



Master Gardener

Vol. 12 No. 6, June 2007

News for Delaware County Master Gardeners



Calendar



A gardener's laundry

June 15 & 16 – Celebrate Gourds –
Smucker's Gourd Farm, Lancaster County.

For carpool information contact Gerri Eunson or Joe Daniels.

June 18 – Public Relations Committee meeting
6:30 PM Smedley

June 19 – Master Gardener's Picnic
and Plant Swap,
5:30— Memorial Bench Site
6:30—Picnic and Plant Swap

June 22-23—Master Gardener State Conf.
State College, PA

June 23-24 –
Master Gardener applicant interviews

June 26 – Fall Fest & Speaker's Bureau
Mtg. 7:00 Smedley Park.

July 14 – 2nd Saturday at Smedley,
10-12 Smedley's Teaching Gardens

August 11 – 4-H Fair, 11-2
'Ask a Master Gardener', and Pot
Painting

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From the Coordinator: *Linda Barry*

Thanks to Gerri Eunson for planning all of the details of our trip to Brookside Gardens and McCrillis Shade Garden. We had a great day.

Interviews for the new Master Gardener class will be held on June 23, 24. Marianne Martin is setting up the interview schedule, and volunteers signed up for greeting the new applicants and administering and marking the pre-test. We begin with Orientation on August 22. The class schedule will be in the July newsletter. If you would like to attend any of the sessions, you are welcome.

Teaching Gardens are featured for July's 2nd Saturday at Smedley program. If you are on one of the Teaching Gardens committees, please work with your chairperson during this next month to make sure the gardens are ready for July 14. Thanks for the great work you have already done this season.

We will be assembling the Memorial Bench, grading the site, and spreading mulch beginning at 5:30 on June 19th. This is the date of our monthly meeting. At 6:30 we will have our Picnic and Plant Swap. If you're available, please show up early and help us. Bring some tools for grading and hauling mulch. A *Cercis canadensis* has been planted at the site of the bench by the Arbor Day volunteers. You are welcome to bring a guest to the picnic. If you haven't notified Hope Jones-Gary that you plan to attend, please contact her. Master Gardeners provide the hot dogs and hamburgers, skillfully cooked by Chef Pfeiffer, and members contribute side dishes and desserts.

Bring some plants to share, and be ready to take home some great new additions for your garden.

We have been asked to have a Master Gardener table at the 4-H Fair on August 11th. Last year Joe Daniels organized a "Pot Painting" party for the children. It was so successful that we have been asked to offer that activity again. We will also answer gardening questions from attendees. Please let me know if you would like to help. The hours are 11-2.

Marion Yagliniski has offered to contribute to the Philadelphia Inquirer's gardening blog. Check out the site. If you would like to offer your expertise also, please let me know.

Enjoy your summer gardening!

MG OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

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Coordinator: Linda Barry

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Elsie Mueller

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Garden Contest: June Wojtowicz
Hortline: Ron Gatto
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Terrace: Carl Pfeiffer
Marion Nelson
Shade: Maru Hollen
Carolyn DiPaulo
Julia King

Taylor Arboretum: Ed Lyons
Darlene Delany

DEADLINE

The deadline for articles to be published in the July MG Newsletter is **Wednesday, July 4th**.

Ed.

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WORDS TO WEED THROUGH

by Tracey L. Carson



Random studies have shown that Mother's Day is the day of the year in which the highest numbers of "direct" phone calls are made. Whereas, Father's Day is shown to be the day of the year in which the highest number of "collect" phone calls are made. In lieu of this blatant injustice we are going to dedicate this article to great dads, and pose the same kind of query that we did for our Mother's Day article. The question...If your father was a plant, what type of plant would he be?

