

The Latest Dirt

MGACRA Newsletter

Summer Issue

2011

Volume 21 Issue 4

President's Message	2
MGACRA Board Meeting Secretary's summary for the July and August Board meeting	3
Meet Beth Daly Beth Daly, an experienced historian, serves as Historian for the MGACRA	5
Must have library Book A photographic history of heirloom tomatoes	5
Educational Opportunities Places to meet your MG educational hours	7
Master Gardener Annual Picnic - Fellowship shared by all	9
Educational Workshop Herbal workshops are still a hit with Master Gardeners	11
Cossey Park Come see what's new at the Cossey Botanical Park	12
Weeding Made Easy A guide to making your garden work for you	14
Founding Fathers - Book Review Keeping the Revolution alive: Grow something	15



Presidents Message



This has been a busy summer, and what a summer it's been!

Laura Collinsworth

In June Stan and Linda

Zack graciously invited us to hold our annual picnic in their beautiful garden.

Cool breezes kept the heat away and made the day perfect for outdoor activities.

Our annual picnic is MGACRA's chance to say thank you to our members.

MGACRA's success is primarily as a result of the dedication of Master Gardener volunteers. Our volunteers show up at educational activities to set up displays and then stay late to help take them down. They show up weekly to work in historic gardens keeping history alive for our residents and visitors. They gladly share their knowledge with others through talks, workshops and plant clinics. Every successful pro-

ject is the direct result of Master Garden volunteers who give of their time, their energy and at times, their resources.

Without our volunteers, MGACRA could not fulfill our mission of education. Without them MGACRA wouldn't exist.

Thank you Master Gardeners!
Job well done.

—Laura Collinsworth

Executive Board of Directors

40-657-5398 President: Laura Collinsworth, 699.6098

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Plant Clinics: Karen Ehrhard, 786.4327

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Cossey Park: Linda Burch 898.1784

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Joan Lindsey, 371.7676

Belmont: Terry Drew, 371-2015

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Kenmore/Ferry Farm:

All numbers are 540 area code unless indicated otherwise.

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

The Latest Dirt is a bimonthly 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.

MGACRA Secretary's Board Meeting Report

July Board Meeting: MGACRA President Laura Collinsworth opened the business session for the July 13 board meeting with a report on the Association's Annual Picnic held Wednesday, June 15, at the home of Stan and Linda Zack in Stafford County. She thanked the Stan and Linda and talked about the success of the event. She said the blue heron statue in the middle of the lake was particularly beautiful. It caught everyone's eye and caused quite a stir when it changed position from time to time and turned out to be a real heron.



Ron Singleton
MGACRA Secretary

Judy Little, MGACRA project chair for the Fredericksburg Agricultural Fair (scheduled for July 28 to August 7), said that the Association will have a Master Gardeners booth at the fair again this year and that it will be operated as a plant clinic. The event will be held again at the city's fairgrounds on Rt. 2 south of the city. The Association will have the same space it has in the past. Judy sought volunteers to help fill empty slots in the work schedule and said working at the Fair provided a good way to accumulate service hours for membership renewal requirements, which must be met annually.

Laura Collinsworth indicated that \$600 has been budgeted this year for Master Gardeners College Scholarships, which helps with the cost of new and continuing members of the Association to attend the annual summer event at Virginia Tech. She said that those who participated in the MG College program in June at Virginia Tech needed to submit documentation that they attended and a request for scholarship assistance. In the past, new "first time" attendees have been eligible for up to \$100 in scholarship assistance and returning attendees have been eligible for a lesser amount, depending on how many members apply for assistance. MGACRA Treasurer Betsy Ryan will work with this year's attendees to collect their applications and documentation so that scholarship checks can be issued soon.

Under "New Business", MGACRA President Laura Collinsworth called attention to the 2011 budget in the Treasurer's Report. She said the Association has projected revenues of \$3,000 for the year and approved expenses totaling \$6,185. The budget was approved for a higher amount this year, she said, because of the availability of carry-over funds from the previous year totaling \$3,185. She said the Association must address its deficit spending since carry-over funds will not be available for many more years. "It is essential that we generate additional revenue," she added. She pointed out that the club is going to rely on its wreath-making project and its new grapevine tree sales project to generate additional funds. She mentioned that she is forming a Fundraising Committee with the assistance of Ellen Westerholm, who chairs the grapevine tree project. That committee will be meeting soon.

