



## Master Gardener

Vol. 12 No. 9, October, 2007

News for Delaware County Master Gardeners



# Calendar



*Love in the Garden—This is a round architectural sphere being swallowed by a Silver Mound Artemisia. Nice hairdo. -ed*

**Friday, October 12th - Hazardous Waste Collection**  
Rose Tree Park—Volunteers needed.

**Saturday, October 13—2nd Saturday at Smedley**  
10—12 Noon—*Scarecrow Making*

**Tuesday, October 16th**  
Master Gardener Mtg., Soup 'n Swap  
6:30 pm—Smedley  
Bring a dish and any plants that you need to divide or would just like to share.

**Wednesday, October 17**  
2008 Budget requests and Volunteer Opportunities are due from Committee Chairs.

**Tuesday, November 6th— Smedley**  
MG Board Mtg. 7:00pm

**Tuesday, November 20th—Smedley**  
MG Meeting 7:00 pm  
*Propagating & Growing Succulents, Ray Murphy*

**Sunday, December 2nd—**  
**HOLIDAY PARTY**  
1:00PM—RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK.

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## From the MG President .....

*Kathy Hornberger*

*ger*

*October*, one of my favorite times of the year, is the month of apples and cider, corn and chrysanthemums, pumpkins and Halloween, and a day to honor Columbus. He was, indeed, fortunate to have stumbled upon the New World in his travels west from Spain in search of black pepper and cinnamon. Although he never found these two plants by taking this route, he did become acquainted with sweet potatoes, yams, cassava (also called manihot or the tapioca plant), beans, maize (what we call corn), capsicum peppers, tobacco, and squash. When he returned to Europe from his travels, he introduced all these natives of the New World to Western culture.

Through selective breeding of food plants through the years, many have given rise to ornamental species or varieties that are used for horticultural purposes. For example, those of you into container gardening have probably used, at one time or another, sweet potato vines as “spillers.” Their simple leaves range in color from yellow to chartreuse to the darkest purple; white and green with pink edging is also a choice. Yam vines grown on trellises or arbors also display simple leaves that vary in shades of green to maroon with prominent palmately curved veins.

Cassava grows from 6 to 12 feet tall under good tropical conditions. For you “snowbirds” who spend time in Florida or other coastal areas during the winter, you may have seen a plant with large variegated umbrella-like leaves and red petioles used as a hedge plant; this is a form of the cassava. In northern latitudes these plants are either grown in containers that are taken indoors during the colder months or grown in a greenhouse or conservatory.

We are all familiar with the ornamental uses of maize, from cornstalks used to decorate doors and posts to corn cobs of red, blue, or variegated kernels found in table decorations or on wreaths placed on doors, fireplaces, etc. If you were not at Fall Fest on Saturday September 29, please make sure you stop by the EE Center to see the superb decorations!

The common bean, *Phaseolus vulgaris* L., gave rise to many bean varieties, including kidney, pinto, string, wax, runner, navy, and others. One species, the scarlet

runner bean, with brilliant red pea-shaped flowers, has some of the most beautiful blooms in this group. Definitely an eye-opener on top of an arbor or trellis!

Peppers have been bred from *Capsicum annuum* L., known today as the ornamental pepper. These plants are used by homeowners and landscapers as showy front-of-the-border specimens because their fruits, and there are many per plant, range in color from green to chartreuse to orange to red as they mature. Squirrels and other pests don't bother them! They also make great potted plants for indoors or out.

Flowering tobacco is not grown for harvesting of leaves for smoking but for differences in height and flower color. Dwarf forms can be used for edging and tall forms up to 3 feet can add height to beds and borders. The tubular star-shaped flowers are white, pink, red, maroon, lavender, green, or yellow.

October just wouldn't be October without squash, particularly the pumpkin. Fruits range in size from mini to gigantic and while many varieties are grown for their pulp to be made into pies, cookies, breads, muffins, and the like, many are bred specifically for decoration. The end of the month will find many a jack-o-lantern sitting on someone's porch, lining the driveway, or peering from among the plants in the garden. Even squirrels enjoy a little carving! Enjoy!



