



## Master Gardener

Vol. 12 No. 8, September, 2007

News for Delaware County Master Gardeners



# Calendar



Tuesday, September 18th—

Master Gardeners Mtg.. 7:00 pm—Smedley

Saturday, September 29th -

Fall Fest -8:30 am to 4:00 pm , Smedley

Tuesday, October 2nd

MG Board Mtg., 7:00 pm Smedley

Friday, October 12th

Hazardous Waste Collection, Rose Tree Park

*“He who is born with a silver spoon in his mouth is generally considered a fortunate person, but his good fortune is small compared to that of the happy mortal who enters this world with a passion for flowers in his soul.” ~ Celia Thaxter*

Tuesday, October 16th

Master Gardener Mtg., Soup 'n Swap  
6:30 pm—Smedley

Sunday, December 2nd—

**HOLIDAY PARTY**

**1:00PM—RIDLEY CREEK STATE PARK.**

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From the MG President..... *Kathy Hornberger*



Yesterday I started a new academic year. The summer is symbolically over and fall is just around the corner. As a gardener I know that my time outdoors will be limited now, confined by weather changes and a new work regimen. However, watering container plants, selective pruning, planting bulbs, mulching, the inevitable weeding, and other gardening chores will go on for another two months or so.

In preparing to return to school, I have had some time to reflect on changes that occurred in my garden this year from past years. One of the most noticeable has been the abundance of monarch caterpillars and subsequent butterflies. I have been thrilled with knowing that I have helped to nurture so many of these awe-inspiring creatures this summer. Yesterday before I left home for the MG Board meeting I stopped by my milkweed plants, growing both out front and in the backyard of my property, to observe one tiny caterpillar about one-half inch long and seven (7) caterpillars the thickness of my little finger and two inches long munching away on the leaves! It was the most I have ever observed on my plants at one time. This morning was even more spectacular because there were even more!

Most of us know that monarch populations are declining, mainly due to development and widespread use of herbicides that eliminates milkweed plants, the major food source for the caterpillars, and additional nectar plants for the adult butterflies. An organization called Monarch Watch was established to encourage people to create waystations at their homes and in their communities at schools, parks, businesses, etc. Because monarchs migrate in the fall to their overwintering sites in Mexico, they require nectar from flowers to provide the energy necessary to get them there. In spring the butterflies will return to northern temperate areas. They need nectar from flowers for energy to produce and lay eggs. After hatching, the larvae (caterpillars) need milkweed plants for metamorphosis into adults.

The waystations that we create should include both milkweed plants and additional nectar sources. Some native milkweed plants are butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and swamp milk-

weed (*Asclepias incarnata*), which are available at many reputable nursery or garden centers. The tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) is also very effective as monarch caterpillar food. In fact, it is this latter species found in my garden that has been host to the convention of 7 and 8 or more caterpillars at one time! While adult monarch butterflies will feed off of milkweed flowers, they will also visit the following nectar plants: joe-pye-weed (*Eupatorium*), blazingstar (*Liatris*), floss flower (*Ageratum*), purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia*), zinnia, and *Verbena bonariensis*. My garden contains all but the *Tithonia*. In retrospect, my garden contains a wonderful collection of plants necessary for the survival of this species so I should not be so surprised that it has done so well this summer.

As with the National Wildlife Backyard Habitat certification program, Monarch Watch also offers a certificate and sign (available for additional purchase) if you establish a waystation and meet all the necessary criteria. More information about this very valuable program is available at <http://www.monarchwatch.org>. For those who can, please HELP SAVE THE MONARCHS!

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#### CALL FOR BLOG ARTICLES

What's your gardening specialty? The Blog Committee needs your expertise! We're looking for articles (200 words minimum to 500 words maximum) that we can post on our Master Gardeners blog. Don't worry--you don't have to be a great writer, we'll do the editing. And we'll give you all the credit. For questions about writing or submitting an article, please contact Marion Y

#### CALL FOR BLOG PICTURES

Are you a budding (or experienced) photographer? I'm building a library of garden-related pictures for our Inquirer blog. Please contact me if you'd like to email your digital photos to me. I will take care of editing and uploading. Thanks! Marion Y

## From the Coordinator: Linda Barry

This has been a wonderful gardening year, and I hope you're enjoying the results of your efforts combined with nature's largess.