—Ron Singleton, Secretary

August Board Meeting:

Judy Little, MGACRA project chair for the Fredericksburg Agricultural Fair reported on the success of the Association's plant clinic displays at the fair. Guy Mussey's scary-looking copperhead in a jar was a particularly big draw, as were the new Q&A plant displays. Judy thanked the Master Gardener volunteers and Interns for their hours of helping to staff the displays. She also thanked Roxbury Nursery for their donation of the living plants display at the clinic. Lastly, Judy Little encouraged Master Gardeners to submit plant entries for next year's fair. There is no cost to enter and winners receive cash prizes.

Continued on [Page 4](#)

Secretary's MGACRA Board Meeting Continued

Continued from [Page 3](#)

MGACRA President Laura Collinsworth reported that \$209 was raised during the Silent Auction at the Association's Annual Picnic, which was held at the home of Stan Zack and his wife, Linda, at their lake home in Stafford County. She also reported that five MGACRA members received \$100 Master Gardeners College Scholarships as first-time attendees at the Master Gardeners College, which was held in June at Virginia Tech. Lastly, she asked Master Gardeners to support the MGACRA Newsletter by submitting articles and photographs to Stan Zack, editor of the Association's electronic newsletter ("The Latest Dirt") and to email webmaster Michelle Meyer photographs for publication on the Association's web pages.

During the committee chair reports Linda Burch gave an update on the Cosey Park Project. The committee is working on the following: (1) a list of plant specimens at the park, (2) talking points for a walking tour, and (3) a report to the City Parks and Recreation Department on the park's progress. Keeley Bruce reported that four Boy Scout Eagle projects have been undertaken at Cosey Park and that one is pending.

Gwen Pote reported that a new series of Master Gardener Classes will begin in mid-September at the Rouser Building in Stafford and that 11 people have expressed interest in attending. There was discussion about the Association's mentoring program, which pairs up Master Gardener Interns with a current member of the Association. Laura Collinsworth said that she has served as a mentor in past years and that it is a valuable program. Gwen Pote also announced that on-line reporting of Master Gardener Education and Volunteer Service Hours will be ready for implementation within a few weeks.

The meeting was adjourned by President Collinsworth at 8 p.m. The next meeting of the board will be held on Wednesday, September 14, 2011. Master Gardener Volunteers are invited to attend the MGACRA Board meetings.

Cover Photo:

Tomatoes picked from Stan and Linda's vines on June 15th.



Meet Your MGACRA Historian



Beth Daly
Historian

Hello Master Gardeners. I'm Beth Daly. I took the VCE Master Gardener program during its second year. Yes, back in 1992. You can guess then why Stan asked me to be historian for the MGACRA. I also volunteer at the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center located at 900 Barton Street, #111 in Fredericksburg, VA 22401 (Maury Commons).

The Heritage Center is a repository and archive for all things paper relative to Planning District 16 which includes the counties of King George, Caroline, Spotsylvania, and Stafford and the city of Fredericksburg. The items we take in are catalogued, given numbers and entered into a data base (so we can find them) using a museum cataloguing software system. Most items are stored in archival (acid-free) boxes. We keep the humidity and light levels consistent with accepted archival practices.

The Center does have copies of most of the old Master Gardener newsletters which were donated by Master Gardeners over the years. What we would like are photos with names, programs from galas, anything that reflects what Master Gardeners do. I have gotten some items from Gwen that were kept at the Extension Office. What we don't need are any of the Association's financial records or Master Gardener texts. So far I have not entered any of the information into the data base, but expect to get to it some time later this year.

We welcome visitors and donations materials and of course, money. Come visit us. I'm sure you'll be impressed. The Center is open Tuesday thru Wednesday, from 10 to 4, and is also open on the first Saturday of each month from 9 to noon. It is an all volunteer organization and has 501(3)(c) status.

A "must" book to add to your library

One Hundred Heirloom Tomatoes for the American Garden

By Dr. Carolyn Male, photography by Frank Iannotti

This is a picture book – 100 pictures of beautiful tomatoes. Dr. Male also provides short chapters on the origins of the tomato, selecting heirloom varieties, growing heirloom tomatoes, saving seed and creating your own heirloom tomatoes. The body of the book is a field guide to 100 heirloom tomatoes - this section requires serious browsing to plan your garden or to compare your yield to Dr. Male's description.



This is a Riesenraube heirloom tomato in bloom – 100 Heirloom Tomatoes description states that Riesenraube means "giant bunch of grapes" and the tomatoes do cluster like grapes.

