



The Latest Dirt

1st Quarter, 2010

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2010 Master Gardener Gala - A Simple Springtime

By Ann Gorrell



Friday, January 29, 2010, was a very cold, crisp day outside and we were expecting 4 to 8 inches of snow; but thankfully, the snow held off until the next day. Inside the Rowser Building Gym at the VCE Stafford Office, a number of Master Gardeners gathered to turn the gym into a banquet hall reminiscent of Springtime. Kari Thompson, the Décor Chair, had just done a wedding show and had lots of beautiful fresh flowers for us to use along with her ample supply of clear vases. The tables looked cheerful with sage green runners and set a spring-like feeling that many of us welcomed. Just thinking about it, Spring is just 8 weeks away. Some of those who helped set up were Terry Drew, Stan Zack, Skip Smith and Chuck Heath whose masculine muscle were much welcome getting the tables and chairs in the right positions. Linda Dunn set the stage with a variety of bright colorful flowers in Kari's wheelbarrow, along with an iron bench and towers, and did a great job of turning an unsightly wooden bookcase into a decorative part of the setting. Kari Thompson, Tina Will, Frances Neuhard, Betsy Ryan and Tanya Richey made the fresh arrangements for the tables and tied in the theme of Simple Springtime. The transition was incredible!

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Beth and John Elkins were at the door to cheerfully greet everyone, have everyone sign in to keep our Security Guard happy, and to hand out the colorful programs done by Mary Marshall. Our Treasurer, Betsy Ryan was there and had the opportunity to collect dues while Teresa Fisher, membership chair, gave out membership cards. (Even though dues are usually collected in January, you're not too late to send in your dues. Don't forget!)

As always the food was outstanding, and incredibly so this year. The Food Team, headed by Michelle Meyer, had everything under control. Caren Meyer was away visiting her mother in Conn., but daughter Michelle did a great job on her own. Thanks go to Anita Tuttle, Beth Malmquist, Jean Billings, and others who pitched in. Linda Dunn gave an inspiring invocation, and no one went away hungry.

President Cathy Smith welcomed everyone, introduced special guests, Jim Scibek, Past President of VMGA and his wife, Midge, Past Presidents of MGACRA, Lin Leong, Betty Marcum, and Linda Dunn, and our VCE friends, Guy

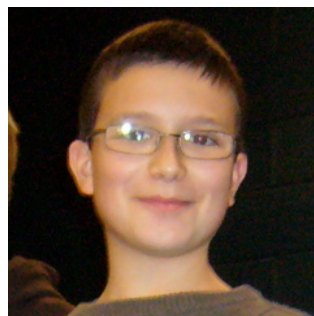
Mussey and Gwen Pote from Stafford, John Howell and his wife Barbara from Spotsylvania, and Peggy Wright and Terry Misch from King George.

Judy Deffenbaugh introduced to us the 5 of 15 Junior Master Gardeners that were present along with her husband. Judy



gave us an overview of what these young people learned this summer; they all received JMG certification.

Judy's husband, a Boy Scout leader, helped with the classes and had 11 boys awarded 8 Boy Scout badges each doing the 4-H Junior Master Gardener Program, a real feat.



Much to Judy's surprise, but not ours, she was awarded the 2009 Master Gardener Education Award. It was easy to see



the number of hours spent. What we didn't see was the effort she spent in organizing, doing the mountain of paperwork to get established, recruiting boys and girls, and teaching all the classes. Congratulations, Judy, on a terrific job well done.



Guy made a special presentation to Chuck Heath. Chuck has met all the requirements and is now certified as a Master Tree Steward.



Much to his surprise, John Elkins was presented with a special recognition from the Virginia Cooperative Extension. John has been a tremendous help to Guy in getting the Cossey Botanical Park started.



John Elkins, Vice President, assisted Cathy in presenting the Volunteer Hours Awards (All these are listed below).

This year's Rising Stars are Michelle Potter and Robert Sawyer. They have demonstrated potential leadership skills as they have become extremely active in the Master Gardener program and MGACRA. They will receive a one-year membership in MGACRA.