This is also the end of the third quarter for reporting Master Gardener volunteer hours, contacts, and educational update hours. I looked at the reporting site last week, and realize some of us have made no entries since October of 2006. Some of this is because you have been giving so much of your time to our many projects, but some is probably oversight. Please update your hours on the web site, or send your hours on the enclosed reporting form so that I can be prepared to send in the state report in October. Our state coordinator, Ginger Pryor, has spent a great deal of time meeting with regional directors and College of Agriculture and Horticulture deans, presenting them with statistics that show how this large group of volunteers assists the University and the county residents. Our statistics can help in her effort to get permanent funding for a state coordinator position.

The Master Gardener class of 2007 is in session. Thanks to the Recruitment Committee chaired by Marty Roelandt for their long days of interviewing, to Lisa Augustine, chair of the Mentoring Committee for pairing the trainees with mentors, and of course the mentors who will be in regular contact with the class members throughout their training. Mentors and members of the Class of 2005 are serving class break refreshments. Hope Jones-Gary is coordinating this effort. Please respond to her requests for food and beverage donations.

The Public Relations Committee is successfully publicizing our activities and events in a variety of new venues, including cable tv community bulletin board stations, a blog site, and a number of new radio, newspapers, magazines and gardening web sites. If you have some good photos from your MG volunteer projects, please share these with the committee. You may send them to Tracey Carson or to myself.

Fall Fest is rapidly approaching, and this committee has been preparing for months for our September event. We hope you can show up on the 29th to support this fun day. There will be plant sales, troughs and trough gardens, gently used gardening items and books. There is also a bake sale to help support the Hortline that is being coordinated by Hope. We

will award ribbons and certificates to winners of the Garden Contest during the lunch break. There are four great sessions of gardening classes, as well as trough-making and composting. You are welcome to register for the sessions, or come out to help with the program. Set-up will begin at 7 am, and volunteers will be needed throughout the day, ending with the clean-up beginning after the workshops. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Alyce Zellers, chair of Fall Fest, Marion Yaglinsky, co-chair for the plant sale, Lisa Augustine, co-chair for the Frugal Gardener, or myself.

We still need volunteers for the hazardous waste disposal projects on September 15 and October 12. Please call the office if you are available.

The Speakers' Bureau is looking for Master Gardeners who would be willing to assist with the scheduling of speakers at some of our monthly meetings. Joe Daniels has been assuming this role in the past, but with the growth and popularity of the Speakers' Bureau programs, he does not have time to continue with this segment of the program. If you are interested, please call me or Joe.

A very special Thank You to the Hortline Committee for their dedication during this growing season. The summer is a difficult time for scheduling because of vacations and family activities, but our Hortline has been reliably staffed with great volunteers. Their patience and expertise are awesome. Thanks to all of the volunteers and to Veronica Connor for accepting the scheduling responsibilities and to Ron Gatto for keeping our information, information sources and research library up to date. If you haven't visited the research library lately, stop in. You'll be impressed with the collection of resources we acquired.

We want to congratulate Bonnie Reale, our office manager, on her retirement. Bonnie retired on August 17th. Our thanks for all of the support and assistance she has given to the Master Gardeners. We hope to see her often at 2nd Saturdays and other special MG events.

## Words To Weed Through

By Tracey L. Carson

### Hark! Who Grows There?

Be on alert! There is a strong activist garden war sweeping the globe. The soldiers - horticulturalists and environmentalists. Their weapons - trowels, seeds, shovels, watering cans, and plants. Their targets - unwanted, misused, and disused public lands. These, for the most part, wasted lands, inclusive of abandoned debris-filled lots, railway embankments, and back alleys are usually in urban settings. Their strategy - to strike quickly, hidden under the cloak of darkness, subject to a high degree of secrecy, using hardy low maintenance plants. Their mission - to not get caught, and to leave the land's condition better than it was when they found it. Their motto - "Fight the filth with flowers". Their dilemma - lack of permission. Their crime - "acts of illicit cultivation". Their goal - world wide beautification of public spaces. Their slogan - "Resistance Is Fertile!" Their name - **GUERRILLA GARDENERS**.

In the 1970's, a group of urban horticulturalists from New York calling themselves The Green Guerrillas, began a movement dubbed "Planting-as-Protest". Their beginnings were a bit coarse with acts such as tossing seed grenades onto vacant trash ridden plots. These grenades, "Christmas tree ornaments filled with soil and wild flower seeds", eventually turned a large number of these lots into community gardens that were overflowing with flowers and vegetables. Since then the movement has become universal, and the name has changed to Guerrilla Gardeners. The technical definition of Guerrilla Gardening is... "political gardening, a form of non-violent direct action, the unauthorized planting of flowers, shrubs, vegetables, and other flora in a public place".

