



Master Gardener

Vol. 12 No. 4, April, 2007

News for Delaware County Master Gardeners



Calendar



Participating in the Spring Clean-up of Smedley are: *Left: Pete Schettler and Carolyn DiPaulo. Right: Barbara Marinelli*

April 14th— 2nd Saturday at Smedley –
10-12 Noon

Veggie Gardening presented by Leslie Trimble

April 17 MG Meeting at Smedley –
6:30pm

Garden Clean-up, . Bring tools

April 21—Intergenerational Garden

10am-1pm, Plant and Seed Pick-Up,

May 1st— MG Board Meeting,

7:00 pm Smedley Park

Officers, Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs, and Class Representatives are all members of the MG Board. All Master Gardeners are welcome to attend Board meetings

April 22—Arbor Day in Smedley Park, 1pm

April 24—Composting Workshop, 7pm,
Smedley Park

May 12th — 2nd Saturday at Smedley –

Gardening with Children 10-12 Noon

April 27—Scott Arboretum, 9am
Hortline Update Training,

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From the Coordinator: *Linda Barry*



This year's Home Gardener's School was perhaps the best overall event that we have had in the history of the Home Gardener's School. Congratulations to the many Master Gardeners who worked on the event, and thanks to all who

attended. The decorations elicited many comments, the plant sale was superb, the speakers well-received, and the facility and food were perfect.

Teaching Garden Committees met the last Saturday of March for the first garden clean-up of this season. Thanks to the hearty MGs who came out for the 'garden party' the beds have never been in such great shape this early in the year. We will spend an hour before our April general meeting to complete the clean-up and mulch the remaining areas. If you are unable to work on the beds, we will also need some volunteers to help us organize our stored treasures downstairs in the Environmental Center. I hope you can come out and join us.

Thanks to those of you who have entered or sent your volunteer hours for the first quarter. Please enter your contacts where it is appropriate. If you are looking for volunteer opportunities we have many activities scheduled for the next two months. Check the front page calendar and the Speakers' Bureau calendar for dates, times and places. We also have requests from two middle schools for garden consultations. The first is scheduled for April 18 in Sharon Hill at 2:45pm. If you are interested and available, please let me know. The second is at Northley Middle School in Aston. No date has yet been set.

Our first Plant and Seed Pick-Up is April 21. You will find the information included with your newsletter. If you are a vegetable gardener, come join us at the Intergenerational Garden. Thanks to the loyal volunteers who have nurtured the plants since February. The next pick-up will be for warm season plants on May 19th.

New website for identifying plants:

<http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/CASDEPT/Hort/LeafID/>



HGS photos: Top left: Ken Paulsell and Lorraine Altrichter. Top Right: Alyce Zellers and Gerri Eunson. Middle: Barbara Knight at the Plant sale table.

While you're out working in your garden, keep the June plant swap and September Fall Fest in mind. Those crowded perennials and volunteer plants can be potted up for new homes. Enjoy this beautiful season.

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From MG President.....

Kathy Hornberger

According to the recent National Gardening Association's e-newsletter, April is National Gardening Month! As MGs, we know that every month is gardening month in some form or another. But it

is at this time of year when our enthusiasm and creativity and our need to get our hands dirty is at its greatest! Indeed, our "sap" is rising right along with the plants in our gardens.

For some of us, gardening is a way to escape the reality of our everyday existence making a living. For those of you who are retired, it is a way to occupy some of the time that was once taken up by pursuing your careers. Now you can pursue a hobby that you did not have time for before or, perhaps, gardening is something you had always wanted to try. For many, it is a way to create calm out of chaos and an oasis of green with bright colors and diverse growth forms and textures amidst landscapes of concrete, brick, glass, and steel. For most of us, it is a way that we can continue to connect with our biological roots.

Nobody ever said gardening was an easy pursuit, or that it would only have good points. Sore muscles, lots of sweat, dirty and torn clothes, and even bloody fingers are part of the package. In fact, it can be downright frustrating at times. According to Beard & McKie (*A Dictionary for Weed-pullers, Slugcrushers & Backyard Botanists*), gardening is 'the art of killing weeds and bugs to grow flowers and crops for animals and birds to eat.' We have all experienced these types of situations firsthand many times and probably always will. It is the nature of gardening.



