



The Garden Gate Newsletter

April – May 2009

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Gardeners
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Plant Clinic
Dave & Joanie Brobst

SMART Lawns
Teddy Martin

Special Events
John Simmonds & Judy Burton

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

Board Meetings

Please note this change to the board meeting schedule as follows:

April 8, 11:30a.m. (not April 1)

Association Meetings

April 8, 1:00pm

Extension Agent **Karen Carter** will give a presentation to the association regarding the collaboration between the extension office and master gardeners.

May 13, 11:00am

Annual Plant Exchange and Potluck Luncheon at Pat Greene's

Where: Pat Greene's home located at 9410 Sir Barry Court (off Pemberton Road, three blocks north of Quioccasin. Details inside.)

Looking forward to seeing Interns and Association Members at this annual event.

Association Website

Don't forget to check the association website for timely information about meetings, links to interesting websites and the helpline schedule.

www.henricomga.org

President's Message

Every organization needs volunteers who bring their individual areas of expertise into the group's leadership and support structure. We in Henrico Master Gardeners Association definitely have our fair share of such persons! Our volunteers work quite effectively and harmoniously and for that we are most grateful.



Some volunteers prefer to work in their area of proven skill, finding their niche, and remaining content there. Another type of volunteer is a risk-taker; not being afraid to commit to a job they have never done before. Sally did this last year with her vision of the Harvest Fair and together we were able to successfully produce a major gardening event. Mary E. took a risk with the hypertufa workshop. Many Harvest Fair volunteers were risk-takers, working in areas that were quite new but pushing ahead toward success and accomplishment.

Lately there are more and more calls coming into the Extension Office asking for Master Gardener volunteers in a wide variety of areas. Some of these requests are for things we have never done before and some are more familiar. All provide opportunity to venture out into areas both known and unknown.

We need more risk-taker volunteers! We need folks who are willing to dare to work in a new area. Our needs are such that we cannot fill them only using folks who have “done it before.” If that were our mindset for the Harvest Fair last year it would never have materialized!

Volunteers are needed who are willing to respond to some of the newer appeals coming into the Extension Office. We also need volunteers who have not been annual participants in our routine commitments such as Plant Clinics. There are still areas of need for our Harvest Fair.

This vast array of gardening opportunities provides “something for everyone”, both in areas of proven skills and in new untested areas. All offer ways to contribute to horticultural education in Henrico County.

Dare to tackle some new area this year. You just may be surprised how much you enjoy it!

-Ann Dutton annforddutton@mindspring.com 740-2514

Upcoming Events

Hypertufa Workshop: Mary E. Vetrovec, Master Gardener, on Saturday, April 4th, from 1-3 p.m. at The Armour House. \$12.00. Call 501-5147.

Composting: Karen Carter, Henrico County Extension Agent, on Saturday, May 2nd, from 9-11 a.m. at Belmont Recreation Center. \$6.00. Call 501-5147.

Tea Gardens: Earline Bethea, Master Gardener Intern, on Saturday, April 18th, from 1-3 p.m. at The Armour House & Gardens. \$15.00. Call 501-5147.

Ongoing Lawn Care Seminars: Building a Healthy Lawn, Master Gardeners or County Extension Agent, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, April 21st, 22nd, and 23rd at the following libraries: Sandston (Tuesdays), Tuckahoe (Wednesdays) and Twin Hickory (Thursdays). Since the lawn series started, classes given on March 10th, 11th and 12th were well attended. They are free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required. Call 501-5160 to register.

Annual Plant Exchange and Potluck Luncheon

We are delighted that Pat Greene and her husband have graciously agreed to host the M.G. Association and Intern May Plant Exchange again at their home and lovely garden.

Date: May 13 **Time:** 11:00 AM for the plant sale. Lunch will follow.

Where: **Pat Greene's home** located at 9410 Sir Barry Court (off Pemberton Road, three blocks north of Quioccasin)

Bring: **Your labeled plants! Bring at least FIVE. Purchased plants okay!**

Pat says that now is the perfect time to begin to "pot up your perennials" to bring to the exchange. Label your plants with their botanical name and common one if you know it, light requirements (sun or shade), color of bloom if any, height/width of mature plant, water requirements, and growth habits.

Your favorite dish (a salad, an entrée, or a dessert) to share and serving utensil.

A folding chair and your MG nametag to wear!

\$1.00 donation for paper goods.

RSVP by Friday May 8: Caryn Coombs at 501-5160

Any questions please call Erica Gilliam at 784-5592 or erica.gilliam@comcast.net

Time to Plan for Master Gardener College

Calling all gardening geeks (and those who just love horticulture). The State Master Gardener College will be held on campus at Virginia Tech June 18-21, 2009. This year Tree Steward Training will be offered during the College time. Local winery tours, area landmark tours, visiting local gardens and visiting sustainable and organic farms are some of the off campus events offered. On campus classes cover every possible interest in horticulture and are led by the *rock stars* of the horticulture faculty and knowledgeable extension agents and master gardeners from across Virginia.

