



Master Gardener

Vol. 12 No. 7, July 2007

News for Delaware County Master Gardeners



Calendar



Big Change this month

This month's MG meeting will be on

July 24—6:30PM

The fourth Tuesday and at an earlier time
because the meeting will be at:

John Heinz National Wild-
life Refuge at Tinicum

More Info on Page 6

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

July 18—Grant Writing Committee Meeting
7:00 pm Smedley Park

**NO MEETINGS OR NEWSLETTER IN THE
MONTH OF AUGUST**

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

August 11 – 2nd Saturday at Smedley,
10-12 Vegetable & Fruit Sculpting

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From the Coordinator: *Linda Barry*

Thanks to all of you who have entered hours on the website or sent them to the office.

If you have a number of hours at the same site, you may shorten the on-line entry process by recording up to 20 hours of volunteer time with one entry. Under *Activity Description* on the form list the various dates that you volunteered. Please enter contacts where appropriate. These numbers will be important for our yearly report which is due in October.

Marty Roelandt, Ken Paulsell and Kathy Hornberger interviewed candidates for the class of 2007 in June. The new class has been chosen and notified. Thanks to this outstanding interview team and to Marion Yaglinsky, Cynthia Sabatini, Lisa Augustine, Marianne Martin, Chantal Wildman and June Wojtowicz for their assistance with pre-testing and greeting the candidates. We had some outstanding applicants, and look forward to a great new class. Lisa will be meeting with Master Mentors and pairing trainees with mentors.

The Teaching Gardens are maturing beautifully and will be showcased at July's 2nd Saturday program on July 14th. You are all welcome to come and join us. Let me know if you shall be attending so that Tracey Carson will be able to prepare an appropriate amount of her outstanding brunch treats. Some of our guests have admitted that they do enjoy the gardening talks, but attend primarily for the food!

We are accepting entries for the Garden Contest until July 27th. Applications are on our website. Judging will be August 3rd and 4th. If you see a great garden in your neighborhood please tell the home gardener there about the contest. Winners are recognized at Fall Fest in September.

I attended the State Master Gardener In-Service in June. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Master Gardeners in Pennsylvania. Dr. Robert Nuss, the College of Agriculture professor emeritus who started the program was the keynote speaker at the in-service banquet. We now have more than 1700 Master Gardeners in the state. My sessions included strategies for promoting the organization, working with volunteers, using the Penn State ANGEL site for sharing information with MGs both local and state-wide, using Blogs and tips for a successful plant sale. Jessica Walliser presented *Beneficial Insects in the Garden* in an excellent keynote address on Saturday. She teaches IPM at Phipps, is co-host for *The Organic Gardener* on KDKA in Pittsburgh and writes a regular column on organic gardening for the Pittsburgh Tribune Review. I purchased a copy of her latest book, *Grow Organic*, for the office. Stop by and check it out!

MG OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

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

lindar16@verizon.net

Committee Chairs:

Newsletter : Barbara Smith

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Elsie Mueller

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Flower Show: Gayla McCluskey
Garden Contest June Wojtowicz
Hortline: Ron Gatto
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Home Gardener's School:
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Speakers Bureau: Joe Daniels
Special Events Gerri Eunson
Teaching Gardens: Hillside: Delilah Foldes
Stephen Hinds-
Butterfly: Kathy Hornberger
Terrace: Carl Pfeiffer
Marion Nelson
Shade: Maru Hollen
Carolyn DiPaulo
Julia King

Taylor Arboretum: Ed Lyons
Darlene Delany

For an excellent example of writing blogs, go to <http://blogs.phillynews.com/inquirer/gardenerjournal/>. Marion Yaglinski has written a number of great journal entries on this Philadelphia Inquirer site. She is also promoting the Master Gardener program and events. If you have some ideas for a blog, please let me know.