We are lucky that, if we do get a bit discouraged, we can call upon Saint Fiacre (fee ah´ crah), the patron saint of gardeners. Born in Ireland during the 7th century where he was raised in a monastery, he later sought refuge in France. He was well-known as a healer, having been taught the use of medicinal herbs, and as a grower of superb vegetables. I have a statue of Saint Fiacre in my garden that I found at a local nursery a few years ago. You can recognize him by the presence of a shovel, often with a basket or bunch of vegetables. Even if you never ask for his help, the statue adds a point of interest.

Happy gardening, everyone

This sounds like fun!

Saturday, June 16, 2007; 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
Interested MGs, save this date to join a car pool trip to Celebrate Gourds in Lancaster County



Smuckers' Gourd Farm
Route 897
317 Springville Rd
Kinzers, PA 17535
(Near Shady Maple Smorgasbord)

Call Gerri Eunson to reserve your spot.

Seasonal Tips:

1. Celebrate Arbor Day at Smedley Park on April 22 at 1PM and Earth Day, join us outside at a fun event and add some more hours on your ever-growing total for this year.
2. Try to determine if your soil is ready to work, take a handful and squeeze it. If it crumbles, then it is ready to plant. If not, wait several days and try again.
3. Cut and remove weeds near the garden to help prevent plant virus diseases and clean out hiding places where slugs live.

Houseplants:

1. Rinse and dust off leaves with a gentle spray of room temperature water.
2. Time to repot any plants that have outgrown their pots. Generally pot sizes are increased by a 1" diameter at each repotting.
3. A thought for this year....Rather than continually increasing the size of the pot to accommodate an even larger plant, sometimes it makes more sense to divide an overlarge plant into several smaller plants and pot them up individually. Now you are thinking what to do with all the new potted up plants...some hints....give them away to your friends, donate them to a library, post office, retirement home, school - or save them for the May plant giveaway at the May monthly meeting.
4. Begin fertilizing plants again.

Bulbs:

1. After flowering, fertilize bulbs. Do not cut foliage of spring bulbs for arrangements or even after flowering, let the foliage die naturally. Please do not tie up the foliage with rubber bands or braid the foliage.
2. Start tuberous begonias and caladiums indoors for later planting outdoors.
3. Label areas where bulbs are overcrowded so that they can be dug up and separated in July. Overcrowding will reduce flowering.

Vegetable Gardens:

1. Fertilize the vegetable garden before planting.
2. Plant asparagus and rhubarb now.

3. Start sowing cool -season vegetables (peas, carrots ,beets, radishes, lettuce, spinach)
4. Set out transplants of cauliflower , cabbage, broccoli, and collards
5. Start seeds indoors for summer crops (tomatoes, peppers and eggplant).

Lawns:

1. Seed bare patches.
2. Cool season grasses can still be seeded. Keep the seeded areas moist to allow germination. (the mix recommended for this area is 70% Kentucky bluegrass, 20% perennial ryegrass, and 10% fine fescue).
3. Before you begin cutting, replace the blade on your mower. An old mower blade is going to tear your grass and put a lot of stress on it.
4. Never cut more than a third of a blade of grass (in one pass). That means if your lawn grows to a small jungle in the spring, trim the grass slowly until you get it to the length you would like.
5. It has been suggested to use a four step fertilization products available at most hardware stores. But remember to follow the directions

Perennials, Biennials, and Annuals:

1. Fertilize as growth begins.
2. Gradually remove winter mulch.
3. Continue to divide and transplant.
4. Plant cool season annuals (pansies, sweet peas, snapdragons).

Roses

1. Prepare bare-root roses for planting by pruning damaged growth and shortening healthy canes by a third and trimming roots by half. Soak plants in muddy water overnight and plant as soon as possible. Water and mulch after planting.
2. Prune rose bushes (usually when forsythia are blooming).

WORDS TO WEED THROUGH

by Tracey L. Carson

One In The Billion

Pennsylvania's State Arbor Day is the last Friday in April. The first Arbor Day took place on April 10th, 1872 in Nebraska. The founder's cause was "that a special day be set aside dedicated to tree planting and increasing awareness of the importance of trees". Who knew that one day its' most basic purpose might be one of the key weapons in today's battle against global warming?