There are radical factions that have done such things as plant marijuana seeds near the British Parliament in 2000. By mid-summer the seedlings had sprouted and were said to have been growing quite vigorously. Eventually catching the attention of the authorities, the crop was hastily confiscated by local law enforcement. As I am sure you have detected by now, their activities tend to be a bit on the illegal side due to the fact that their operations are based on lands that they do not own. Also, this type of gardening has been categorized as a type of graffiti. Instead of spray cans, the tools of vandalism are plants. Occasionally these zealots have been questioned by authorities, but usually to no further avail.

Our action - Let's ban together and keep a watchful eye on these militant planters. Our unsightly, eye sore areas, and underused public squares are under attack. Our potholes aren't even sacred anymore!



## FOCUS ON FALL FEST PLANT SALE

Since we're moving toward self-funding, our Fall Fest Plant Sale is more important than ever! We are working on developing a reputation for a great plant sale that will draw lots of people. That means improvements in what we offer and how we offer it. We want people to look forward to the sale and come back year after year. And of course, as improvements are implemented, more work is generated. Please help us make this the best plant sale ever.

I will be accepting plants at the Environmental Center from Wednesday, Sept 19 through Friday, September 28. I am unable to accept plants on the day of the sale. Please call me if you need to make special arrangements for drop-off.

Please supply the following information (if possible) on an index card when you drop off your plants:

full name of plant (example: *Viburnum dentatum* 'Christom' Blue Muffin)

color of blooms

growing information

picture of plant in bloom (if possible)

I know, I know—it's extra work, but we're developing our reputation for excellence in plant sales, right? We don't want to be outdone by the Brandywine Museum Native Plant Sale, do we? We want people to rave about *our* plant sale! So please plan ahead and take a little extra time to help make this the greatest plant sale ever!

Plant categories this year: bulbs, cacti & succulents, herbs, houseplants (excluding spider plants—they didn't sell very well), natives, perennials, shrubs, shrubs, shrubs! and trees.

I need one more volunteer for set-up (VERY IMPORTANT—it sets the tone for the whole day). In the week prior to the Fest, I will need 4 volunteers to help groom and care for the babies so they will look their best for Fest Day. Please contact me if you'd like to help. THANK YOU!!!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Call Marion Y.

*To Be Continued...*

## A Favorite Plant of Mine



The American cranberry bush (*Viburnum trilobum*), synonymous with *V. opulus* L. var. *americanum* is a large woody shrub native to the northern half of the United States and the state of New Mexico. Its range extends from Maine across to Washington State and as far south as Kentucky. Hardy between USDA zones 2 to 7, the American cranberry bush also be called highbush-cranberry and cranberry bush viburnum, is a member of the honeysuckle (Caprifoliaceae) family. The leaves are opposite and have three lobes, hence the epithet "trilobum." The large flat umbel-like creamy white flowers that bear a resemblance to the flowers of Queen Anne's lace, are referred to as cymes. The showy outer flowers are actually sterile, while the inner smaller flowers are fertile. American cranberry bush blooms in late spring and early summer. American cranberry bush is low maintenance and grows well in full or partial sun, and moist soils. It tolerates wet and alkaline soils fairly well, as well as wind, which makes American cranberry bush an excellent plant for windbreaks and hedges, It grows to a height of about 15 feet, and when planted alone has a somewhat rounded habit with arching stems. With its dense foliage, showy white flowers, persistent red fruits, and reddish-purple fall color, it has ornamental value throughout the year. Birds and wildlife adore the fruits, which are edible and can be used to make jam.

JOE DANIELS

Snipping a handful of tansy stems, I was exhilarated by the potent aroma of the fern-like leaves and stopped to question how I got this plant. I didn't purchase it, didn't plant it. This herb, *Tanacetum vulgare*, arrived some years ago and I'm happy to welcome the perennial every year growing in the east garden. Possibly a bird delivery.



Though not "the" favorite, the tansy is "a" favorite of mine because I use it spring, summer and fall. I cut long sprays for a background in flower arrangements displayed in my dining room - all the time. Seeing flowers and just greens in the house is very uplifting.

In Rodale's All New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening, I read that the tansy, of strong scent, will keep Japanese beetles, ants and flies away. Just recently I greeted heads of tiny gold/yellow button flowers sweetly topping the

somewhat leggy stems.

Inclined to learn more about this friendly resident, I referred to a library book, *Green Immigrants* by Claire Shaver Haughton. I discovered the centuries old native of Europe and Asia was used as an embalming substitute in colonial America.