## From the Coordinator: Linda Barry

We had a remarkable Fall Fest event this year. Accolades to Alyce Zellers and her entire team. Thanks to all of you who donated plants and gardening items, helped with the grooming of the plants and set up and cleaned up for the day.

Thanks to all of you who have turned in volunteer and advanced training hours. The report to the state coordinator is due this month. If you haven't entered or sent the hours yet, please do it as soon as possible.

The MG Board has approved two new Master Gardener projects; the Sabold School Sculpture Garden in Springfield, and the Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Chester. Holly Thorpe will chair the school project. I will be coordinating volunteers for programs at the center in Chester.

All committee chairs are requested to send their 2008 budget requests to Liana Bauerle and Volunteer Opportunities write-ups to Marty Roelandt by October 17<sup>th</sup>. The budget will be approved at the November MG Board meeting.

We have printed donation tickets for the US Airways \$1000.00 gift card. Three are included in this mailing. Additional tickets and flyers are available at the office. The door prize will be awarded at the Holiday Party on December 2. Donors do not need to be present to receive the door prize.

### URGENT COOKBOOK INFORMATION!!

To all of the wonderful people who gave me recipes for our cookbook: would you let me know if the recipes are original or if they are from another source. Email or phone your answers to me.

Thanks for your cooperation,  
Chantal

### Holiday Wreaths Workshop

We will be having two 2nd Saturday wreath-making workshops on December 15. Please hold off pruning your evergreens until the first or second week of December, and donate those cuttings for the workshop.

We use a lot of plant material for these workshops. Drop the greens off at Smedley Park on the 13th or 14th.

Thanks,  
Joe Daniels

## HINTS FROM DELILAH

There is green in the kitchen, green in the garden and you can go green, too. There are hints on how to cut down on your carbon footprint in almost every periodical you read. Conserve water. Those rain barrels some M.G.s got this spring are no doubt thirsty, too.

Water your shrubs deeply by the drip method rather than by overhead sprinkler. Then mulch with shredded leaves, pine needles on the acid loving plants, or woodchips away from the house foundation to avoid an attack by termites.

In the bathroom new shower heads are available which deliver only 2.5 gallons of water per minute, compared to the old shower heads, which deliver 5.5gpm. New low-flow toilets also save considerable water. This will save you money in water heating costs as well as water. Check for water leaks everywhere.

Use compact fluorescent lights to save money on your electric bill, even though they cost more initially, and unplug appliances that are turned on by a clock or remote control as they continue to use electricity when not in use. This includes computers. Put yours on the sleep mode, which will allow you to continue where you left off. Imagine the electric energy and emissions that could be reduced if all offices were to turn off the computers at night!

If you are putting your tools away for the season, clean them of soil by rubbing with an old piece of steel wool, an old broom with the bristles cut to 3 or 4 inches or an old paint brush with the bristles cut very short. Wash tools with warm water, dry thoroughly, and apply a light coat of vegetable oil to protect them from rust. The oil will also dissolve pine pitch off your cutting tools and lubricate them.

Rusty tools can be restored by soaking the metal portion in cider vinegar for a day. Then wipe the tool dry with a clean, dry cloth.

Delilah Foldes

# Words To Weed Through

By Tracey L. Carson

## Hark! Who Grows There? – Part II

The Guerilla Gardening uprisings are at epic proportions. They have elicited such tactics as chemical warfare! With the use of ordinary boxes, in your average home kitchen, they recruit organized armies of red worms to transform food scraps into a fruitful vermicompost and worm juice fertilizer.



Bombs are being tossed over locked fences into vacant inaccessible areas! These “seed bombs” are composed of seed and soil, and sometimes clay, molded together to enhance their explosive artillery of weaponry. They have been even known to substitute the hardware with delicately drained eggs filled with soil and seed.



Combat has broken out in pavement cracks and subway grates. The battles are said to be “vertical and horizontal ...one’s imagination is the limit”. Skirmishes are taking place in London, Brussels, and Sydney, Australia. They have even “Guerill-a-ttacked” an old abandoned car in front of a restaurant in Toronto.