The Master Gardener Board voted at the July meeting to install sliding safety glass panels in the showcase outside of the Environmental Center. With easy access to the case, we will be able to keep the information updated. They also approved the purchase of MG business cards. These will have the Penn State logo, office contact information, and 'Master Gardeners' printed on them. We will encourage all volunteers to carry the cards when they are meeting with the public.

There is no Master Gardener Board meeting or MG General Meeting in August.

Enjoy your summer.

LB

WORDS TO WEED THROUGH

by Tracey L. Carson



Believe Me or Not?

There are facts that you probably already know about the month of July, such as its' official flowers being the Larkspur and the Water Lily. You may have even known that the month was re-named for Julius Caesar who was born in July. Previously this month was named "Quintilis" in Latin. There is even a very slim chance that you knew that the "bikini" made its' debut on July 5, 1946, and was the most famous invention of, French automobile engineer, Louis Reard. But I'd bet my weeds that you had no idea that in Finnish, the month is called heinäkuu, meaning month of grass. On that note, let's delve a little more deeply into your trivia bank about the hottest month of the year.

On a national level – President Reagan declared July as National "Peach Month" in 1982. The U.S. Department of Agriculture proclaimed July as National "Blueberry Month" on May 8, 1999. Don't take my word for it. Check it out at www.blueberry.org/USDA%20Proclamation.htm. July is also National "Baked Beans Month". Don't believe it? You can filter the facts from far-flung fiction without fuss by taking a peek at www.classbrain.com/artholiday/publish/article_355.shtml. Last but not least, during the second week of July, the National "Cherry Festival" takes place. Don't fall victim to villainous misinformation. View verbatim verification via the internet at www.cherryfestival.org.

On a slightly smaller scale – July 15th is "Cow Appreciation Day", and July 18th is "Chrysanthemum Day". Probe the proof at www.mums.org. My favorite fun fact falls on July 27th. To be doubled over and dissolved into laughter, discover the details of "Take Your Plants For A Walk Day" at www.emotionscards.com/otherholidays/takeyourhouseplantwalking.html.

The month's grand finale must be credited to the quaint town of Waynesburg, PA. July 29th has the honorable designation of being "Rain Day". As of 2005, Waynesburg has had rain on this date 109 out of the past 131 years. "This is the only holiday anywhere in the world that is not a success unless it rains". The festivities are phenomenal. To get the facts on this gala, grab your umbrella, gather your galoshes, and go to this great website for a glance. www.rainydayfestival.com/overview.html.

"Ah summer – what power you have to make us suffer and like it" ~ Russell Baker

WE HAVE A BLOG!

Marion Yaglinski is writing a gardening blog for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

The blog is one of the projects our new Publicity Committee is doing to increase presence in the community.

Marion plans to address timely issues such as environmentally responsible gardening, xeriscaping, coping with deer, composting, and native plants. She also posts information about the Master Gardeners program and our scheduled events. Check it out at :

<http://go.philly.com/gardenerjournal>

WANTED

Again this year we are collecting items for the Frugal Gardener table at the Fall Festival. Do you have slightly used garden tools, books, magazines that you no longer need? We are also looking for garden art, birdhouses or maybe even some examples of your creativity (pots you have painted, gourds you have fashioned into birdhouses). Anything that you have that you no longer need or use please drop off at the office or give me a call and I can arrange to pick up.

Please.....we are looking for slightly used, not tired items.

[Lisa Augustine](#)

Need a Summer Read?

I highly recommended *The Wild Trees*, a narrative non-fiction book by Richard Preston. It is a fascinating adventure story of college students with passion for trees who determine to explore the canopy of the coast redwood forests—heretofore uncharted territory. What they discover in the canopy is another living world filled with unknown and unnamed animal and plant life. Check it out at the library for your summer read.

