



The Garden Gate e-Newsletter

October -November, 2006

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

Association Meetings

October 11, 1:00PM

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Representatives from the Henrico Police Department will speak about their community program designed to promote home safety through appropriate landscape design. They are still looking for MGs to be on hand for questions for their public programs. If you would like to learn more about home safety and more about the volunteer opportunity come to hear this presentation.

November 8, 1:00PM

Orchids

Want to know more about orchids? We will have one of the most knowledgeable orchid growers around to answer your questions. Art Chadwick from Chadwick and Sons Orchids in Powhatan will be speaking about his specialty plants. Don't miss this one!

December Planning Ahead

The Volunteer Appreciation Reception will be held on December 13 at 3:00pm. instead of the regular meeting.

www.henricomga.org

Don't forget to visit our new website for information about association meetings, special events and speakers.

Smart Lawn Measurers

Don't forget that when reporting your volunteer hours you should combine travel and work time together.

President's Message



Two of my summer vacation outings related to recent MG Association programs.

Master Gardeners across Virginia are promoting red, white, and blue flowers to support the commemoration of America's 400th Anniversary. I visited Jamestown 2007! We certainly have every right to have pride in Virginia's place in history. Jamestown is making this history come alive for all. Not only did I absorb more history than when I was in 4th grade but there was no test at the end.

Nearby Busch Gardens really lives up to 16 years as America's most beautiful theme park. If you think "beautiful theme park" is an oxymoron then see Busch Gardens for yourself. The mature landscape and plantings disguise the park's mechanics. And hundreds of beds, boxes, urns, fountains and water features are beautiful, lush and imaginative. And honoring nearby Jamestown, they have already begun to celebrate Plant red, white and blue.

Virginia is for lovers of history and gardening. Visit and enjoy!

Mary E Vetovec

Book Review

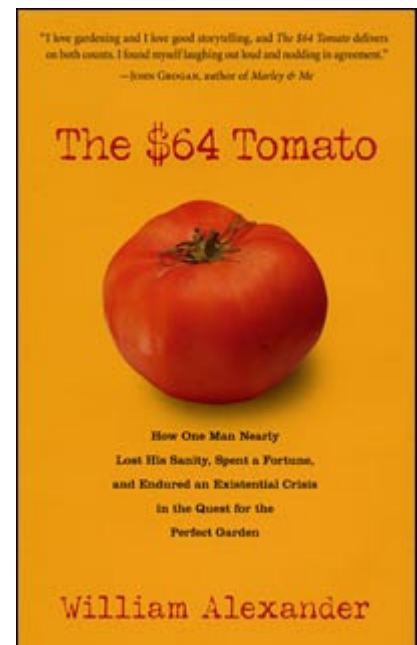
By Connie Lilly

The \$64 Tomato

Bill and Anne Alexander move with their two children from New York City to a ninety year old stone and cedar house on three acres in the Hudson Valley. Soon Bill is planning his vegetable garden and orchard to provide his family fresh food without the grocery store coating of preservatives and pesticides.

Thus begins the often hilarious saga of their battle with landscapers, contractors and an array of uninvited animal guests including the "opossum from hell" and the groundhog "Superchuck". The author's entertaining style intermingles a decade of gardening tips, philosophy and family psychology.

As the garden and the gardener mature it is obvious that both must change to survive. The setting may be New York, but most of the challenges Bill Alexander encounters seem universal.



Getting To Know Teddy Martin



In December, 2004, Teddy retired from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as Director of Procurement. Before that he was assistant accounting manager at Friedman Marks Clothing Company. Just before retiring, he enrolled in the Master Gardener Program and was a graduate of the class of 2005. Today he is the Association's 2nd vice president in charge of advanced training.

Teddy enjoys his lawn and his pond which has a waterfall and is home to fish and frogs – a real habitat. He says his lawn and garden really looks better than it did before he enrolled in the Master Gardener program. He has worked at plant clinics, the help line, diagnostic bench work, and Smart Lawns. He really enjoys most the Speakers' Bureau. Teddy also attended the Master Gardener College and found

it a rewarding experience.