Staying in college dorms offers a flashback to younger days but with no papers or tests. The food is varied and yummy. Walking to classes gives a jump start to that back to health program you have been intending to begin.(transportation is provided for those who prefer it) Meeting master gardeners from all over the state renews your enthusiasm for our own excellent Henrico MG program.

This year's keynote speaker is Michael Dirr, tree and woody plant expert. His books are located in our helpline library and have provided great reading pleasure while waiting for that phone to ring. You may preview other headline information at www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener/mgcollege

-Mary E. Vetrovec

Coconut Cake

(served by Janie Vincent at the January 28 advanced class on cover crops and compost)

1 box white cake mix, plus ingredients to prepare

1 (15 oz) can cream of coconut

1 (8 oz) container whipped topping

1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk

2 cups shredded coconut

Mix and bake cake according to instructions on the box. Bake in a 9 X 13 lightly greased pan. While the cake is still hot, punch holes in it using a fork, toothpick, or the end of a wooden spoon. Mix the condensed milk and the cream of coconut. Spread over the hot cake. Let cool completely. Cover cake with whipped topping and sprinkle coconut over the top. Keep in refrigerator.

Can be frozen

-Peggy Lowry

Getting to Know John Sartin



John, a retired manufacturing executive, grew up in Memphis, Tennessee. After completing a tour in the U.S. Army, he attended Tennessee State University and graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering.

He began his career with General Electric as a quality control engineer and later joined GE's Manufacturing Management Program. After graduating from the program, he held various management assignments in many different areas of business. He retired as manager of Global Manufacturing and Purchasing within the

Transportation System Business which is a world-leading producer of locomotives, transit car systems and off-highway vehicle power systems.

John and his wife, Carolyn, have lived in Glen Allen for nine years moving here from Erie, Pennsylvania. One of their favorite pastimes is traveling.

John became a master gardener in 2004 and is involved in Smart Lawns, the training team for new master gardeners, and is Co-Chair of the 2009 Harvest Fair. John's hobbies include water gardening and bowling. John and Carolyn have a son, daughter, and five wonderful grandchildren.

Emerald Ash Borer Update

by Peggy Lowry

The Emerald Ash Borer is the potential death knell to all 16 species of North American Ash. It was found in Michigan in 2002, probably having come into the Great Lakes area via wooden crates aboard cargo ships. It has now spread to Missouri, Maryland, West Virginia and Virginia. This happened because a Michigan nursery broke the quarantine and sold ash trees. In their native lands, eastern Russia and northern Asia, these borers are held in check by four species of wasps that lay eggs in them and by various trees that have evolved a chemical resistance to them. Our country has neither those wasps nor the chemical resistance. Although we now have an infestation of the ash borer, some precautions were made in 2006 to prevent future invasions of alien insects. All solid wood packaging in international trade is supposed to be treated. So far, this precaution has helped to keep out almost 90% of insect invaders.

A Little Bit about Red Clover

by Peggy Lowry

Red clover is one of the chief sources of honey.

There are about 250 species of clover, but red clover leads them all in economic importance. Although it is found in almost all of our states, it is an immigrant from the Mediterranean and Red Sea areas. Its journey probably began when the Romans took it northward and across the channel to Briton. They called it *clava* because the three-petaled leaf reminded them of Hercules' club, and the Anglo Saxons called it *cloeferwort*. It was used for medicinal purposes as the suffix, wort, implies. The flowers were harvested as soon as they bloomed. Some were dried and then simmered, strained, and mixed with honey as a cough syrup. They were also used as a digestive aid, a diuretic, a sedative, an expectorant and as a yellow dye. In some parts of Northern England the leaves were carried or worn as a charm against evil.

During the Middle Ages, red clover was grown in castle and monastery gardens throughout Europe. In 1240, Albertus Magnus, a Dominican priest, cultivated red clover in his greenhouse – **the first greenhouse in recorded history**. His invention caused him to be suspected of sorcery, but his good reputation helped to dispel the accusations. (He was canonized in 1931.)



By the 14th century the main forage crop in the Rhine Valley was red clover, and by the 16th century it was used all over Italy. In England, Gerald's Herbal said that the English cattle "do feed on the herb as also young lambs. The flowers are acceptable to bees."

In 1740 red clover was brought to the English colonies along the Atlantic coast because landowners there needed a dependable forage crop. But widespread cultivation of it was delayed by the Revolution. Lafayette deserves the credit for establishing it in the U.S. When he was invited back for a visit to the U.S. in 1824, he brought many bushels of red clover seed. News of this increased the demand for it, and it was soon extensively grown in most of the eastern states. By 1850 it had spread to the mid west where it became of interest to the American Indians. They harvested the strong deep tap roots spring and fall, washed and dried them in the sun and stored them for later use. Fresh roots were steamed or boiled and dipped in fish oil when eaten. Soup was made from young leaves and blossoms added to wild onions and ground nuts and garnished with dried berries. The dried blooms and seeds were also

ground into flour. Some tribes today still use the roots, dried and ground, to thicken soups.