Gerri Eunson

MY FAVORITE PLANT

BY JOE DANIELS



Lantana (*Lantana camara*) or shrub verben is a flowering broadleaf evergreen plant native to tropical America, USDA zones 10 and 11. The roots are hardy to zone 9;

however, it will die down during colder months. A member of the verben family (Verbenaceae) , its range includes the southern US and extending as far west as Texas, Utah, Arizona, and California. The showy, white, yellow, orange, red and purple flowers of Lantana attract butterflies, bees, and birds and bloom throughout the growing season. Sometimes a mix of colors occurs within the same flower cluster. As with many members of the verben family, lantana leaves are aromatic when crushed or bruised. Use lantana in containers, flowerbeds, and in Xeriscape gardens. Propagates better by cutting not seed. In cooler climates lantana can be over-wintered and is considered an "annual." Lantana prefers full sun and grows to a height of 3 to 4 feet high. It tolerates poor soils. Many cultivars are available including dwarf varieties. Lantana is deer resistant and parts of the plants are poisonous to humans and may cause allergic reactions or skin irritation in some individuals. If it appears to be getting out of hand it can tolerate a severe pruning. Its a great 'weaver' plant in the garden and containers and lends its many colors to connect other annuals and perennials with its many subtle shades and nonstop blooming all season long.

Volunteers Needed

We have been asked to distribute information for the Hazardous Waste Collections on September 15 and October 12. The Pesticide Ed department has a grant which will allow them to donate \$100 to our program for each day. Please call the office if you would be able to work 9-12 or 12-3 on either of these dates.

September 15th - Covanta of Delaware Valley

2nd and Harwick Sts., City of Chester,
PA 19013

October 12th Rose Tree Park
N. Providence Road (Route #252),
Media, PA 19063

2007 TRAINING SCHEDULE

All classes, with the exception of Tuesday, October 23 will be held on Wednesdays from 12 noon to 3 pm

August, 22 – Orientation
August 29 – Soils
September 5 – Botany
September 12 – Plant ID
September 19 – Weeds
September 26 – Native Plants
October 3 – Entomology
October 10 – Vegetables
October 17 – Communications
October 23 – Plant Propagation
October 31 – Turf
November 7 – Plant Disease*
November 14 – Plant Diagnosis *
November 21 – Test Review (Optional)
November 28 – Planting and Pruning *
December 5 – Plant Pathology and IPM *
December 12 - Test

The following dates are in Chester County:

Oct. 23: Government Services Center, Rm. 171
Oct. 31: Oakbourne Mansion, Oakbourne Park, 1014 S. Concord Rd. Westtown
Nov. 7: *East Goshen township Building, 1580 Paoli Pike, West Chester*
Nov. 14: *East Goshen township Building*
Nov. 28: Oakbourne Mansion
Dec. 5: Oakbourne Mansion

4-H Summer Fair

Master Gardeners have been asked once again to have a Q&A table and also a 'Pot Painting' activity at the 4-H Fair on August 11 from 11 am-2pm. Please call the office if you are interested and available. There are many fun family-oriented activities scheduled for day.

Community Greening Award

PHS and the Keep Pennsylvania beautiful alliance recognize beautification efforts that improve community green spaces. The Master Gardeners were recognized in 2006 for our gardens in Smedley Park. If you have a community garden project that you wish to nominate you may enter online at www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org. The deadline for entries is July 15th

My Favorite Plant by Marion Yaglinski

Ask me about my favorite plant and depending on the day of the week, you'll get a different answer. I'm so fickle! I'm constantly falling in love with a new little beauty. Today, it's White Bishop's Lace (Ammi majus). My fascination with sun-loving WBL started last year when I drooled all over a gorgeous photo in Fine Gardening magazine. I wondered if they'd be easy to grow from seeds, so I picked up a packet at the Longwood Gardens plant shop this spring. The answer is yes! I planted the seeds on May 24 and they started blooming last week. WBL looks like a regal and refined Queen Ann's Lace, but its flowers are much larger. The 4 to 5 inch pure white and perfectly formed blossoms look like fireworks on the fourth of July. And the foliage is airy and delicate. I don't even mind that they droop and flop after a rain--it just adds to their charm. I cut one bloom to bring indoors and it's a stunner in a small green glass vase! This lovely 3 foot tall annual starts blooming in spring and doesn't stop till a fall frost ends its Queenly reign.