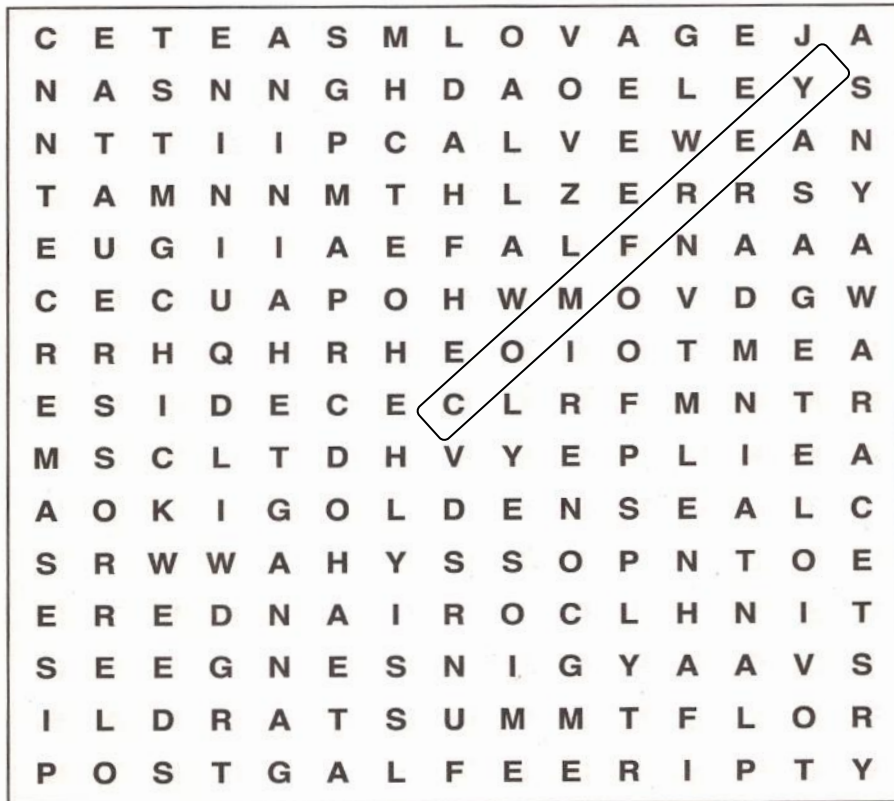
If you see copies of this book do not hesitate to buy one. It is not available at Central Rappahannock Regional Library. Amazon prices it at \$93 new and \$24 for used copies. Southern Exposure Seed Exchange lists the book for \$18.95 but when I checked it was sold out.

(www.southernexposure.com)

— Joan Lindsey

Hide and Seek Words

HERBAL PLANTS



- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|----------|--------------|
| ALOE VERA | CUMIN | LOVAGE | SORREL |
| ANISE | FLAG | MINT | THYME |
| CARAWAY | GINGER | MUSTARD | VIOLET |
| CATNIP | GINSENG | PLANTAIN | WILD QUININE |
| CHAMOMILE | GOLDENSEAL | SAGE | WITCH HAZEL |
| CHICKWEED | HYSSOP | SAVORY | |
| COMFREY | JEWELWEED | SESAME | |
| CORIANDER | LAVENDER | SHALLOT | |

Print out this page—Circle the words. They may be up down backwards forward, or on a diagonal.
 Answer on Page 16 But Don't peek.

Did You Miss An Education Opportunity!



January



February



March



April



May



June



July

Do you need Education Hours for 2011!

Join fellow master gardeners and a growing list of friends and neighbor gardeners who attend the 4th Tuesday Presentations at Salem Church Library. Master gardeners and extension agents have volunteered their time since January 2011 to share their expertise on the following:

January: "It May Be Cold, But Not Too Early to Think Gardening" by John Howe

February: "You Too Can Have A Paradise Garden" by Laurie Clarkston

March: "Protecting Our Trees From the Emerald Ash Borer and Other Invasive Insects" by Gwen Pote

April: "Composting 101" by Michelle Potter

May: "Growing Roses Organically" by Cathy Smith

June: "The Gardens of Italy 2011: A travelogue about Virginia Tech's most recent summer tour of international gardens" by Ron Singleton

July: "Container Gardening" by Dee King

It's still time to attend three more 4th Tuesday presentations at Salem Church Library, with **one exception**. The August presentation will be held on the 5th Tuesday.