Teddy grew up in Richmond and studied accounting and public administration at the University of Richmond. He has lived in the Bryan Parkway sub-division almost all of his life and has been president of its civic association for thirteen years. Currently he is president of the Virginia Governmental Employees Association-Retirees' Chapter, and he is the former president of both the Virginia Governmental Employees Association and the Henrico North Rotary. Some of his hours are also spent working at the Lamb's Basket Food Pantry in his neighborhood and on the board as assistant treasurer.

Teddy's wife, Brenda, substitute teaches at Lakeside Elementary and was formally Associate Registrar of the University of Richmond, having graduated from Westhampton. Their son, Chris, graduated from Virginia Tech with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. He is working on a doctorate in combustion engineering and will be working in Germany for six months beginning in January.

Teddy and Brenda enjoy riding at the Marriot Ranch in Hume, Virginia where they work with the ranch on trail rides and cattle round ups. Teddy plays the English handbells at Lakeside Presbyterian Church (Brenda is director), plays the saxophone and enjoys model railroads, golf and leather crafting.

Teddy says that he has learned that the old adage, "I don't know when I had time to work," is really true for him.

-Peggy Lowry

Coconut Macaroons



14 oz. Can condensed milk
14 oz. pkg. coconut
1 ½ tsp. vanilla

Mix ingredients and drop by teaspoon, 1 inch apart on greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-15 minutes until browned. Remove immediately and cool. Makes about 40 cookies.

-Peggy Lowry

Henrico Police Desire Partnership with Master Gardeners

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a program being currently promoted by police officers from Henrico, Chesterfield, Richmond, Virginia State Police and Hanover crime prevention deputies. The program teaches homeowners and home gardeners how to help prevent crime through the choices they make when buying new plants, trees, and shrubs or when planning the landscape design for their homes. The program discusses choices in fencing, lighting, choosing plant material and maintaining the environment once it has been created in addition to some basic crime prevention principles.

Henrico Police would like to create a partnership with the Henrico Master Gardeners so that they can team-teach this program together. Not having formal training in landscaping, the police need to find master gardeners who can help with questions that will come up on types of plants to use. The programs will be offered to home centers, local nurseries, garden groups and other citizen groups. *“Sowing Seeds of Safety with CPTED”* explains how the CPTED key concepts help prevent crime and how those principles can be combined with the concept of sustainable landscaping to create an environment that is safer for homeowners, the surrounding neighborhood, and the community.

Two training sessions are planned:

- **Oct 10 from 7-9 PM at the West Gov’t Center Training Center**
- **Oct. 26 from 7-9pm at the East Gov’t Center Training Center.**

Henrico police are advertising these programs through Rec/Parks.

We had very few Master Gardeners at our September association meeting sign up to help. We need more volunteers! Please consider this worthwhile community project in your Master Gardening service to Henrico County.

Behind the Shed

This is a newer section of the newsletter where members can give away 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!

I have several sized Crape Myrtles that I want to find good yards for. Please contact me at 266-9065 or j.brannon@erols.com to let me know of your interest. Most of them will be pink or watermelon color. FREE! -Joyce Brannon



Four Pounds per Person per Day

Why everyone should compost

By Jody Taggart

Did you know that people in the United States generate approximately 4 pounds of trash per person per day? Almost 25% of that trash is made up of kitchen scraps and yard waste that is easily compostable. Composting is free, easy, good for the earth, good for your soil, healthy for your plants and it is just plain interesting! What else can you do that provides so many benefits for such a small amount of work?