The picture on the right, by the way, is one flower.

The pictures don't really capture their charm or lovely foliage. They're much more beautiful in person.



DEADLINE - No MG News in August

The deadline for articles to be published in the September MG Newsletter is **Wednesday, Sept. 12th** Please send your article to: [Barbara Smith.](mailto:Barbara.Smith@psu.edu)

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

Editor: Barbara Smith

Web Designer: Kathy Moyer

Committee: Linda Barry, Tracey Carson, Joe Daniels, Carolyn DiPaulo, Marianne Martin, Elsie Mueller, Marion Nelson, Cynthia Sabatini, Mary Sambor, Carl Pfeiffer & Arlene Pugh

Web site address: <http://delaware.extension.psu.edu/MG/>

Cooperative extension - Email: DelawareExt@psu.edu

DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN YOUR LAWN?

BY ELSIE MUELLER

At first glance my lawn, not too large, looks terrific. Where the sun hits, it's a glorious hue of luminous green and in the shady spots, a luscious deep green.

But if you get down close and scrutinize what is growing there, it's a surprise because the various types of grasses are mingled with a mix of weeds probably considered undesirable.

I repeatedly explain my philosophy is to give complete freedom to the lawn. Whatever wants to grow, as long as it is green, is okay. The lawn mower cuts the weed invaders down to size and viola, they all blend to make a lovely covering...from a distance.

I never fertilize, never use pesticides, will not rake clippings and don't even water. The rain does that job. I may appear to be a minimalist but I prefer an environmentalist description for my innate attitude.

Recently, I discovered my attitude is not very far afield. I read an article in a 2003 Gardening magazine I unburied from my book shelf which supports my ecologically correct habit. I was thrilled.

Included in the writing were astounding statistics worth attention. These came from the EPA which contends American lawns devour 60% of cities' clean water annually, eat up 67 million pounds of pesticides and \$5 billion worth of fertilizers. Ninety percent of landscaping costs are for lawns and 10% of the air pollution is coming from gasoline powered lawn-care equipment

And I wonder if homeowners know that chemical fertilizers, weed killers and pesticides destroy the soil's natural ecology. This toxic stuff is exterminating those very organisms so beneficial and necessary to the lawn's health, such as helpful insects, earthworms, spiders and numerous others.

Of course, the pests which survive tend to be resistant to chemicals and so require more and stronger chemicals.

Troublesome is the fact that the "most wanted" lawn grasses develop a dense root system which prevents much of the moisture to reach the soil. Precious rainwater then runs off. This leads to watering, a waste, and adds to the global water crisis.

According to a current Newsweek article, "toxic substances and pollution are now routinely filtered out of the nation's water supply." In the same story was a report that scientists are finding disturbing effects on aquatic wildlife.

Another problem can develop because grass clippings are not left to return rich nutrients to the soil. They will supply at least one third of the lawn's nitrogen requirement. Unfortunately, the large expanse of a clipped and cleaned lawn reflects a great deal of heat and, like concrete, increases the need to cool houses in the vicinity and the use of air conditioners.

Suggested as helpful is to slowly reduce the lawn area with trees, shrubs, ground covers, non-lawn grasses, vegetable gardens, mulched walkways and ponds.

In my yard, I allow nature to 'just be' hoping my tiny contribution can help, can heal our environment.