Please join us for the remaining 2011 presentations, 7:00 PM at Salem Church Library:

August 30th: "Don't Be Afraid of Shade!" by Tara Hoit *See next page*

September 27th: "What We Can Learn from the Gardens of England and Wales" by Ron Singleton

October 25th: "How to Create Dish Gardens and Terrariums for Gifts" by Linda Dunn

—Linda Burch

Education Opportunity at Salem Church

Don't Be Afraid of Shade!



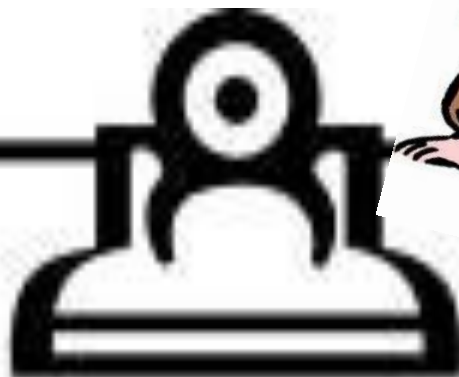
This program was presented by Tara Hoit, on Tuesday, August 30, 2011 at the Salem Church Library .

Tara Hoit is a Master Gardener and has lived all over the country gathering gardening skills in many different environments. Since moving to Virginia, she has fallen in love with shade plants and has devoted most of her home garden to shade-loving perennial beds. After becoming a Master Gardener, Tara chose her childrens' elementary school garden as her volunteer project. She is responsible for raising funds through grants and sponsorships and has a large group of volunteers dedicated to the maintenance of the school garden. She teaches students and parents basic gardening skills hoping to instill in them a life-long love of a rewarding hobby.

If you have a hobby or skill and would like to share it with others, then please contact Linda Burch at lburch4@yahoo.com for presenting at Salem Church or contact Tina Will at brianandtina.will@gmail.com for presentations at the Fredericksburg Regional Library.

Please Note — There are many more educational activities noted in the *MGACRA* web site. Just go to mgacra.com and tab on Education.

If you have an article on a program or activity that you would like published in *The Latest Dirt*, please submit it to Stan Zack at szack@infionline.net. If you have pictures accompanying the article, please submit them and ensure each picture is titled.



Master Gardener Family Picnic Checklist

Weather—Perfect

- Sunny ✓
- Warm ✓
- No Rain ✓

Location— Ideal

- Lots of Shade ✓
- Flowers at their Peak ✓
- Roomy and relaxing ✓

Food—Delicious

- Casseroles Galore ✓
- Mouth Watering Deserts ✓
- Lots of dogs and burgers ✓

Silent Auction— Fun for All

- Numerous items ✓
- Great Bidding Competition ✓
- Good Fundraiser ✓

Fellowship Time Together—**Priceless**

Continued from Page 9

Master Gardener Family Picnic



Upcoming Educational Events

Butter Me UP in July

The Summer Herbal Workshops continue at Ann Gorrell's home. The July "Butter Me Up" workshop had 12 Master Gardeners and guests first sampling Ann's herbal butters and cheeses and then watching Ann demonstrate harvesting and chopping fresh herbs with chef's knives and a mezzaluna. (Look out kitchen shops...there will be 12 crazed women looking for a mezzaluna--a double bladed, really sharp knife used with 2 hands). Using cream cheese and real butter, each one made their own herbal cheese and herbal butters for their own gourmet creations. There was so much chopping going on it looked like everyone was throwing confetti. And the fragrance of fresh herbs was indeed delightful. What fun! Yes, everyone had great fun.



Annibananni

"Fragrant Bouquets to Cheer You" on September 22, and on October 20, "Camellia Sinensis for Your Health." Anyone interested, please contact me: [Ann Gorrell](mailto:AnnGorrell@hughes.net); 540 972-7613 or anngorrell@hughes.net



July Herbal Workshop: LtoR or more or less: Bonnie McQuillon, Jane Thoman, Laura Collinsworth, Caren Meyer, Betsy Ryan, Ann Gorrell, Debbie Albrecht, Kari Thompson, Laura Burch, Pat Hyjek, Nikki Carnes