Guy and Gwen recognized the Fall 2009 Class and the newly certified Master Gardeners.

Beth Malmquist and Anne Kline's husband certainly stayed busy snapping photos. Many of you jumped right in to help clean up the 'banquet hall' and turn it back into the gym. It was done in record time; we were out by 9 p.m. It was indeed an uplifting and fun event for Master Gardeners and friends, and my pleasure to be involved. Thank you to everyone who helped bring us a little springtime in the middle of winter.

- Ann Gorrell



2010 Master Gardener Gala Awardees

250 Hours

Judy Deffenbaugh, Beth Elkins, John Elkins, Pat Lovett, Betsy Ryan, Robert Sawyer, Cathy Smith, Skip Smith

500 Hours

Carolyn Allen, Charles Heath, Anne Kline, Ron Singleton, Tina Will

750 Hours

Gwen Pote, Anita Tuttle

2000 Hours

Linda Kline,
Frances Neuhard

Rising Star Awards

Michelle Potter,
Robert Sawyer

Education Award

Judy Deffenbaugh

2009 Re-Certifications

Karen Anderson, Carolyn Allen, Jean Billings, Caryl Brown, Terri Brinkmann, Sara Broyles, Eileen Charters, Laura Chollinsworth, Marsha Cuzzocrea, Elizabeth Daly, Terry Drew, Linda Dunn, Karen Ehrhard, Beth Elkins, John Elkins, Deborah Godfrey, Ann Gorrell, Gail Gulotta, Charles Heath, Richard Hicks, Elaine Benzio Hild, Patricia Hyjek, Jean Johnson, Kay Kimmell, Dee King, Anne Kline, Helen Lawrence, Lin Leong, Joan Levander, Judy Little, Pat Lovett, Beth Malmquist, Betty Marcum, Cathy McGinnis, Clyde Meador, Caren Meyer, Michelle Meyer, Theresa Mogensen, Frances Neuhard, Preston Neuhard, Virginia Nicholas, Carlene Ochsenknecht, Phyllis Phillips, Gwen Pote, Kathy Rivers, Betsy Ryan, Ron Singleton, Cathy Smith, Skip Smith, Mary Stram, Jane Thomann, Susan Van de Putte, Jody Wilken, Tina Will, Clara Yates, Stan Zack

Newly Certified Master Gardeners

Linda Burch, Judy Deffenbaugh, Outi Hanscomb, Tara Hoit, Dawna Lambrecht, Joan Lindsey, Mary Marshall, Michelle Potter, Ann Victoria Reich, Robert Sawyer

Fall 2009 Master Gardener Class

James Alderman, David Blackman, Emanuela Fordham, Susan Gingrich, Betty Grigg, Cindy Hall, Kena Hengy, Saadet Hines, Judith Jones, Karen Jones, Josh Maddox, Tanya Richey, Mary Sele, Izabela Sikora



2010 GALA Memories



Note from the Editor: This issue is very late, and I sincerely apologize. Our new MG President's message was sent to me long ago. —Teresa Fisher

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Cathy Smith,
MGACRA President**

Greetings. In case somebody missed it, I'm Cathy Smith, your new President.

I've been gardening off and on for over 50 years, and I started with my Grandfather when I was a very little girl. My husband and I live in Spotsylvania County and have been practicing organic gardening for over 25 years. I am a confirmed, "tree hugger", but I am not a purist. I am willing to use other means and alternatives if necessary. My primary area of expertise is vegetable gardening, fruit and nut trees and roses. Since becoming a MG and partnering with others, I'm learning a lot about peren-

nial flowers.

My vision for us as a group includes getting an up to date website, so we can better communicate with each other and reach out to MGs all over the country. We can share ideas and problems with others in our peer group. Since we are located in such a large area (and it looks like we might get even bigger in the future with the current budget issues). We do have a MG Yahoo group and I hope that if you have not joined yet, that you will do so soon.

I want to try and improve our numbers. As President, I plan on calling each of our inactive members to see what we can do to get them to come back and play with us. I would also like to see us actively try to recruit more members by talking to your gardening friends, etc.