SUMMER HINTS FROM DELILAH

Composting never ends and we never have too much. You all know how and what to compost but there are some things I never tried in the mix: Shredded junk mail, tissues, seashells, wine corks, pizza boxes, human hair, nut shells, and vacuum sweeper dirt. Wood ash also works but be careful with the quantity. Left over wine and beer dregs jump start the pile by the sugar content, which the microbes love, as does dry dog food, because of its high nitrogen content. Aquarium water is a good moisturizer for the pile. To sift the compost, make a sifter from 1/4 inch square metal screening and narrow slats of wood from the frame big enough to fit over a five gallon bucket (the kind I have used for years), or larger holes, if you prefer. An old vent from your home or an old dresser drawer with the bottom removed and a screen stapled to it, or an old tennis racket make good screening devices, too. A quick flip of the screen puts the unfinished compost back in the pile. Keep an old waste basket with holes drilled in the bottom for moisture drainage nearby to collect stones, rubber bands, plant markers, plastic bags, or other things that should not be in the compost.

To keep slugs, which seem bigger this year, from eating your Hostas, and other desirable plants, sprinkle pine needles around them. The slugs don't like crawling over them.

When tomato plants grow taller than four feet, cut the tip off to force the tomatoes to ripen. Experiment with a couple. Everyone has more than two plants!

Delilah Foldes

Special Thank You....

The Master Gardener program received more than twenty flats of annuals from John Price, owner of *Farmer John's* in Aston. We also thank Chuck McLaughlin for picking up and delivering the flats to Smedley Park. The plants were used in the Teaching Gardens, Main Street School's garden, as well as three hort therapy program sites.

Farmer John's specializes in homemade BarBQ, as well as a great selection of annuals, perennials, and woody ornamentals.

JULY MG MEETING AT JOHN HEINZ WILDLIFE REFUGE

This was the only date I could get for the monthly meeting, and we usually go somewhere else besides Smedley for the July meeting. So.....the members can arrive anytime earlier than that to wander around the refuge. The meeting will start at 6:30 and we have to leave by 8:00PM when the park closes (sunset). The meeting will be in their environmental center. The Cusano Environmental Education Center :

How to get there:

From the Blue Route(I-476)

Traveling on I-476 South, stay in the left lane, and follow signs for I-95 North

Get off Exit 10 of I-95

- At the first light, turn left onto Bartram Ave.
- At the 4th light, turn left onto 84th St.
- At the second light, turn left onto Lindbergh Blvd.
- At the first stop sign, refuge entrance on right.

It might be a good idea to carpool from Smedley Park with some friends if you are unsure of where you are going. The directions are quite simple from the Blue Route

History

The history of Tinicum Marsh, the largest remaining freshwater tidal wetland in Pennsylvania goes back to the first settlements in the region in 1634. Swedes, Dutch and English diked and drained parts of the marsh for grazing. At that time, the tidal marshes measured over 5,700 acres. The rapid urbanization since World War I, reduced tidal marshes to approximately 200 acres. The eminent of this once best tidal marsh is protected by the refuge.

A diked, non-tidal area of 145 acres, adjacent to the eastern end of Tinicum marsh, was donated by the Gulf Oil Corporation to the City of Philadelphia in 1955. This area, administered for the benefit of wildlife and people, was known as Tinicum Wildlife Preserve. The areas of open water along with the adjacent heavily vegetated tidal wetlands, formed an ideal habitat for thousands of migratory waterfowl.

In 1969, the remaining area was threatened by plans to route Interstate 95 through it and by a sanitary landfill on the tidal wetlands. These activities started a long series of injunctions, public hearings and extraordinary efforts by private and public groups to secure rerouting of the highway and termination of the landfill operation. Under legislation passed by Congress in 1972, authorization was given to the Secretary of the Interior to acquire 1200 acres to establish the Tinicum National Environmental Center.

In November 1991, in a bill sponsored by Congressman Curt Weldon (R-Pa), the name of the refuge was changed to John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum to honor the late Senator who helped preserve Tinicum Marsh. Over the years, the refuge has become a resting and feeding area for more than 280 species of birds, 80 of which nest there. Fox, deer, muskrat, turtles, fish, frogs, and a wide variety of wildflowers and plants call the refuge "home."