Fall is a great time to get into the composting habit if you haven't done it before. Put a bowl on the kitchen sink and toss in all those veggie parts that would otherwise go into the trash or down the sink. Make a point to take a stroll out to your compost pile once a day to dump your bowl and have a look at the yard (stop and pick a weed), enjoy the change in the weather or talk to a neighbor. Keep a wheelbarrow or a bucket handy outside for yard waste and dump that into the compost pile when it gets full. Locate your compost pile in a place that is handy for you to walk to from the kitchen.



What to do with all those leaves, dying annuals, vegetables and perennial clippings? Compost them of course! You can add the shredded leaves to your compost pile, flower beds or directly beneath the soil. Use your mower bag to gather the leaves with your grass clippings directly from the lawn and you'll get a nice mix of browns (carbon) to greens (nitrogen) to get the decomposition started. The ideal ratio is 2:1 browns to greens, however with home composting you don't need to measure the amounts, just make sure you have some of each. Shredding the leaves with a mulching mower or leaf shredder helps to move the decomposition along. (I'll discuss which materials are "browns" and "greens" in a future article.)

You don't need a fancy composting bin, a pile in an out of the way place in the yard is just fine. Or bury your composting ingredients in your vegetable bed now and by spring the scraps will be rotted and ready to go. You can use a blender to help break down the kitchen scraps into smaller pieces that will decay faster. The easiest way to get started is to make a heap, add some water if you can and turn the pile occasionally, like once a week. Yes, it can be done faster with a more complicated formula and some more work, but with this easy method of composting you can see results in 3 months or so and keep all that trash out of the landfill!!

There are some things to remember NOT to add to the compost pile. Anything that is not plant material like meat or dairy from the kitchen should not be added. Also, noxious weeds and weeds that have gone to seed should not be added because your pile may not heat up sufficiently to kill them. Also large woody plants will not decompose rapidly.

There is a lot more to cover on the topic of composting. The next thing I'd like to discuss will be composting during the winter.

A Little Bit about...Pawpaws

By Peggy Lowry

The Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) is native to the United States ranging from Florida to Michigan and as far west as Texas and Nebraska. In Virginia it is found near creeks, mountain drainage areas, and in deep fertile bottomland soils. It is the largest native fruit tree in the United States, and the fruit is the largest edible fruit native to North America. The fruit is a true berry and is in the same family as cherimoya, sweetsap, and custard apple; and it is the only member of that family not confined to the tropics. The name, Pawpaw, is thought to be from the Spanish papaya, since there are similarities in the fruit.

The tree itself is a small understory tree growing up to 20 feet, and it usually forms a thicket because of root suckering. The large dark green leaves are drooping and turn a vibrant yellow in the fall, but some of the southern species are often evergreen. The oblong to cylindrical fruit can weigh up to a pound, is one to six inches long, and is one to three inches in diameter. It has also been called Indian banana, poor man's banana, prairie and Ozark banana. It is bright yellow to orange in color and has a strong, fruity odor. The creamy, custard-like texture of the fruit has a flavor mix of papaya, banana,



mango, and pineapple and has numerous seeds. It is high in vitamins A and C and is richer in potassium, phosphorus, and magnesium than peaches, apples and grapes. It also has a good balance of amino acids and food energy values. There are compounds in the plant that have anti-carcinogenic and pesticidal properties. There may be also anti-tumor properties found in the natural compounds in the fruit, leaves, bark and twigs. Pawpaws are also the larval host of the Zebra Swallowtail butterfly.

In the wild, fruit set is poor because of poor pollination. The flowers are insignificant and purple cup shaped. The female stigmatic surface of the flower is receptive before the pollen is mature; and the pollen, even when released on time, is often self-incompatible, requiring cross pollination from different varieties of the plant. The flowers produce a fetid odor similar to rotting meat which attracts carrion beetles and bottle and blow flies as pollinators. Some growers hang rotting meat and chicken necks on the branches at bloom time to increase the number of pollinators. Although the fruit is delicious and nutritious, the pawpaw hasn't been cultivated on a large scale because it doesn't ship or store well. It is highly perishable and bruises easily. The flavor and sweetness is best if allowed to tree ripen, but it stays fresh only a few days at room temperature and about a week refrigerated. Also much of the fruit drops before it is ripe, and if picked before ripe, the flavor suffers. As the fruit ripens, there are flecks, blotches and streaks that reduce its marketable appeal. Fruiting characteristics vary highly among cultivars as do sweetness and flavor.