The author describes an 1846 opening of the coffin of Harvard University's first president buried July, 1668. It was filled tightly with tansy still retaining its shape and spicy odor.

This verified that the English custom of using tansy in coffins was carried over by the Puritans to Massachusetts.

For the English the multi-use of the tansy was encouraged in a medical home guide written by Dr. Andrew Bourde. Oxford trained, he was appalled when he started his medical practice in London by the inadequately trained doctors who charged exorbitant fees.

Deciding to give people practical home treatment information he wrote a *Breviary of Health* with recipes and directions to use plants found in home gardens and along roadsides. He highly recommended the tansy for many ailments, internal and external, for flavoring, as a cosmetic and insecticide.

Tansy tea was the drink to cure ulcers, hysteria, dropsy, rheumatism and suggested for women wanting to conceive. When tansy leaves were steeped in rum, they provided a tonic or sedative - understandable. A cosmetic was created by soaking leaves in buttermilk for two nights - a face wash for a beautiful complexion.

This book came to Massachusetts to become a medical authority in New England households.

Grown along all the Atlantic Coast English colonies, tansy got a listing as a naturalized plant in the northeast in 1785. As it wandered into the fields it became a common plant.

The word tansy, derived from Greek "athanasia," means immortality as the plant that gods employed when eternal life was granted humans. I favor the tansy as a blessing bestowed to enjoy an enchanting fragrance and possess a natural insecticide.

ELSIE MUELLER



CORRECTION

This is one of Marion Yaglinski's favorite plants.

I failed to give her a byline in the last issue.

-ed.

## Become a Tree Tender!

Take part in the "growing" TreeVitalize movement, a program designed by Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to increase Southeast Pennsylvania's tree cover and the benefits that trees offer us all. Join us for nine hours of hands-on training that will cover tree biology, identification, planting, proper care and working within your community. This training course was developed by staff from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) and Penn State School of Forest Resources. It is based on PHS's Tree Tenders project which, since 1993, has trained over 1600 community volunteers from 100 Philadelphia neighborhoods.

The course is being offered on weekday evenings at three different locations this fall, and is designed for lay people and experts alike. The course is free but registration is required.

There are several ways to register. See below for a registration form which could be faxed to 215-988-8810 or mailed in. You can also register online, by going to [www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org](http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org), and choosing "Tree Tenders Training".

THE NEXT TRAININGS WILL BE HELD:  
Tuesdays, September 11, 18, 25; 6-9 pm  
Delaware County: Lansdowne Twentieth Century Club

84 S. Lansdowne Ave, Lansdowne, PA 19050

Thursdays, October 11, 18, 25; 6-9 pm  
Chester County: Coatesville Area Public Library  
501 E. Lincoln Highway,  
Coatesville, PA 19320

New!!! Saturdays, January 12, 19, 2008; 8:45 am-1:30 pm  
Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society  
100 N 20th St, 5th Floor,  
Phila. PA 19103

TRAINING INCLUDES:  
Pizza every session at 5:45 pm!

Tree Awareness:  
\* Tree Biology  
\* Urban Stresses on Trees  
\* Tree Identification  
\* Basic Tree Pruning and Root Care  
\* Tree Planting

Community Organizing:  
\* Fundraising and Identifying Resources  
\* Working with Local Government  
\* Organization Building

The three-part series is FREE

For more information contact:  
\* Julianne Schieffer, 610-489-4315 or [jxs51@psu.edu](mailto:jxs51@psu.edu)  
\* Mindy Maslin, 215-988-8844 or [mmaslin@pennhort.org](mailto:mmaslin@pennhort.org)

### TREE TENDERS REGISTRATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Local Municipal Government (City, Borough, Township) \_\_\_\_\_

Please give a brief description of your knowledge of trees. \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to learn from the TreeVitalize Tree Tenders training? \_\_\_\_\_

Email this form to [dwaters@pennhort.org](mailto:dwaters@pennhort.org); fax it to 215-988-8810; or mail to:

Dawn Waters  
PHS/Philadelphia Green  
100 North 20th Street, 5th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

BECOME A TREE TENDER .... learn to plant and care for trees in your neighborhood!

# What Type of Gardener Are You?



Everyone has their own gardening style, usually one that reflects their personality. What type of gardener are you?????

## 1. Plant Collector

Plant collectors love to shop--for plants, that is. When a new variety is introduced, they're the first in line at the garden center. The more the merrier. Planting in groups is a foreign concept to them. All of their plants are specimens.