Stan Zack, Terry Drew and Gwen Pote are hard at work at updating and modernizing our bylaws. (Yep, we got those, too) I want everyone to have a copy and to please take the time to read it over.

We also have a board committee working our way to acquiring 501-C status which will make us a tax-exempt organization. This should be a way to greatly improve our ability to raise funds for our various projects. I see us as a "professional" type organization and these things will certainly help us toward that image.

As I've mentioned in one of the general membership meetings, I want to revitalize our Speaker's Bureau. Linda Burch has recently accepted the position of the Chairperson of this project. Please,

think about what you truly "love" in your gardening efforts, and offer your expertise to the group. If you're uncomfortable speaking to the general public, please share your experience with your fellow MGs. Tina Wills is the Chairperson for that group and I know she is always looking for great speakers.

There are lots of plans tumbling around in my head, but they don't mean a thing unless you all agree and are willing to participate. Please feel free to contact me with any of your ideas, suggestions, complains, etc., either via email or by phone. Your input is invaluable.

Thanks, and I am wishing us all a great season with wonderful blooming flowers and productive vegetable gardens.

As ever,

Cathy Smith, President, MGACRA



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Downtown Greens: Laura Shepherd, 371-2117

Kenmore/Ferry Farm: Alma Withers, 371-8069

Mary Washington House: John and Shirley Davis, 898-5438

James Monroe House: Brenda Randall, 373-3472

All are 540 area code unless indicated otherwise.

For any corrections to the above lists, please email Teresa Fisher at thelatestdirt@gmail.com

The Latest Dirt – Master Gardener Association of the Central Rappahannock Area

The Latest Dirt is a quarterly publication of the Master Gardener Association of the Central Rappahannock Area (MGACRA), an organization dedicated to furthering horticultural education and volunteerism within the community. The opinions expressed are those of the volunteers and are not necessarily those of the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Please send corrections to thelatestdirt@gmail.com.

Gardening tips for the heat of summer

Taken from the Star Exponent newspaper in Culpeper, VA

Summer's full upon us and the heat and lack of recent rain is causing problems for many plants. Trees, shrubs and other large perennials that are watered well and deeply, rather than frequently and lightly, have better root systems. These will help during dry periods.

Water your lawn and garden an inch a week. Check those plants recently planted. They will take more water in the first year to become established. Trees can take two or three years to become well-established. Plants in containers and hanging baskets dry out quickly and should be watered daily.

Plants that provide wonderful color in the heat of July include crape myrtle, day lilies, spirea, hydrangeas, summersweet, hypericum, and butterfly bush.

Hostas bloom beginning in June and continue thru August, depending on the variety planted. Since one of my gardens requires a good bit of shade, I tend to look for shade-loving plants for that particular area which can stand some morning sun. Ligularia is a perennial having large, beautiful leaves with lightly ruffled edges in a deep green on top and eggplant purple on the underside and stems. It blooms at this time of year with the bright, lovely yellow flowers making a beautiful contrast. This is definitely an under-utilized plant that blends well with hosta, caladiums, astilbes, heuchera (coral bells) and other shade-loving varieties.

Deadhead spent flowers on spirea, yarrow, Russian sage, and daisies now to encourage rebloom. Other plants that respond to deadheading or cutting back include artemisia, balloon flower, dragonhead, veronica and Culver's root.

Pinch back the buds, deadhead the tops, but not more than one-third of the plant should be removed, and strip out dead or yellowing leaves for a neater, cleaner appearance. Stop pinching back asters and mums by mid-July to allow time for buds to set before fall. Judicious pinching can extend the flowering season, but you don't want to overdo it. Azaleas and rhododendrons should not be pruned past mid-July. Buds for next year's bloom begin to set soon, so trimming after that will result in fewer flowers next spring. Now is also the time to begin seeds for fall vegetables, including broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts among others.

As a Master Gardener, continuing education is both required and important to keep up with changes in horticulture. Master Gardener College provided advanced training and new information to over 220 Virginia Master Gardener's at Virginia Tech two weeks ago. There were classes in plant breeding and propagation, integrated pest management, changes in pesticides and insect resistance to pesticides, (similar to some human diseases now resistant to antibiotics), among many other fascinating classes.