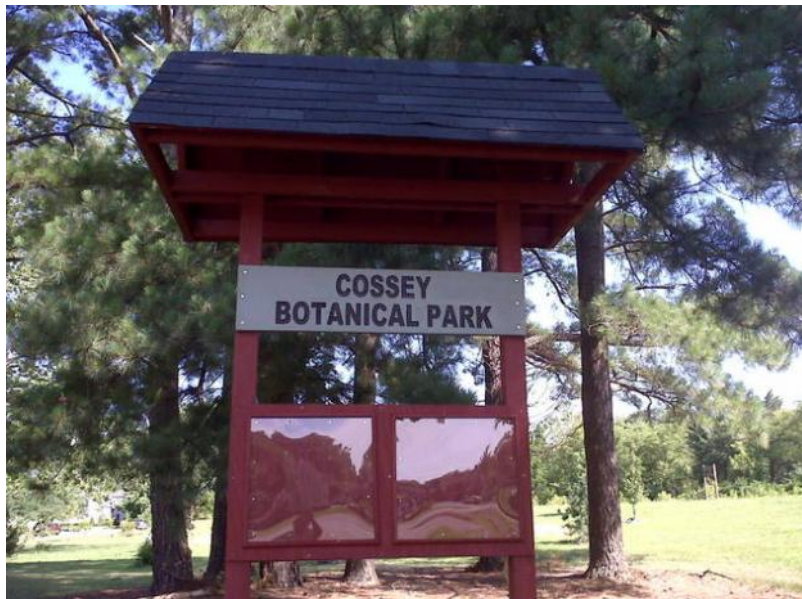
July Herbal Workshop: Left to Right: Laura Burch, Pat Hyjek, Nikki Carnes (Laura's friend), Betsy Ryan, Bonnie McQuillen, Jane Thoman

Upcoming Educational Events

What's Up At Cossey Botanical Park?

by Linda Burch

THE NEW SIGN IS UP!



Thanks once again to Boy Scout Troop 907 for service at Cossey Park. Scout Erik Pospisil designed and installed a much needed sign for the botanical park as part of his Eagle Scout project. The next project underway by Troop 907 is the construction of a storage container for tools and watering equipment. Master Gardener summer projects at Cossey Park are:

- Weekly Watering by Master Gardeners
- Scheduled Work Days to maintain garden and label plants
- Research on Site History
- Planning for site events and fundraising

In the last newsletter MGACRA President Laura Collinworth issued a challenge for all Master Gardeners to "Sign Up and Show Up" for volunteer projects. If you would like to earn Volunteer Hours take the challenge with us who are excited and enthusiastic about the development of a Botanical Garden in the Fredericksburg area. For more information e-mail Linda Burch at lburch4@yahoo.com.

Fredericksburg Fair

The MGACRA had a display at this year's Fredericksburg Fair and several Master Gardeners had the opportunity to serve at the fair answering questions and providing help to the public. As usual, this was a fun and interesting time for the Master Gardener volunteers. Master Gardener Anna Reich, who volunteered at the fair, would like to share her insight of the fair:

- The MGACRA area was setup in the home arts building at the fair where Master Gardeners were available to answer questions from visitors.
- All kinds of questions related to problems with lawns, trees, soil, etc., were asked. Soil testing kits, handouts, and informational literature were also available.
- There were plenty of bookmarks with Virginia Co-op Extension numbers on them that were also available.
- Some of the tables at the fair had displays showing good and bad bugs. This caught the attention of a lot of people.
- There was another table that gave an explanation of Emerald Ash Borers and explained this in further detail.
- There was also a table that demonstrated how lasagna gardening is done and how it helps the soil.

I would like to say that there was lots of information available at the MGACRA display to help anyone with an interest in gardening. Working the fair was a good time to learn a lot about gardening and of course, catch up on volunteer hours for the year!

—Anna Reich

Letter to the Editor

Dear Stan, I am a new Master Gardener Intern. I know you do the newsletter- The Latest Dirt- and I thought a highlight of a great DVD would be something you may be interested to add sometime. The DVD is called "A Man Named Pearl" , you can get it at the library to view. Wonderful movie, Master Gardeners would love it. And it may inspire a field trip! It is a true story about a man who is currently alive and working, named Pearl, who has an amazing talent with plants, despite his lack of education and opportunity. He goes on to become an amazing asset to his community all from his self-acquired plant knowledge.

—Stacey Feindt

Stacy, While I hadn't had the opportunity to see the movie, I did some searching about what other viewers had to say about the movie and one in particular caught my attention and I'll share it with you:

"Pearl Fryar inspires not only the gardener but everyone who has ever had a dream and sought it with all his heart. It underscores the fact that with very few material possessions, our imaginations and God-given talents can lead us to places we had little idea we could be. This film is a beacon of hope; and Mr. Fryar is an inspiration."

—(Freemont NH)

Wise Weeding Made Easy



These are my favorite weeding tools: the Hori Hori knife is perfect for deep rooted perennials like Queen Anne Lace; the Korean Weeder is good to use on weeds that are close to your perennial plants; and I use my oscillating weeding hoe for large areas of small annual weed seedlings. (Pictures are courtesy of Garden Tool Co.)