At this point, my advice is to keep your eyes and ears open. One of these radical rascals is rumored to be amongst us. A few years ago she formed a group called “Ridley Park Greens”. They won several “Make a Difference Day” awards for the work they did on public lands. They also won the PA Hort Award for a park they created to commemorate September 11<sup>th</sup>. The alleged perpetrator goes by the alias of Barbara Smith –aka- Newsletter Editor.

*“Well done is better than well said”~ Benjamin Franklin*

As the growing season comes to an end, its time to reflect and take stock of how our gardens have fared. Starting a gardening journal is one way to remind ourselves from year to year what worked and what wasn't so successful. Here are a few pointers you may wish to log down in a journal for future reference:

#### 1. Best Performers

Which plants or flowers grew best in your garden this year? Did that new variety you tried take off or bomb big time? Was it a banner year in your garden overall or a not so hot one?

#### 2. Winning Combinations

Perhaps you experimented with a new combination of flower colors or leaf textures. Sometimes what we visualize doesn't always turn out the way we imagined so if your vision in pink was not exactly worthy of an artist's canvas, make a note of it.

#### 3. Worst Invaders

The term "worst invaders" refers to both weeds and pesky insects. If there was an invasion in your garden this year, try to remember when and where so you can plan ahead and be proactive instead of reactive next year.

#### 4. Lessons Learned

Most of us don't have the perfect garden. There's always something that can be improved--even if it's as simple as adjusting the depth of mulch from 2 inches to 3 inches or resolving not to plant so many flowers that the garden becomes terribly overcrowded by the end of the growing season.

#### 5 Start a Wish List

Want to try square foot or lasagna gardening next year? Build a trellis? Try container gardening? Write it down in your garden journal, whether it's on paper or on your computer. Chances are you'll have a long wish list come springtime.

NOT yet.....

Don't be too quick to put the hose away! Just because it's fall, doesn't mean it's over. In fact, some of the best growing weather for plants is during the fall! And just when you think it's really over....

Good gardeners keep the hose handy in the garage or shed during the winter months. You never know when Mother Nature will grant a thaw. And when she does, pull out the hose and give your plants a good drink. Evergreens, especially broad-leaved plants like Rhododen-

dron, will lose water through their leaves during the winter. If the opportunity presents itself, get out the hose.

If you need to buy a hose, do it now. Don't wait until spring. If not, put it on your wish list for your birthday, for Christmas, Hanukkah.....or just because.

### Powdery Mildew

It's that time of the year, when powdery mildew, a fungus (*Microsphaera penicillata*) that affects many plants, makes an appearance in many parts of the country. Powdery mildew can affect just about any plant, but lilacs, roses, bee balm, phlox, and member of the squash family like pumpkins seem to be most susceptible. Plants growing in shady areas or crowded together with poor air circulation along with overcast skies, higher than usual amounts of rain, and higher humidity levels make powdery mildew a common problem even in arid climates like New Mexico and Colorado. A whitish powdery looking coating on the leaves is the most obvious sign of powdery mildew. In severe cases the leaf may become deformed and the stems and flowers may also be affected. While powdery mildew may mar the appearance of your plants, it doesn't really harm them. In most cases, it's not even necessary to treat it since most of these plants will be shedding their leaves in a month or two anyway. Just be sure to remove the leaves and affected parts and destroy them to lessen the chances of the spores re-infecting your plants. Do not compost infected leaves! If your plants are affected by a mild case of powdery mildew and you'd like to treat it with a homemade remedy, try spraying the leaves with a solution of one tablespoon of baking soda in one quart of water. It may take a second application. A solution of one part mild detergent to 9 parts water may also work. There are also fungicides, many containing sulfur, on the market that can be applied as well.

Enjoy yourself during the fall clean-up...relax...reflect....remind yourself to take your time.

## 2007 FALL FEST



Fall Fest was fabulous! We again had excellent weather, enthusiastic attendees, energetic Master Gardeners and of course, a great program. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who volunteered and helped with Fall Fest. It could not be accomplished without MGs to help with parking, PR, decorating, setup/breakdown, mailings, logistics, and many other components of the day. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for all your hard work.

