



The Garden Gate e-Newsletter

October – November, 2007

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

Association Meetings

October 10, 1:00PM

Presenter: Susan Frakes, Container Gardening Specialist at Strange's
Location: Strange's Garden Center 12111 West Broad (360-2800)
www.strangesgardencenter.com

Strange's has graciously agreed to do this program for us on short notice. Because the program will be at the garden center, Susan will be able to show a much larger variety of containers. She will also be using a large variety of plants: annuals, bulbs, perennials, evergreens, etc. From her description, this presentation is going to be even better than the previously scheduled one!

Susan asked that we report to their reception desk when we arrive to be directed to the exact location of the presentation. Strange's will be providing seating and meeting space in the greenhouse. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause to anyone due to the changed location. We are grateful to have such a wonderful replacement on such short notice.

Get your containers ready! Bring your notebook and pen! You will be going home with some great new ideas!

November 14, 1:00PM

The November presentation will be on camellias and the speaker is Rosalie Nachman. She last spoke to our group in 1999. She is a highly respected and admired Henrico gardener. She will share her expertise and enthusiasm for successfully growing camellias in our area. Her background knowledge is appropriate for gardeners who have grown camellias for years as well as those who are just beginning or want to begin. There will be a Question and answer period at the end of the presentation..

Board Meetings: Please note changes

The October Board meeting will be at Strange's upstairs in their meeting room at 12 noon preceding the meeting at 1pm. November's meeting will be at 1pm on November 7 in the second floor Social Services board room.

President's Message



In the last news letter I listed all the reasons that all master gardeners would enjoy attending Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech during the 3rd week in June each year. Now an incentive plan is in place for you to attend. A one time scholarship has been given to the HMGA to be used for MG College attendance. This scholarship will be awarded to the MG with the most volunteer hours. (These will be hours above those required by interns)

There are a variety opportunities for hours and everyone will be able to fit their particular interests and abilities. As the helpline winds into the fall months Gwen Hipp especially needs volunteers. Lisa sends out many choices each month. I know that there are talented garden designers and now you have an opportunity to put your artistic stamp on Henrico's newest park, Armour House. With our Fall Festival only one short year away in October '08, the design team will need the time and energy of all master gardeners. There is also the chance to choose your own adventure and have it approved by Lisa.



I am so impressed by all of my fellow master gardeners and thank you for each project that you take on.
So let's all keep digging!

Mary E Vetovec mevetrovec@aol.com

Oatmeal Cookies

- 1 box spice cake mix
- 2 cups uncooked quick rolled oats
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup oil
- ½ cup milk
- 2 cups raisins
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- ¼ cup brown sugar



Combine all ingredients and mix well.
Drop by the teaspoon on to an ungreased cookie sheets.
Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until tested done with a toothpick.
Cool on baking sheet for one minute; cool on wire racks
Can be frozen. Makes about 4 dozen.

-Peggy Lowry

Getting To Know Faye Derkits

By Peggy Lowry

Faye became a Master Gardener in 2004. She has worked on the hospitality, new master gardener training, and junior master gardener committees.

It is difficult to pick out her favorite plant—it seems to change yearly—depending on the climate and soil conditions. She prefers perennials with interesting leaves, such as dicentra luxuriant—it can bloom from April to October and has lacey type leaves, Japanese painted ferns, heuchera (with purple leaves). She also likes oak leaf hydrangea and Japanese Maples. She enjoys looking and smelling her perennial garden with as little as possible weeding and watering.

She was born and raised in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. She got her bachelor's degree from Bloomsburg State University and her master's degree from The Pennsylvania State University, both in PA.

Faye and her husband moved to Richmond in the fall of 2003. In fact, their furniture was delivered the morning hurricane Isabelle visited our area. They moved from Arlington, Virginia, where they lived for 38 years. They both worked for the Federal Government. She was an instructor and editor for the Central Intelligence Agency before she became a mother of two sons. After the children, she worked over 20 years in elementary school libraries.

Both of her sons now live in the Richmond area. She has one grandson who is three. She is proud to say he knows the relationship between ladybugs and aphids and which end of the worm is the head. She is trying to teach him that gardeners call "dirt" soil and he should too—but he says he is not a gardener so he can call it dirt. This is why she enjoys working in the junior master gardeners program—you never know what the children are going to say and they are fascinated by nature.