In the late 1800's the growing conditions for red clover in the Ohio valley proved to be ideal, so the U.S. began to import seed for forage for the growing livestock population. World War I put a stop to this, and so the mid west again became our primary source for the seed.

Red clover is one of the chief sources of honey. All clovers need pollinators –Red clover has 40 to 60 florets per bloom, each one like a miniature sweetpea; and the petals must be opened to release the pollen. The large, strong bumblebees do a better job than honeybees, but they are wild and less prolific. Over two colonies of honeybees are assigned to each acre of clover. Red clover adapted well in Australia, and so bumblebees were imported. They do an efficient job there because there are no native clovers to distract them.

In this country red clover is seldom seen in lawns, but it is common in vacant lots and neglected corners of yards and parks. It is a short-lived perennial and does not spread the way white clover does. It is hardy to zone 6 and is not hurt by frost. Generally the late flowering strain is grown in the shorter season north, while the early flowering strain is widely grown in the south for both hay and seed. It flowers here from May to September, the seeds ripening from July to October. Although its high estrogen content causes fertility reduction in ewes, red clover remains the second next forage legume in the U.K. Of course, being a legume, it enriches the soil by fixing nitrogen. It is a good green manure and retards erosion. It is also a food plant of many moths and butterfly larvae.

Red clover contains protein, calcium, phosphorous, iron, potassium, zinc, niacin and vitamins A, B1, B2, B6 and C. It has been recommended for the prevention of osteoporosis. Extracts from this plant significantly increase bone mineral density and also raise the H D cholesterol level.

The leaves, if picked before the plant blooms, can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in soups or cooked or cooked like spinach. They can also be dried, powdered and sprinkled on foods to add flavor. Some people enjoy the sprouted seeds in salads as well as the flowers, fresh or dried. Herb teas can also be enhanced by adding fresh or dried red clover flowers. The flowers can be chopped and added to butter or sweet bread and muffin batter to add sweetness, texture and fiber. Dried red clover leaves impart a vanilla flavor to cakes. Of the many immigrant plants, few are as beneficial to man as red clover.

Master Gardeners on the Move



Former Association President **Mary E. Vetrovec** and **Carolyn Lange** presented Hypertufa-How-To in the Bouquet of the Day arena at the Maymont Home and Garden Show to approximately 100 attendees. The presentation was a show-and-tell format and not a hands on type workshop presented at the Harvest Fair. A group of four friends had driven from North Carolina specifically for the class. The types of questions asked were varied and included questions such as: What plant material is suitable for the container?, Will hypertufa containers drain?, Can you color the hypertufa mixture? and Can you cover cinderblocks with the material? Master Gardeners will teach a hands-on hypertufa workshop for Henrico Parks and Recreation on April 4. A future workshop for an association program is also being planned.

On Saturday February 21, 2009, **intern Earline Bethea**, spoke to a group of about 23 about growing herbs in a home garden at Southern States. Some of the gardeners said they work with raised beds and others were starting container gardens. Attendees shared information and personal experiences about various herbs and their uses and Earline handed out information sheets.



Grace Harrison presented a workshop on starting plants from seed at the Maymont Home and Garden Show. The presentation focused on the different ways to start seeds and the medium in which to start them. She shared plants such as geraniums and tomato plants which she had started in her own greenhouse,. There were at least 72 people in attendance. Some of the questions asked included what kind of peat pots can be bought, and temperature and lighting required. Grace, assisted by **Ray Clemen**, will be speaking on April 6, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. at Epiphany Lutheran Church on indoor plants. They will discuss bringing plants inside after being outdoors, light quality, watering, fertilizing, insects and diseases.

Ukrop's Golden Gift Program

Ukrops is sponsoring their Golden Gift program again this year. Since they created the program in 1987, they have distributed over \$12 million to local non-profits. The Henrico Master Gardeners Association has registered to be one of those non-profits this year and you can help us by donating your Golden Gift certificates to our organization.



Anyone who has a valid Ukrops Valued Customer (UVC) card can participate in this program. Every time you shop at Ukrops between March 2, and March 28, 2009 and use your UVC card, one Golden Gift point will be earned for every \$1 spent. Points are automatically calculated and tracked on your receipts. Around the end of April a Golden Gift certificate will be mailed to your address that is on file with Ukrops.

Once you receive your certificate, simply bring or mail it to the VCE office to my attention. These will need to be turned in before the end of May. I will collect the Golden Gift certificates and take them to Ukrops by May 31. The checks will be mailed out by the end of August and I will report on how much we earned in the newsletter published following the payout date.

Thank you, as always, for your support of your Henrico Master Gardener Association.

Beverly Cochrane
Treasurer

from the Richmond Times-Dispatch...

"The Henrico Board of Supervisors approved the West End Farmers market, which will operate twice weekly at the Gayton Centre Shopping Center at Gayton Road and Ridgefield Parkway....It will be open from 8 a.m. until noon, Wednesdays and Saturdays, from April 25 to the second Saturday in December."

Meeting Date Reminders

Board Meetings

April 8 11:30 am

May 6 1:00 pm

Association Meetings

April 8 Karen Carter 1:00 pm

May 13 Plant Exchange 11:00am

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