garden afterwards for refreshments. Beverly is a plant collector. "I have one of everything," she says. Beverly likes tropicals as well, so touring her garden will be quite a treat.

Form your own car pools, wear comfortable walking shoes, and gather at the Estes' home at 1:00 p.m. on September 12<sup>th</sup>. After the tour there, we will proceed to Beverly's garden which is nearby.

Directions: The Estes' garden is located at 129 Brookschase Lane. From the Extension office, travel on Parham Road past the Regency Mall and take the River Road exit which is a left turn at a traffic light. At the light at the end of the exit ramp, turn left (East) onto River Road. Continue to right onto Windsor James Place, left onto Bevelyn Way, and right onto Brookschase Lane. 129 Brookschase Lane will be on the left.

Beverly's garden is at 505 South Gaskins Road. Leaving Susan's house: take Brookschase Lane back to Bevelyn Way and turn left onto Bevelyn Way, right onto Windsor James Place, and left (West) onto River Road. Continue on River Road for 2.7 miles and take a left at a traffic light onto Gaskins Road. Continue .5 miles to Beverly's house which will be on the left at 505 South Gaskins Road. Beverly recommends parking on either Old Club Trace or on Gaskins. Her driveway may be available and, if so, be mindful of getting blocked in by others who arrive after you.

Barring hurricanes and tropical storms, both gardens are available to us rain or shine. Questions, comments, concerns? Call Carol LaVigne at 515-0113.

# History of Henrico Master Gardener Classes 1981 to 2006

*By Joyce Brannon*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Graduates</u>	<u>Number Active</u>	<u>Active Members Names</u>
1981	17	0	
1982	12	1	Judy Burton
1983	17	1	Margot Burgwyn
1984	14	2	Julie Abbott, Peggy Lowry
1985	11	0	
1986	10	0	
1987	14	0	
1988	13	0	
1989	15	1	June Walker
1990	18	0	
1991	13	0	
1992	16	0	
1993	19	2	Mary Glen Taylor, Lou Weissbecker
1994	24	3	Dave Brobst, Joanie Brobst, Cole Culver
1995	22	3	Carol Colby, Pat Greene, Pat Remley
1996	17	3	Joyce Brannon, John Coe, Jim Smith
1997	19	4	Chuck Bingley, Elizabeth Cooke, Arline Murphy, Janie Vincent
1998	13	1	John Simmonds
1999	19	4	Amy Morkoc, Dick Forrester, Connie Lilly, Tom Walls
2000	20	5	Shelby Earehart, Tom Fifer, Jack Kelzer, Carol LaVigne, Dermot Murphy
2001	20		
2002	14	5	Belinda Ashmore, Sandy Ashworth, Flo Grigg, Susan Robson, Rob Walser
2003	22	17	Denise Bunting, Beverly Cochrane, Lyn Dodge, Allen Earehart, Wayne Ferguson, Betty Gillian, Erica Gilliam, Laura Hawkrigde, Betty Parker, Nancy Penick, Alice Preston, Patricia Schultz, Jody Taggart, Mary E. Vetrovec
2004	19	14	Jackie Dean, Ann Dutton, Lucy Hottle, Mary Kolb, Bill Omberg, Allyson Roberts, Faye Derkits, Kelly Hammock, Sherry Kerley, Jeanette McKittrick, John Sartin, Claude Seal, Keith Wyllie, Allison Wright
2005	21	16	Mary Ann Adams, John Baranowski, Pat Baskind, Gladys Bowles, Ray Clemen, Betty Fahed, Holly Hartley, Theresa Hawkes, Gwen Hipp, Barbara Keith, Katherine Kelly, Janice Kuhn, Gerri Lynch, Teddy Martin, Letty Muncy, Ed Piper,
2006	19	17	Claudia Alcorace, Cheryl Berg, Joyce Conner, Terry Duke, David Hammer, Stuart Hanckel, Linda Markwardt, Jim Miller, Suzanne Pericle, Irene Pittman, Nora Prince, Pauline Schaut, Carolyn Snider, Elizabeth Steele, Sally Stockslager, Susan Wasserman, Sheila Zeheb

# Meeting Date Reminders

## Board Meetings

August 1, 1:00 PM  
September 5, 1:00 PM

## Association Meetings

August 8, 1:00PM  
September 12, 1:00PM

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