Faye is co-chair of the 4-H youth/JMG Committee



Help Wanted: Fall 2008 Festival

-Sally Stockslager



What will the Fall Festival committee be doing in twelve months? We will be working like crazy to put on the show for October 18, 2008. Be a part of this event - earn some of your 2008 volunteer hours by working on the festival. Ideas and suggestions are always welcomed.

The work has begun. Jim Smith and his committee members have nailed down the featured class topics and demonstrations. The committee is confirming the list of speakers. Carolyn Snyder and the vendor committee members have been busy the past two weekends. Lewis Ginter's fall plant sale and the Garden Festival were great events for finding vendors.

The next time you turn in a timesheet you can win a prize! Write down your suggestion for a name for the Fall Festival. We really need a catchy name. Just keep in mind that all Extension areas are participating, not just horticulture.

Getting To Know Elizabeth Steele

By Peggy Lowry

Elizabeth graduated with the class of 2006. She has been most involved in the Junior Master Gardener Program. Being a fairly inexperienced gardener, she has learned from teaching the JMG curriculum to the children. Like children, she also learns best by doing. Plant propagation is especially interesting to her—to create a new plant from an old one absolutely thrills her!

To choose a favorite flower would be just as impossible as choosing a favorite work of art! Sunflowers and Gerber daisies make her feel happy inside and out; the scent and delicacy of magnolias are as close to heaven on earth as you will get; and tulips are quite elegant and stately in her opinion. Her favorite tree is the magnolia because it has something beautiful to offer year-round. Her favorite shrubs are rhododendrons and mountain laurels and lilac bushes too!

She likes the type of gardening that requires the least amount of maintenance. Her basic landscape design provides some nice color year round, so she accents it with annuals and perennials, always trying out new things. She loves rocks, driftwood, mosaic stepping stones and colorful flowerpots, so she has fun experimenting with different compositions and arrangements, working hard not to over-do it. She aspires to have a “travel-friendly” garden—one in which they can go away for a few weeks at a time, in the middle of a drought, and nothing dies.

Elizabeth grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, as a Dance Major and then received a Master’s in Expressive Arts Therapy from Lesley College in Boston, Massachusetts. As a Movement Therapist, she has worked with two-year-olds all the way up to 102 year olds. (In fact, in the mid-80’s, a fellow MG, Carol Colby, and Elizabeth appeared on “Good Morning Virginia” demonstrating a “Smooth Moves” routine together.)

She Lived in Richmond from 1984-1990, and then from 2001 to present. She lived in Mathews County in-between.

Elizabeth and her husband, John, have four children between them—Lynn, Lisa, Christopher and Savannah. They also have two grandchildren, Hannah and Davis, and a Manx cat named “Bobbie.” They count their blessings every day.

Elizabeth is a mosaicist and she especially loves to mosaic flowerpots. She enjoys scouring thrift stores for interesting china, bringing it home, smashing it to smithereens and then creating something beautiful out of it. She loves to cook, and every Sunday she invents a new soup using herbs from her garden. She also does Pilates, mentors two children and travels with her husband. She and John have gotten into bird watching lately and they are especially thrilled to see an eagle periodically perch in their old sycamore tree down in the pasture. Oh, and Elizabeth does sell her flowerpots.

Elizabeth is co-chair of the 4-H Youth/JMG Committee.



Water Stewardship at Virginia Tech

by Holly Hartley

In June I attended the Water Stewardship classes at the Master Gardener College at Virginia Tech. Having no idea what a water steward was made me feel a bit nervous, however, I've experienced adventures before. So I took a deep breath, said, "Ho-Hum" and dove into it. It seemed to me it ought to have been rated PG 13 as we learned all about drain fields and septic tanks. Not long after that my husband and I had our own septic tank cleaned. Oh, how I wish I had taken pictures! It is a PG 13 event. It was nasty!

A lot of time was spent on wells and how they function. Since I have three of them I was very interested and also learned some new terminology. I believe many people think of wells as an endless supply of water – not so! It depends on the source of the water in the aquifer, the type of soil through which the water has to move and the number of pervious and impervious surfaces, and that varies a lot. Much of the water in a well comes from ground water, the very ground you stand on. That is why it is so important to be very careful what we put in and on the ground.