The temperatures are high and most of the garden chores are done. We've finished planting, pruning and mulching but there is one chore that is never ending, at least for me, and that is weeding. It feels like by the time I finish, it's time to do it again. Weeding is my most disliked chore. Because it is unpleasant, we may have a tendency to put it off until the weeds are out of control which will just make the task more labor intensive. Weeds are unwanted in our garden because they rob our plants of nutrients needed to grow, they crowd roots, spread disease, and often encourage pest. On top of all that, removing weeds is back breaking work, but when you finish, it is so nice to see your beautiful flowers grow to their full potential.

Speaking of back breaking, make sure your weeding doesn't cause you back pain. There are three main ways to position yourself for weeding. Some like to get down on all fours, some like the kneeling position but I prefer to sit. No matter what position you choose, keep your spine long, push your whole body forward from your pelvic area to grasp the weeds and pull it back to get the weeds out. Avoid yanking them out with your arms and hands, this will cause shoulder and neck tension. Limit your motion to your trunk. Keeping the action focused on your trunk and pelvis, which is stronger than your shoulders, and are designed to support your body weight, will also prevent back strain. Keep your attention on how you are doing the movements. Monitor for tension in your neck and shoulders, remember to keep your spine long. Steer any turning, leaning or twisting movements of your spine from your pelvis.

The first step in weed control is to identify the plant which you consider to be a weed. I have most of my perennials identified with a marker so when they are emerging in spring after a long winter sleep, I don't mistake them for a weed. Weeding is a much easier process and the weeds are easier to remove if the soil is moist, but not wet. This allows the roots to be loosened easily and removed in its entirety. You do not want to weed when the soil and plants are wet. You will remove large clumps of soil from around your plants with the weed and increase the chances of spreading soil borne disease. Allow the weeds to grow one inch, this will make it easier for you to grasp the weed and thus increasing your chance of completely removing the root.

Continued on [Page 14](#)

Continued from Page 13

Wise Weeding Made Easy

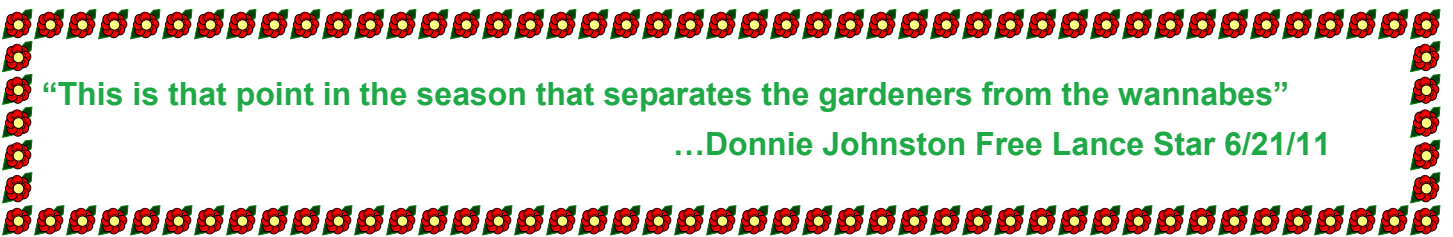
Most annual weeds are easily spotted because the seedlings will suddenly appear in a cluster or group, near where the parent plant grew. They will generally have a fibrous root system which spreads just beneath the soil surface, unlike the fleshy or tap root systems of perennials. The shallow root systems of annuals make them easy to eliminate in the seedling stage with just a couple swipes of your weeding hoe.

Using the proper tools will make the job of weeding easier. Hand pulling and digging individual weeds with a trowel is fine for small gardens and raised beds, but for larger gardens you will want a more substantial tool. There are many tools which can be used for this task, but my favorite tool for larger jobs is my oscillating hoe. My favorite tool for smaller areas is the Korean weeder/cultivator. A hoe or a cultivator is great for controlling weed seedlings, and should be done while they are small. For larger weeds, I like to dig with a garden fork. This way, I can be sure to get the entire root. Once the roots have been uprooted, annuals can be left in the back of the garden on the surface of the soil to dry in the sun and then turned over in the soil or added to the compost pile if they have not flowered. Perennial weeds produce an abundance of flowers followed by thousands of seeds. Unfortunately they also produce and spread by fleshy underground roots and rhizomes. Perennial weeds with their roots should be removed from the garden. They should only be placed in your compost if you are sure your compost gets hot enough to destroy any seeds. Also remember that most perennial weeds will grow from any portion of root that remains in the ground. Do not till a garden with perennial weeds, the machine will chop the roots creating lots of 'root cuttings' which will quickly grow into new weeds.