We toured the greenhouse and horticultural gardens, the labs where your soil tests are sent, insects identified and nematode problems diagnosed.

It was exciting listening to well-respected speakers talk about the latest research. Master Gardeners are available to answer questions through the Culpeper, Orange and Madison Extension offices and at the Farmer's Markets in these counties. Take advantage of free advice with your plant problems, or simply learn more about Master Gardeners. We welcome your questions.

Sandy Mullins is a Master Gardener from Orange

From the Editor:

Hello Master Gardener Friends. I hope this finds everyone somehow keeping cool while still being able to garden. As it seems I always have to do, first let me apologize for the lateness in this publication. I did not intend to have a newsletter that went from our Gala in January to the horrible heat of summer, but so it is, and I am sorry.

My new horse "Gus", is the current love of my life. He seems to be taking every spare moment I have and I am enjoying every minute. I have dreamed of owning another horse for many years, and now I do! While I hate to keep using him as the excuse for not getting things done, it's true. The newsletter, my housework, my gardens, the bills, ALL OF IT is because of Gus, and I wouldn't trade him for anything!



"Gus"

Please remember that I need articles often for the newsletter. As I have said before, I will TRY to be more timely in getting them out.

- Teresa Fisher, Editor for The Latest Dirt newsletter



Belmont Butterfly Garden volunteers needed!



Volunteers are needed to help maintain the Belmont Butterfly Garden this summer.



Volunteers meet for Wednesday mornings at 9am and are usually done by 10am.



Please contact Rich Hicks at colrich@comcast.net if interested.



This is a great opportunity to learn more about butterflies and the plants that attract them!



Up and Coming Events:

Master Gardener General Membership Meeting for MGACRA (open to the public)

Date: Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Location: Central Regional Rappahannock Library, 1201 Caroline Street, Fredericksburg, VA 22401.

Time: 7 PM

Guest Speaker: Beate Jensen, Buildings and Grounds Preservation Supervisor, Gari Melchers Home and Studio, Fredericksburg.

Topic: Belmont Woods and Gardens is becoming a work of natural art. Please come and hear Beate Jensen talk of the continuing restoration of the historic gardens and the development of the woods and as a recreational and wildlife habitat at Gari Melchers Home and Studio at Belmont.

Point of Contact: Tina Will 374-5233 blwill@cox.net

Master Gardener Herbal Workshops

Ann Gorrell has 3 more Herbal Workshops this year at her home on Forest Walk Drive, Spotsylvania. Evening hours are planned for 6:30 pm so that those who work can participate. Here are the dates:

July 22 (Thursday) Dill-The Herb for 2010 is Dill! So after sampling dilly goodies and discussing its growing and harvesting habits, we will make an herbal bouquet featuring our Herb of the Year. Participants are asked to bring a colorful, empty tin can, with label still on and fresh herbs and flowers from their gardens. (If you don't have herbs, come any way, there will be plenty.) We will learn the 'tussie mussie' technique for arranging the floral material. ps I have a few extra tin cans if you need them.

August 26 (Thursday) Basils- The variety of basil is astounding! Participants are asked to bring different sprigs of basil from their gardens for show and tell! Then we will make herbal vinegars. Participants are asked to bring sprigs of different herbs to share and a clean (run through the dishwasher) bottle for their vinegar (no metal tops). Vinegar will be provided along with spices, garlic, hot peppers, lemon and some herbs.

September 23 (Thursday) Rosemary- Yes, I lost my big rosemary to last winter's fury. We'll talk about winter hardy varieties and horticultural needs. Then we will make harvest swag to bring in the autumn season. Participants are asked to bring any grasses, flowers or herbs that will dry well after assembled into the swag.

Registration: If you are interested in attending any or all, please contact Ann Gorrell, 540 972-7613 or anngorrell@cs.com, to register. If you have questions, you can call or e-mail Ann.

PS The Lavender Workshop was a great success. Thanks to all who attended!

Happy
Gardening!



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