Much of our time we learned about Rain Gardens and then – we had to make one! Walking three or four blocks straight up hill and then digging out about six inches of soil, planting about a hundred (well, maybe 25), plants on a very hot day took a lot of energy. We filled it in with mulch, and after about three hours, stood back and smiled at our accomplishment. In the process of digging we even dug up a line running into the house even though Miss Utility had been there. That's sort of a given considering the Rain Garden was so close to the house. The professors in charge checked it out and we decided the wire was an old one and no longer in use. I think we made sure of that!

We learned some very interesting facts, such as about 98% of all water used for public drinking comes from wells throughout the U.S. Do you know which state gets the most rainfall? Do you know what the laws have to do with the use of waterways in Virginia? Do you know how often the Virginia State Code requires a septic tank to be cleaned out? Did you know it is against the law in Virginia to deliberately contaminate or trash any creek, stream or river?

That's enough for now. You may get more information from me later. It really was interesting and to think I managed to stay awake in class every day for four and a half days! It was great.



Free Crepe Myrtle plants from about 6" to 1'. Call Joyce Brannon at 266-9065 or e-mail: j.brannon70@verizon.net. They may be dug up at 2709 Tanager Road, 23228

The **Colesville Nursery Tour** has been rescheduled for Monday, October 8 at 10AM. We will meet at Colesville Nursery in Ashland. They accept Mastercard, VISA and possibly American Express for payment if you wish to charge your purchases. Please reconfirm with Lisa Sanderson if you are able to attend

Directions: Take I-95 north to the Ashland exit (92B). Go 1/2 mile to Route 1 (the 3rd stoplight) and turn right. Proceed north about 1.2 miles to Jamestown Road and turn right. After crossing over I-95 you will see Colesville Nursery signs and will take a left onto Nursery Road (our driveway). .
www.colesvillenursery.com or 798-5472



A Little Bit about Daisies and Chrysanthemums

By Peggy Lowry



One of the most beloved and recognized plants in Western culture is the daisy. The Anglo-Saxons called it *daes eage* – day’s eye – because the whole bloom closes at night and opens again in the morning. Chaucer refers to it as the eye of day. Its official name is *chrysanthemum leucanthemum*-gold flower/white flower.

Because of its golden eye, Germanic tribes believed that the daisy could ward off lightning, and in Scotland, too, the belief was the same, and daisies were called thunder or moon flowers. In medieval Germany the daisy was called *Johanneskrut* – the flower of St. John. The church did this in an effort to dispel the pagan magic of Midsummer’s Eve, a time when the daisy was in bloom.

In France, Margaret of Anjou loved the daisy so much that she had it embroidered on her robes and those of her attendants before she sailed to England in 1445 to marry Henry VI. She was strong willed and led her husband’s troops in the War of the Roses, the daisy prominent on her banners. From this the daisy was called “*marguerite*,” now a name usually given to another garden daisy.



There were no daisies in North America when the settlers arrived. It was probably brought by the colonists in their packing straw. We know that John Winthrop, Jr. (later governor of the Connecticut Colony) bought oxeye daisy seed just before sailing to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1631. It quickly spread throughout the nation, convincing most people that it is a native plant. Luther Burbank, recognizing the oxeye’s stamina and appeal, combined this with several other daisies. After years of experimenting, he produced the Shasta daisy, which he named after the snow capped Mt. Shasta that he could see from his experimental nursery in California.

Some sources say that the daisy is of Asian origin, and others say that they are European natives. Although it is considered a weed, people love this plant that has given man “no meate or medicine” and no food for cattle. In fact, it can give milk an “off” flavor if animals consume too much of it. Horses, sheep and goats will eat it, but most pigs and cows avoid it. It is considered a serious weed in some countries when it competes with cereal crops, barley, flax, oilseed, rape, sunflowers and wheat. It spreads both vegetatively and by seed and usually grows in small to large patches. It can survive in a whole range of environmental conditions and is common in overgrazed pastures, meadows, grasslands, waste areas, roadsides, and in a wide range of soils. Also it is unaffected by frost or drought. It is primarily insect pollinated and is the larval host of several species of beetles, weevils, flies, gnats, wasps, bees, and butterflies.