## 2. Armchair Gardener

Most of qualify as armchair gardeners in the winter, but true armchair gardeners are in their chairs all year 'round--watching HGTV, perusing seed catalogues, or reading gardening magazines. Sometimes armchair gardener is a transitional phase, for example...if you live in an apartment but aspire to owning a home with a yard someday. Then again, sometimes it's not.

## 3. Nature Lover

Nature lovers are true gardeners, the dig in the dirt, plant flowers, mulch, revel in compost and earthworms and do all the things gardeners are supposed to do, but they're content to let nature take its course. As a result their gardens are a bit on the wild side. Then again, they might be too.

## 4. Farmer

The farmer grows all his or her own vegetables, herbs, and as many fruits as possible--usually for his or her own consumption as well as family members, friends, and possibly the neighbors, depending on the size of the garden.

## 5. Artist

Color, form, and texture of the flowers and plants are the motivation for this type of gardener. The golden glow of sunflowers in the late afternoon sun is far more exciting than making compost or mulching.

So, sit back and think what category....or is that categories you fit in and let's see what most Master Gardeners tend to think of themselves. Good Gardening and enjoy the beautiful autumn weather.

*Joe Daniels*



Here is a photo of the Garden Contest winner for 2007. A lovely garden in Lansdowne.

# Hints from Delilah

Now that Vegetables are ready for abundant harvest plan to use by canning or freezing them. Pickle cucumbers, beets or beans. Make borscht of beets or cabbage. And there is always delicious zucchini bread. Herbs can be dried for future use or made into sachets for fragrance or to repel moths. If you do none of these things, give the excess to Philabundance or the Rescue Mission in Chester or your favorite food charity.

In a few weeks the garden will be ready for a cover crop to reduce erosion, smother weed sprouts and to help the soil release its nutrients. Buckwheat, sweet clover, and rye are good cover crops. Cut them, if needed, and till them under in the spring.

A great place for a compost pile is right in the garden. Then, when you weed, have over ripe vegetables, or spent plants just toss them there to decompose. When weeding your flower beds, carry a small paper bag with you to hold the weeds. When the bag is filled, just bury the whole thing in the perennial bed and let it do its magic. The bag and all will compost.

Keep the seeds you save from your favorite plants in a cool, dark place, and sealed away from moisture. Label well with its name and cultural information and place in a resealable plastic bag. Place the plastic bag(s) in a jar with a tight fitting lid and keep them in a cool garage, basement, or refrigerator. Prepare a seed collecting kit for your purse, home or car. Snack size plastic bags, or plastic film cans, a pencil and small size paper to record details make up the kit, ready when you are, for your seeds, those of friends, or wild flowers. Do not collect seeds of rare or endangered plants.

When transplanting shrubs or large plants this fall, a handy hauling device is an old snow saucer. Place the item on the saucer and pull it by rope to the new location. A large piece of fabric, such as a tarp, old sheet or shower curtain can hold any soil you dig for the plant and allow you to drag it to where you want it. Another piece can hold the shrub to drag it to the new location. This saves soil, mess and energy. Of course, water the plant well, along with your other shrubs, especially, newly planted ones to prepare them for winter. Planting season isn't over yet!

To water plants if you'll be away for a while, by using a plastic bottle, in which you have made a small hole with a heated very fine nail or heavy needle, either in the plastic lid or in the bottom. Fill the bottle with water and place it close to the plant. Dig the bottle in an inch or two, if possible. The bottle may be placed right side up, or upside down if the hole is in the lid. This could water the plant for up to two weeks, depending on the size of the bottle or the size of the hole.

Happy fall gardening.

## A Note of Appreciation

Thank you to all my MG friends who shared a word of concern, a hug or a sympathetic listening ear during my husband's final illness. Your cards and notes of sympathy after his death touched my heart and I appreciate it all so very much.

Barbara Meahl

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## HELP WANTED from

### PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

We need someone to go up to the Cooperative Extension Office, go thru Linda's files, and sort photographs. Linda has a ton of Master Gardener event photos, but no one has ever sorted, labeled, and filed them.

When press releases go out, the newspapers are asking for accompanying pictures... i.e. Fall Fest. We need someone who is a little computer savvy to come in, go thru them, and create a computer file for them. Give me a call if this appeals to you.

Tracey Carson

### DEADLINE - MG News in October

The deadline for articles to be published in the September MG Newsletter is **Wednesday, October 3rd**. Please send your article to: [Barbara Smith](mailto:Barbara.Smith@psu.edu)

### MG OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

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

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Flower Show: Gayla McCluskey  
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