Is there a certain time of the year that he is so glued to the television that you can see the 50 yard line on his forehead, making him *Turf Grass*? Was he visually impaired when it came to cutting the 3 foot tall grass that he assured your mom would be taken care of, making him a *Veronica Fairytale*? Yet, with bionic accuracy, he could see the clock strike 1 minute past your curfew making him a *Rhus Tiger Eye*? Which was usually followed by an almost mythical temper tantrum, making him a *Poncirus Flying Dragon*? When your mother let him dress himself, was he an *Abelia Kaleidoscope* or a *Yucca Colorguard*? Then when she commented on this, did he disappear in a quiet huff of *Baptisia Purple Smoke*? As a child, when you ran around the house like you were crazy did his bellow almost melt the wax in your ears, making him a *Pyracantha Firethorn*? But when your kids explode into a similar frenzy, are you dumbfounded as you watch him happily become a *Rose Carefree Wonder*? Has time and age disclosed that his bark was always worse than his bite, bringing to light that he would sacrifice anything for your happiness, making him an *Astilbe Heart and Soul*? Did you secretly have him wrapped around your little finger, making him a big *Magnolia Teddy Bear*?

Let's not forget your father-in-law. Does he get a little happy with the island drinks during the family vacation, making him a *Picea Margarita*? Does he follow this up by falling sound asleep for hours in the sun, making him a *Rhododendron Red Red*? For some reason, unbeknownst to me, my father says that I must see him as a *Bonsai Money Tree*. Yet, I find myself thoroughly amazed at the buff job that he is now able to do on the top of his head. The shine it casts is so brilliant that I can primp with my left hand in its reflection, while I lighten his wallet with my right hand. Thus, I would categorize my father as a *Malus Silver Moon*. In any case, all good Daddies, Pop Pops, and Grandpas are gifts and they, or their memory, should always be honored as such. I wholeheartedly wish every devoted dad out there the Happiest Father's Day Ever!

"It is admirable for a man to take his son fishing, but there is a special place in heaven for the father who takes his daughter shopping" ~ John Sinor

FOCUS ON FALL FEST PLANT SALE

Planning ahead is a *very* good thing! This year I'm going for the little extras that make a plant sale great! How about a picture of the little beauties in bloom? That's what those digital cameras are for, right? A picture stimulates interest and helps potential buyers to visualize the plant in their garden.

Thanks for planning ahead! And while you're planning, please save those shallow boxes and containers that you accumulate over the gardening season as you bring home additions to your garden. We will need them for the sale.

Plant categories this year are: bulbs, cacti & succulents, herbs, houseplants (excluding spider plants—they did not sell very well), natives, perennials, shrubs, and trees...with an emphasis on shrubs.

I anticipate needing 4 volunteers for set-up and 3 volunteers for sales on Fall Fest day. In the week prior to the Fest, I will need 4 volunteers to help groom the babies so they will look their best for Fest Day. Please contact me if you'd like to help.

Questions? Contact Marion Y

Summer Hints from Delilah Be kind to your wildlife friends. Set out fruit, that is too rotten for you to eat for the butterflies on a plastic plate. They will enjoy it. Make a puddle for them too, in a shallow plant saucer or old cake pan filled with pebbles, a handful of soil and filled with water. Place the pan in the ground almost up to the rim and leave bare soil around it. Keep the pan and the soil moist. The butterflies will sip the mud for the minerals in it. The male butterflies will gather around it, almost like the local bar. Plant some extra parsley and asclepias for their larvae to feed on. To attract more birds to your yard, place a birdbath on the ground. That can be a large plant saucer or upside down garbage can lid and hang a gallon jug or empty soda bottle over it from a limb or Shepherd's crook. Put a small pinhole in the bottom, fill with water and let er drip. Birds are attracted to moving water and can hear it from a distance. Save your eggshells. Clean and dry them before crumbling them. They can be used in the planting hole of your tomatoes to eliminate blossom end-rot or scratched into the soil beside them, or throw them out for the birds to devour. Birds need grit to aid their digestion. Other hints: Now that the garden is planted, keep the weeds down by placing a few layers of wet newspaper between the rows. For a better look, and to keep the paper moist put dry grass clippings or shredded leaves over them. Next year they will just be turned under to add tilth and nutrients to the soil. To keep lettuce from bolting, build a lean-to to support climbing plants and let them shade the lettuce planted under or behind them, or plant taller plants which will shade the lettuce in the hotter part of the day. Delilah Foldes

A short message to all fellow Master Gardeners: I thought it would be fun to do a monthly column on our favorite plants, whether it be a tree, shrub, annual, perennial, herb, or maybe a weed. Hopefully many of you would write a short article on one of the plant types and submit it for all of us to enjoy and possibly introduce into our own gardens. So start thinking about one of your special plants, which I know you have many of and share some thoughts about it to all of us, and who knows it may become one our garden delights. Join me in doing this each month to introduce us to a new variety or species we should know more about.