Nobel Peace Prize winner and Kenyan environmentalist, Dr. Wangari Maathai, has founded a global movement called "**The Plant for the Planet: Billion Tree Campaign**". Backed by Albert II, Prince of Monaco, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) the initiative aims for the planting of a minimum of 1 billion trees in 2007. The project is calling on all people from governments, to corporations, farmers,

private sector organizations, schools, and individuals to go to the website and make a pledge, by registering, to plant a tree and ensure its' ability to thrive for a long period afterward. Each pledge can be in any amount from 1 to 10 million trees. The drive stresses the planting of indigenous trees, as well as trees that are suitable to the local environment. Urban environments are but one of the four key planting areas that the operation identifies, but beginning with a single tree in a backyard garden is ideal. Per the website, "all contributing participants will receive a certificate of involvement".

Keep these few quick facts in mind:

- One ton of carbon is produced by each long haul flight.
- In one year an average tree inhales 26 pounds of carbon dioxide, and exhales enough oxygen to sustain a family of four for a year.

Rainforests generate almost 40% of the world's oxygen, and contain nearly half of all the trees on earth, but only cover 7% of the land on earth.

These are but a few of the reasons why Dr. Maathai has spear-headed this crusade meant to "inspire ordinary citizens to help the environment". She stresses that this push is "something that anybody can do" and that "we have but a short time to avert serious climate change". As of 3/25/07 the pledge total was at 819,152,544. So go to the website, make your pledge, follow through, and encourage everyone that you know to do the same. Make sure that you and yours are 1 in the billion!

www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign

"That each day I may walk unceasingly on the banks of my water, that my soul may repose on the branches of the trees which I planted, that I may refresh myself under the shadow of my sycamore"~

Egyptian tomb inscription, circa 1400 BC

Green Thumb Schedule always at 6:45 pm

NEW DATE

April 24th Walnut Hill Restaurant School
in West Philadelphia

Merry Place Schedule 9AM—12 Noon

May 12th Community Volunteer Day
June 2nd Compost Workshop

Janae Alberts

MG OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

President: Kathy Hornberger
Vice President: Lorraine Altrichter
Secretary: Darlene Delany
Treasurer: Liana Bauerle
Coordinator: Linda Barry

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Field Trips: Gerry Eunson
Flower Show: Gayla McCluskey
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Butterfly: Kathy Hornberger
Terrace: Carl Pfeiffer
Marion Nelson
Shade: Maru Hollen
Carolyn DiPaulo
Julia King
Taylor Arboretum: Ed Lyons
Darlene Delany



Girl Scouts learn to “Adopt a Park”

Janae Alberts and Joe Daniels had 67 Girl Scouts at Merry Place in Havertown on Saturday March 31st.

As part of their "Adopt a Park" program, we talked about the signs of spring, pulled some weeds, and planted pansies.

[MORE CALENDAR ITEMS](#)

Thursday, April 12

"Oasis in the Nation's Capitol -
The National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden "
7:30 p.m., Learning Center Auditorium

Redbud Nursery Events

Sat April 14th 10 AM Lenny Wilson, Instructor, Delaware Horticulture Center, "Using Native Plants in Your Landscape" 11 AM Rick Ray, Barnes Foundation Horticulture Instructor, will demonstrate how to prune small trees and shrubs Sun April 15th 12 Noon to 2 PM Bryn Richard, ASLA, will assist homeowners with landscape design and plant choice for their properties Redbud will donate 10% of all proceeds to Chester-Ridley-Crum Watershed Association.

June 7-9 - Millersville University
Native Plant Conference, contact 717-872-3030,
npilc@yahoo.com.

June 22-23

Master Gardener State Conference, State College, PA

Volunteers Needed

May 24, Senior Expo sponsored by Senator Pileggi at Neumann College, 10 am-1 pm. Please contact Linda if you would like to participate.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO GET SOME UNUSUAL PLANTS

The Providence Garden Club of Pennsylvania will hold its **59th Annual Plant Sale on Saturday, May 5, at The Williamson Free School of Mechanical Trades, 106 South Middletown Road (Route 352) Middletown Township from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

If you pre-order between April 1st and April 30th, you have an opportunity to come on Friday, May 4, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. where you can pick up your order and purchase additional plants for your garden. Order Forms will be available at the March meeting, the Home Gardeners' School or call Karen Barnes, Plant Sale Co-chair.