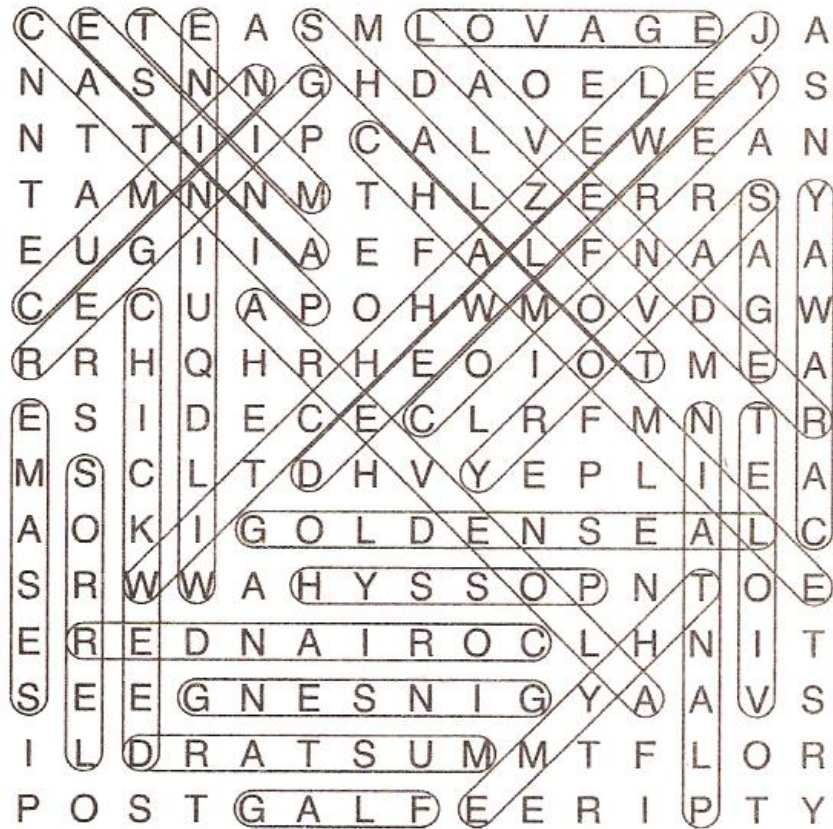
It is very easy to make this dreaded chore into just another gardening task. As you go about your other gardening tasks, keep your gloves or other hand weeding tools with you. If you see a weed, take a second to "nip it in the bud" before it spreads. Or just take a few minutes and walk through your garden every couple of days on weed patrol and remove any weeds that you see. If you do this on a regular basis, your weed problem will be a thing of the pass and your task of weeding will become quick, easy and second nature. If you are finding an abundance of weeds, review your mulching technique. You may need to add more mulch to prevent weed growth.

By following these basic gardening tips, most weeds can be successfully and easily controlled. The use of mulches and a watchful eye will help to keep your garden healthy and beautiful and weed free.

Happy Gardening
—Clara Yates



Hide and Seek Words



If you have an article on a program or activity or even a comment in a **Letter to the Editor**, that you would like published in The Latest Dirt, please submit it to Stan Zack at szack@infionline.net. If you have pictures accompanying the article, please send them and also title each picture.

From the Library of Jan Topperoff



Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation

by Andrea Wulf

Horticulture and politics seem unlikely bedfellows, but in *Founding Gardeners*, Andrea Wulf is engrossingly convincing in her deeply researched chronology about how America's founding fathers seamlessly blended the two and the role these pursuits played in founding our New World nation. Although our first four presidents, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, regarded themselves first as farmers and gardeners, not politicians, "their passion for planting, gardening and agriculture was deeply woven into the fabric of America and totally aligned with their political thought. Agriculture and the independent small-scale farmer were, in their eyes, the building blocks of the new nation. Ploughing, planting and vegetable gardening were more than profitable and enjoyable occupations: they were political acts, bringing freedom and independence," according to Wulf.

During the Revolutionary War while Washington was preparing for the British invasion of New York, he briefly left his generals for a private moment to compose a letter to his estate manager with instructions for planting groves of flowering trees at Mount Vernon. Returning home victorious at the war's end eight years later and before becoming president, Washington was intent on expanding his estate and creating an American place by insisting that only native species be planted. "Mount Vernon was his private statement of independence and republican simplicity, wrought from the soil and trees of his country" writes Wulf.