I would like to send a very special thank you to Tracey Carson for all her hard work and dedication on the PR Committee. Fall Fest had more press coverage this year than in the past which would account for our sell-out! Thank you, Tracey.

The plant sale was our best yet too. Many thanks to Marion, who groomed the plants and tagged them all with the help from the class of 2007. We also had some tireless new class members who showed up at 7 a.m. and worked the



whole day Saturday. Thank you very much MG Class of 2007; you are the best!

Again The Frugal Gardener had some unusual, fun, and great priced items. The Hortline Bake Sale had some mighty tasty items that did not seem to linger too long. . . (*great cake Arlene*)

Now that this event has passed its third year, please consider how we, as Master Gardeners, would like this event to grow. This includes a new chair (not a garden chair) for Fall Fest. Please consider taking this on for next year. Many kinks have been worked out and there may be a few more... but...we have wonderful gardens to show off, a gardening passion to share, environmental education to teach, and the ability to put on a successful event!

Alyce R. Zellers

I'm sure you've heard that the Fall Fest Plant Sale was a huge success. But now you're going to find out why! Many generous Master Gardeners contributed a wonderful variety of beautiful and interesting plants. Special thanks go to Eleanor Tickner (who must have contributed half her garden) and Ray Murphy (who wowed us with a large variety of cacti and succulents once again).



I was lucky to have a dedicated group of MG trainees from the class of 2007, who offered to help with grooming and sorting all those plants. Nancy Barlow, Hazel Dilikatny, Jeanne Skinner, Nancy Ellis, Genny Hamilton, and Ruth Ross arrived at the Environmental Center with pruning scissors in hand and clipped those babies into shape. Thanks to all of you—you're the BEST!

On Fall Fest day, Marie Trexler, Liana Bauerle, Cynthia Sabatini, Julia King, Ray Murphy and Holly Thorpe (another dedicated 2007 class member) arrived at 7 AM to help set up tables and plants. Due to their efforts, we were set up in record time and ready to handle the early bird shoppers who appeared at 8:30 AM.

June Wojtowicz, Lois Sellers, Cynthia Sabatini, Ann McCloskey, Ray Murphy and Julia King were happy to give information and answer questions about plants and then collect all that money (\$1,154) when people couldn't resist the little beauties.

Last but not least, we all are grateful to the PR Committee for doing a bang-up job of getting the word out and bringing so many people to Fall Fest.

THANK YOU, EVERYONE! GREAT JOB!

Marion Yaglinski

I would like to send out a general thank you for everyone who helped with the success of the Bake Sale at the Fall Fest, Saturday September 29, 2007. We had wonderful cakes, cookies, pies, breads, candy, fudge, apples and even a popcorn cake, and I'm sure I might have missed a couple of other types of goodies we had on our tables. And a big thanks for everyone who helped out on Saturday. We had a perfect day to be outdoors and the people came to enjoy us. The reported total we raised this year for the Hortline Committee was \$222.40; we did better than last year. Thank you for all your hard work. I look forward to next year's Fall Fest and the Bake Sale.

Hope Jones-Gary

## Timepieces in our Plants



Steve Bogash,  
Regional Horticulture Educator

*This is the first in a two part series on how plants mark time. The next article will discuss how temperature affects this process.*

Have you ever wondered how plants tell time? In order for plants to flower at about the same time every year, go dormant for winter and resume growth in the spring, it is vital for a plant to know the time of year. Without this awareness, plants could get caught fully leafed out, actively growing and too tender to survive the cold. As the days get shorter in the fall, plants get the cue from the change in lighting that they need to begin winter preparations.

This awareness of the time of year results from the plants ability to track daylength or photoperiod and is known as photoperiodism. Plants are grouped roughly as long-day, short-day and day neutral based on their response to photoperiod. Photoperiod is defined as the time that plants are exposed to light during a 24 hour period. A 10 hour photoperiod has 10 hours of light and 14 hours of darkness and would naturally occur twice each year, once in the late winter in early February and again in the Fall at the beginning of November. It's interesting enough just to know that plants run on a 24 hour cycle. Many plants will go into a night cycle with the lights fully on. Think of these plants as jet lagged.