Providence Garden Club is working closely with local growers to offer many hard-to-find species of annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs. A selection of choice plants for containers is included in the sale. Be sure to mark your calendar for this date and plan to come early, as many varieties sell out early in the day.

Another feature of the sale is the opportunity to purchase a wonderful selection of time-tested perennials that come from the gardens of club members. If you are looking for reasonably priced plants that are sure to do well in your garden, then be sure to visit the "Hort Table," where you'll find these plants.

2007

**SECOND SATURDAYS
AT SMEDLEY PARK
ALL CLASSES BEGIN AT
10:00 AM TO NOON**

April 14—Vegetable Gardening

May 12 Gardening with Children

June 9—Formal Herb Gardening

July 14—Tour of Smedley Gardens

August 11—Vegetable and Fruit Sculpting

September 8 - Gourds & Birdhouses

October 13—Scarecrow Making

November 10 - Fall Flower Arrangement

December 8—Wreath Making

MGS' FIELD TRIP ON JUNE 2ND



Please join the Delaware County Master Gardeners as we visit a major public garden, its associated shade garden and a specialty nursery on a day trip to Mary-

land, on Saturday, June 2. The itinerary includes a tour of Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Md., McCrillis Shade Garden in Bethesda and Behnke's Nursery in nearby Beltsville.

The bus will leave at 7:15 a.m. from the Baltimore Pike entrance to Granite Run Mall and return at approximately 7:30 p.m.

At Brookside Gardens, the group will have a special guided tour of native plants used in garden settings as an alternative to exotics. Brookside features 35 acres of formal and informal gardens as well as two conservatories. The landscape includes a Japanese pavilion and pond, fragrance garden, rose garden, azalea garden, butterfly exhibit, gift shop and information center.

The nearby McCrillis Shade Garden, donated to the county by the original owners and now associated with Brookside Gardens, is approximately five acres in size and offers a selection of choice ornamental trees and shrubs that will extend bloom in the garden, as well as bulbs, groundcovers and perennials.

The third stop of the day will be at Behnke Nurseries, one of the major nurseries for the Washington area. There the group will have the opportunity to tour the original 11-acre garden center and indulge in plant purchases.

The cost of the trip is \$55 per person and includes transportation on an air-conditioned, lavatory-equipped motorcoach. Participants should bring a sack lunch. The trip is held rain or shine.

To register, or for more trip information, call the Delaware County Cooperative Extension Office at 610-690-2655. Checks should be payable to DCCE (Delaware County Cooperative Extension) and mailed to: Linda Barry, Delaware County Cooperative Extension, Smedley Park, 20 Paper Mill Road, Springfield, PA 19064. Add your e-mail address for trip confirmation.

Old Farmer's Almanac for April

1 Grub out weeds, briars and other plant pests

2-3 favorable days for planting root crops. Fine for sowing hay, fodder crops and grains. Plant flower

4-6 Good days for planting beets, carrots, radishes, turnips, peanuts and other root crops. Also good for cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, kale, celery and other leafy vegetables. Start seedbeds.

7-8 Barren days. Do no planting.

9-10 Favorable days for planting beets, carrots turnips, radishes, onions and other root crops.

11-12 Excellent time to kill weeds, briars, poison ivy and other plant pests.

13-14 Favorable days for planting root crops, extra good for vine crops. Set strawberry plants.

15-16 Poor planting days. Break ground or cultivate.

17-18 Favorable for planting beans, corn, cotton, tomatoes, peppers and other above ground crops.

19-21 Poor days for planting, seeds tend to rot in ground.

22-23 Plant tomatoes, beans, peppers corn, cotton and other above ground crops on these most fruitful days. Plant seedbeds. Start flower gardens.

24-28 Grub out weeds, briars and other plant pests.

29-30 Plant corn, melons, squash, tomatoes and other above ground crops. A favorable time for sowing grains, hay and fodder crops. Plant flowers



HOME GARDENERS GO TO THE HEAD OF THE CLASS

Diana Breen officially opened this year's Home Gardeners' School with the clang of an old-fashioned school bell and a homework assignment.