Wherever the founders traveled abroad, their farms and plantations were always on their minds. As men of the Enlightenment committed to scientific observation and experimentation, they were obsessed with gleaning the latest knowledge for methods for improving soils and harvests, while making detailed notes for future correspondence. All kept "seed boxes" that appear to have been the currency of their friendships in an international network that defied official hostilities. They were familiar with the most important and influential botanical writing of their day including Philip Miller's best selling *Gardeners Dictionary*, Frederick Gronovius's *Flora Virginica* and Carl Linnaeus's work.

When frustrated with stymied trade negotiations in London after the Revolutionary War, Thomas Jefferson & John Adams set off for an ambitious tour of British Gardens. Serving as a guidebook, each had a copy of *Whately's Observations* which described the gardens on their itinerary in great detail as well as the general design principles of the English garden. Comments were annotated in the margins for future reference. What delighted them most was the realization that world-famous "English Gardens" were populated with American plants thanks to the tireless work of their good friend and renowned botanist John Bartram, and later his sons, and his American native plant introductions of more than 200 species to fashionable landowners and notable English botanists through his London agents. (For a wealth of information about Bartram's life and work, see Wulf's 2009 *The Brother Gardeners*.)

Adams recalled that overcoming the challenges of gardening at his farm in Quincy, MA imbued his mental strength of politics. In one of his lesser known exploits in England, he is described as delighted in finding a compost pile to examine.

Continued on [page 18](#)

Continued from previous page 17

Teasing apart the straw and dung, he clearly didn't mind the muck of manure, and gleefully noted that it was "not equal to mine." Wulf suggests that a particular garden changed the tide of American history. Weary of the contentious debate over state representation at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, George Mason, and five other delegates adjourned for a field trip to Bartram's nursery and garden near Philadelphia. "Where the delegates could see how the manifold flora of the thirteen colonies thrived together, their branches intertwined in a flourishing horticultural union." Two days later, the Connecticut Plan, a compromise proposal for state representation, passed by a narrow margin. The deciding votes were cast by three delegates who changed sides after their "three hour walk on a cool summer morning among the United States of America's most glorious trees and shrubs," writes Wulf.

With Washington's decision not to seek re-election in 1796, the partisanship that had been simmering in the new nation came to a boiling point. As party lines hardened between the Federalists and the Republicans, the important topics of agriculture and nature in the future of the United States were ones all four agreed upon and continued to correspond about.

Thomas Jefferson's greatest achievement as president was the Louisiana Purchase followed in concert with the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Pacific Ocean with particular emphasis on America's natural history. Among the provisions Jefferson ensured that a copy was included of America's first botanic textbook, the *Elements of Botany*, written by Benjamin Smith Barton who taught Lewis in Philadelphia. "Jefferson planned this expedition in the name of science, but it would also be the beginning of a distinctly American glorification of the wilderness. The years after the expedition would see the awakening of an obsession with rugged nature, a passion that instilled the American landscape with patriotism and is still part of our national identity today," writes Wulf.

During his retirement at Montpelier, Madison became the first president of the Agricultural Society of Albemarle and fathered the environmental movement. An advocate of living off the land without destroying it, in speeches he spoke about conserving timber resources on once-fertile land that had been depleted from overuse. He was, according to Wulf, "at the vanguard of forest and soil conservation, decades before a concerted effort was made to preserve America's nature...He knew that man's reckless use of his environment would change only if Americans understood the broader context of agriculture, its pivotal place within the delicate balance between man and nature."

In less than four decades after our nation's founding, Wulf writes, "Americans had become so worried about the destruction of native flora that they felt a need to preserve them. All four founding fathers had unsuccessfully attempted to establish a botanic garden in DC during their presidencies, but a year after Madison retired, Congress finally gave the charter to the Columbian Institute for the Promotion of Arts and Sciences to create a five-acre garden at the foot of Capitol Hill.

Our founding fathers left an invaluable legacy for our nation. *Founding Gardeners* is a work of historical and horticultural importance which presents our first four presidents in new light and enriches our understanding of our American heritage. You will be entertained and absorbed in a wealth of well documented information. The text includes hundreds of footnotes, an extensive bibliography, 28 color plates, and black and white drawings and maps.

—Reviewed by Jan Toperoff

The Latest Dirt

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