Long day plants create blossoms as the days get longer. Therefore, these plants set their flower buds as soon as the days get long enough in the spring. Most sunflowers are long day plants, so they bloom in the summer. Other common long-day plants include: Petunia, Snapdragon, Black-eyed Susan, Shasta Daisy, Purple coneflower, African marigold, & Hosta.

Here's a great demonstration of photoperiod: Plant nearly any common sunflower in the late summer after about mid-July. They will grow to a very short height and make very tiny blossoms and do it all very quickly as compared to the same seed planted at the end of May. Since the daylength in mid-late summer is correct for flower development, the small young seedlings produce flowers almost immediately, compared to the plant in the spring where weeks of vegetative growth result in a much larger plant at flowering. To complicate this scenario, there are some day-neutral sunflowers grown for the cut flower trade that are much less sensitive to day length and will look pretty much the same assuming there is enough light and warmth to grow and flower. Many bedding

plants are photoperiodic, but have been bred to have a reduced response to photoperiod.

Short-day plants have pretty much the opposite reaction to day length as long-day plants. These plants set flower buds and bloom as the days shorten in late summer going into fall. Chrysanthemums (mums), Dahlia and Poinsettia are examples of short-day plants. Generally, sometime after the longest day of the year, these plants begin to set flower buds, but some can set flower buds before if the conditions are right. This makes dahlia a great choice for long-lasting summer through fall color. If you dig sweet potatoes too early in the season, there will be few if any of the swollen roots that we eat since the plants are still actively making more leaves and shoots.

The mums and poinsettias that we purchase at garden centers and greenhouses in the late summer and fall have been manipulated during production to bloom late enough for a great fall and winter display. Mum manipulation consists chiefly of pinching the bloom buds back in summer making the plants not only much thicker and more compact, but delaying flowering. Many varieties of fall mums (there are exceptions) will grow very tall and bloom in late June or early July if planted in your garden and allowed to grow naturally without pinching. In the same manner many varieties of poinsettias are also day length manipulated through the use of blackout curtains.

*How do deciduous trees such as Red Maples know when to put on their annual color show?* As the days get shorter in the fall, these plants begin to shut down the cellular chemistry that creates the pigment chlorophyll, the green color we see all season. As the chlorophyll breaks down, we can now see the other color pigments that have been there all along, but were masked by the overwhelming amount of green. This same cue tells the maples to create the zipper or abscission layer that eventually lets leaves fall from the trees.

So far, I've used the expression short and long day, this is an easier way to talk about this subject, but is inaccurate. Plants really tell time by how long the nights are by the reaction of the red pigment phytochrome in their cells to the dark. Day-neutral plants flower when they have grown large enough to flower.

*Why do trees near street lights still change color and lose their leaves?* Most street lights are of the wrong color spectrum, direct their light downward, and are too weak to affect trees. Drought and other stresses on plants can affect when they begin going dormant.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

I would love to have some volunteers for a bulk mailing. This one is the Second Saturday brochure for 2008. Please note that it will be done on Tuesday, November 6 at 1:00pm in the environmental center. Our mailing list has increased by leap and bounds over the past few years, so please come to help. Several of us will shorten the time it takes and you know we always have a good time chatting as we work.

Barbara Meahl

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## WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION

BY BARBARA SMITH

It was a gift to me from my husband on a BIG birthday and we toured Venice, Verona, Tuscany and Lake Como. Flower and Gardens everywhere; that's what I most enjoyed most. Northern Italy is very lovely and in Venice, where there is nowhere to plant gardens, people take advantage of window boxes and



you'll see flowers overflowing from every house.

This photo is in Varenna's Villa Monastero on Lake Como.

Why not tell us what YOU did on your summer vacation?

### DEADLINE - MG News in November

The deadline for articles to be published in the November MG Newsletter is **Wednesday, November 7th.**

*Ed.*

## MG OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

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Vice President: Lorraine Altrichter  
Secretary: Darlene Delany  
Treasurer: Liana Bauerle  
Coordinator: Linda Barry—610-690-7669

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