"Learn two or three tips today and take them back to your garden," she advised students, after welcoming the 130 registrants to the 11th annual Home Gardeners' School.

Yet even before noon, it was abundantly clear that few if any students had followed Diana's directive to the letter. Instead, notebooks bulged with dozens of soil tips, composting and fertilizer suggestions, plant lists, bird and butterfly garden ideas, sketches, to-do lists, Latin names for flowering trees and lists of local venues where one can find, buy, swap, recycle and reuse just about anything and everything for the garden.

Here is a spade full of tips I transplanted from both the HGS faculty and various students whom I asked the question your kids may shrug off but an enthusiastic gardener will slog through knee-deep mud to answer -- "What did you learn in school today?"

Lesson 1: Native plants offer native wildlife the most nutrition. Use them to attract and nurture birds and butterflies. Migrating birds need increasing levels of fat from springtime onward and native plants provide these much-needed nutrients. Also, native trees, such as Black Gum, Red Buckeye and native Serviceberry trees have brilliantly colored fall foliage, which acts as a "flagging system" for migrating birds.

Lesson 2: Must-have plants in the bird and butterfly garden include purple coneflower, which goldfinches love; *Lobelia cardinalis*, which attracts hummingbirds; milkweed, which is the only host plant for monarch butterflies, and native grasses, which produce plenty of seed heads for birds plus provide shelter for winged friends.

Lesson 3: Three of the very best flowering trees for the garden are the *Prunus x incam* 'Okame' or Okame Cherry, *Amerlanchier laevis* or Allegheny Serviceberry and *Malus* 'Jewelberry', *M. Red Jade*, *M. sargentii*-Crabapple.

A fairly upright grower, the Okame Cherry reaches a height of 20 – 25 feet and spreads between 15 and 20 feet. Since it doesn't bear fruit, it's an ideal choice for shading patios or placing near walkways. It should be planted in full sun for the very best floral and fall color display.

The Allegheny Serviceberry also offers spec-

tacular spring and fall color, producing delicate flower clusters in spring, and later, berries, which birds love to eat. The Serviceberry is a native tree, likes moist soil and a little afternoon shade. It rewards those who plant it with a brilliant fall display of orange, red and purple foliage.

The Crabapples also prefer full sun and produce very fragrant and showy flowers and fruit. The cultivar Red Jade is a weeping variety that flowers best every other year. The *Sargentii* turns a lovely golden yellow in the Fall.

Lesson 4: Kent Russell is *not* on drugs. He's quite rightly an abundantly enthusiastic gardener, who specializes in creating one-of-a-kind, over-the-top, take-your-breath-away, fabulously floriferous containers that most mere mortals couldn't conjure up even in their wildest dreams. He's also great fun and the perfect after-lunch lecturer as there is just no way one could doze off with Kent front and center. And that's even after a major carbohydrate load at lunch, including a dessert of carrot cake! As one delighted student confided to me, "Kent alone is worth the price of admission! He's a wealth of information and just so much fun."

One of Kent's signature flowers for containers is the annual *Calibrachoe*, 'million bells' petunia. Other favorites include Fuchsia 'gartenmeister', Angelonia and various kinds of euphorbia. Lantana is one of Kent's favorite "spiller" plants for large pots. To keep potting soil moist, he recommends using soil-moist granules when planting and also to include a slow-release fertilizer, such as osmocote, when first planting your pots. If placing pots where they can be sabotaged by deer, Kent uses an all-natural product called Deer-Out, whose main ingredient is peppermint oil.

Two of our fellow Master Gardeners, Marty Roelandt and Joe Daniels offered up heartfelt and highly informative Valentines to two of their favorite plants, Winterberry and *Nandina Domestica*, respectively. Claire Sawyers, Director of Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College closed the day with her suggestions for using various broad leaved evergreens as groundcovers, low shrubs, large shrubs and trees in the garden.

The day ended as it began -- with the clang of the bell by this year's Home Garden School co-chair Diana Breen, who would like to sincerely thank co-chair Ken Paulsell and all of those who worked so creatively and diligently to make this year's Home Gardeners' School such a resounding success.

Class dismissed. Go home and garden!

--Julia King