A hummock of somewhat shiny spoon shaped leaves anchors the plant. At one time these leaves were very much used as a spring green. The foliage is tender, the flavor faintly resembles anise and makes an interesting addition to salads and sandwiches. The plant is a widely used herbal remedy to treat kidney problems, rheumatism, arthritis, bronchitis and diarrhea. The whole plant has antispasmodic properties used to treat asthma and whooping cough. Astringent properties of the plant are used to staunch blood flow in ulcers and internal lacerations. Blossom infusions are used to treat colds. Powdered flowers have been used

to drive pests from plants and pets that were dusted with them. The daisy blossom even yields shades of yellow with an alum mordant for a natural dye.

The daisy produces in great numbers and has encircled the world. And so although it has remained a weed, ruined thousands of acres of productive land, it still delights us to see the bright summer fields of gold and white.

Although daisies, feverfew and marguerites are all chrysanthemums, we usually think of the colorful fall blooms when we refer to mums. The name mum means “golden flower” – (chip-gold; anthemum-flower). Modern chrysanthemums are much more showy than their wild relatives. They are daisy-like, pom-poms, buttons and large showy blooms. There are many hybrids in various forms and colors comprising over a hundred species, nearly all from the temperate or subtropical regions of the Old World. Some have been cultivated for over 3,000 years in China and Japan. They were cultivated in ancient China as a flowering herb. The history of its development from a simple daisy is long lost, for the beautiful blooms seen by the first westerners had been developed with care for centuries. Confucius wrote about yellow chrysanthemums five hundred years before Christ was born.

In old China exquisite flowers were thought to be a focus for devotion and meditation. Tao Ming-Zang, a Chinese botanist and scholar, did much toward developing new species; and the fame of his flowers drew many people to his city. His gardens became so popular that the city became known as Ju Kian or Chu-sein, the City of Chrysanthemums. There were over thirty varieties under cultivation at that time – the parents of our modern hybrids.

China is recognized as the birthplace of the chrysanthemum, and for a while in Japan it was grown only by aristocrats, forbidden to the common folks. The flag of Japan is a chrysanthemum – not the rising sun. In 910 it became the national flower of Japan and the emblem of the Mikado. Viewing chrysanthemum displays was a favorite “recreation” of the elite, and being invited to the Imperial Gardens was a social ambition and a status symbol. In 1876 the emperor created the Order of the Chrysanthemum – the highest order he could bestow. World War II changed all that when the emperor announced to his people that he was an ordinary mortal and not descended from the Gods. His son, Akihito, today’s emperor, is the 125th Japanese monarch to sit on the Chrysanthemum Throne. Today the flower is for all the people, and there is a yearly Festival of Happiness to celebrate the chrysanthemum.



Among the first Europeans to have access to the Orient were the Dutch, and by the 18th century they were growing six or seven dozen varieties. The French also found the flower worth developing, and many gardens in the south of France established the chrysanthemum as a garden flower. It was here that Old Purple was developed, a basic mum of European gardens that helped to established mums as garden flowers.

A few seeds and plants were imported by some American growers in the late 1850’s, and by 1900 the Chrysanthemum Society of America was founded. Most varieties at this time were still grown in conservatories. Devoted plantmen transformed these hot house beauties into America’s popular fall garden flower.

Most garden chrysanthemums are useful in some capacity. The leaves of some are grown commercially in Asia to use in stir fry, their flavor fragrant and complex, their texture dense and mucilaginous. Some of the yellow and white flowers are boiled to make a sweet drink called simply Chrysanthemum Tea, sometimes used to treat the flu. In China the leaves are stir fried with garlic and chili peppers, and in Korea some rice wines are flavored with the blossoms.

Pyrethrum (chrysanthemum or Tanacetum cinerariaefolium) is a natural source of an insecticide. The flowers are pulverized, and the active ingredient called pyrethrins are extracted. When not present in the amounts fatal to insects, they still have an insect repellent effect. Although toxic to fish they are biodegradable, breaking down easily when exposed to light.

Today we can choose among more than 150 species of chrysanthemums originating in China, Japan, Korea, Australia, England, France and the Netherlands. By selecting certain varieties, one can have chrysanthemums in bloom from early August to frost. Also some cultivars have been developed to bloom at 27° F. Mums are a welcomed addition to the garden, blooming late when others are winding down for winter.

Meeting Date Reminders

Board Meetings

*October 10, 12:00 PM

November 7, 1:00 PM

Association Meetings

*October 10, 1:00PM

(*Strange's Garden Center in Short Pump)

November 14, 1:00PM

Please submit your contribution to the newsletter

By **November 20** to Jody Taggart

jody.taggart@comcast.net 360-2680