Bringing any new fruit to market involves breeding and selection for quality and uniformity, and work has only just begun with pawpaws. So far the greatest potential for this fruit may be for processed foods – blended fruit drinks, ice cream, or baby food. In some localities pawpaws are being used in ice cream and frozen custards, and some producers are considering pulping the fruit and selling it frozen.

Growing and harvesting are strong in southeast Ohio, especially among organic growers. The Ohio pawpaw growers also sponsor a pawpaw-festival (Lake Snowden near Albany, Ohio), and they are urging their general assembly to make the pawpaw Ohio's state fruit. But Kansas State University is the leader in pawpaw research.

The pawpaw is difficult to transplant because of long tap roots; therefore, it is propagated mostly by grafting. To grow by seed, the heavy coated seed must be stratified in a moist medium for 60 days at 40°, and even then germination is erratic. Although in the wild it is an understory tree, it does quite well in full sun as long as young seedlings are shaded for their first year or two because they are sensitive to sunlight at that time. Pawpaws grow at a moderate rate, have few pests, and require relatively low maintenance once planted. Currently there are over 40 nurseries in the United States selling named cultivars as grafted trees as well as seedlings.

The Pawpaw was an important food crop of the American Indian and settlers. Lewis and Clark mentioned the fruit numerous times in their expedition journals. Chilled pawpaw pulp was a favorite of George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson had them planted at Monticello. Today the Pawpaw Foundation in Washington, D.C. is a non-profit organization dedicated to research and promotion of the pawpaw as a commercial fruit. Large specimen pawpaws can be seen at the Fern Valley Native Plant Collection at the National Arboretum.

To sample a pawpaw, the closest place I know of is Washington, D.C.'s Dupont Circle Farmers Market in late summer.

Plant Riddles

By Irene Pittman

1. This plant makes a cool refreshing, excellent acidic drink. It's color is yellow. It can be mixed with green or orange fruit. What is it?
2. This drink is brown, though it's called orange. Sometime it's called green, though you can get it in many flavors.
3. This plant can actually choke you. That's where it gets its name.
4. One of my favorite green plants grows like a ball, can be eaten cooked or raw.
5. We haven't decided if this plant is a fruit or tasty veggie. It is red, green, or yellow. The best way to eat it is raw with salt.
6. These roots once planted come back each year. One is purple & white, one is orange, and one is dark red.
7. These beautiful, beautiful large veined leaves grow to 18" tall. If they're happy they tell you by sending up a white tubular flower, enclosing a white stamen. Nonedible, they are grown from roots. What are they?
8. Roses have been in existence for how many years?
9. A type of venus fly trap called Sarracenias, also called a picture plant; is it from South America?
10. Being from China the Liriodendron is kin to the Liriope? True or False?

Answers on the next page.

A gentle reminder to keep an eye on your property while attending association meetings. Several items have recently disappeared during meeting times. The extension office is in a public building which can be entered by anyone so keep your valuables within sight.

Meeting Date Reminders

October 2006

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						Weekend Plant Clinics
2	3	4 IPM Board Meeting	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 IPM Member Meeting	12	13	14 Fall Home Show	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

November 2006

		1 IPM Board Meeting	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 IPM Member Meeting	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	29	30	

Answers to Plant Riddles: 1. Lemon, 2. Tea, 3. Artichoke, 4. Cabbage, 5. Tomato, 6. Turnips, 7. Caladiums, 8. 35 million years, 9. False; from Southeast North America, 10. Liriodendron is the Tulip Tree and Liriope is a grass.