FRINGE TREE



One of my favorite trees, is the Fringe Tree (*Chionanthus virginicus*). This is a small tree native to the eastern United States, its range extending from New York south to Florida and across to Texas. Hardy between USDA zones 3 to 9, the fringe tree is a member of the olive (*Oleaceae*) family, the same family that lilacs, privet, forsythia, ashes, and of course olives belong to. The large leaves are opposite and between 4 to 8 inches long. Blooming in April, May, or June (depending on location), the showy fragrant 1

inch long creamy white flowers form drooping clusters called panicles and hang from 4 to 8 inch stalks, giving them the appearance of a white beard. The dark blue to black fruits ripen in late summer and resemble olives but are not edible. Fringe tree is a low maintenance tree that grows well in full or partial sun, preferring moist to wet soils. It is considered a large shrub or small understory tree and in cultivation grows 12 to 20 feet tall and about as wide. With its interesting flowers, good fall color (yellow), and lack of insect or disease problems, fringe tree is an attractive addition to the landscape, especially along a stream or in a woodland garden. Fringe tree tolerates pollution and is an excellent tree for urban gardens.

COFFEE GROUNDS FOR GARDENERS

This year marks the 11th year the coffee giant Starbucks is giving away coffee grounds as part of their social and environmentally responsible corporate programs. This program is called "Grounds for Your Garden". If you're a Starbucks fan, you probably already know about this, but if you're not, why not swing on by and pick up a bag to add to the garden or compost bin? In the world of composting, coffee is considered a "green" waste material with a carbon-nitrogen ration of 20:1. It's also suitable for vermicomposting (worm composting), or can be added directly to the garden. It's acidic and roses, azaleas, hydrangeas, and other acidic soil loving plants love it. Starbucks says that one small bag is enough for one small garden. If you want to apply the coffee grounds directly

to the garden, sprinkle them around before watering or an expected rainfall. You could probably make compost tea with them as well. Grounds are given away on a first come-first served basis and any remaining grounds are donated to nurseries and schools for community gardens.

VERMICOMPOSTING

Vermicomposting also known as worm composting, another method gardeners can use to produce compost for the garden. It is one of the best ways to compost kitchen waste in fact. Simply put, the worms turn organic waste into organic matter suitable for the garden by eating the organic waste and excreting it. Worm casts are chock full of microorganisms that are good for the soil, are pathogen free, and contain many times more the amount of nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus than normal soil contains.

The worms used in vermicomposting are a special kind of worm, in other words not your garden variety earthworm. They go by several names including redworms, tiger worms and re wigglers and make their home in organic matter such as leaf mold, unlike earthworms that inhabit and tunnel through the soil. Specifically two species of worms are used in vermicomposting, *Eisenia foetida* and *Lumbricus rubellus*. Both are usually sold at local garden centers or by mail order.

Vermicomposting works best for food, yard waste, and paper scraps and because the worms work quickly, there is typically no odor, and the smaller the scraps the faster the breakdown.

Speaker's Bureau Meeting.—June 26, 7PM at Smedley Park.

The meeting will involve the discussion of topics for next year's Second Saturday program. So put on your thinking caps and come up with some ideas. If you can't attend the meeting then please email me some of your ideas. If you are a member of the speakers bureau or not, all ideas are welcome and even better if you have a talk or hands on workshop you would be interested in giving. If you have a topic you need some help working on, let me know, I am always willing to help with the development of new subjects for the education of the community.

GREEN THUMB DINNERS

Trattoria Guiseppe
4799 West Chester Pike
Edgemont Pa 19073
610-353-4871

This is BYOB restaurant located behind Genuardi's All are welcome to join us. Please let me know if you are coming so that I may reserve the appropriate size table.

Janae Alberts