



Master Gardener

Vol. 10 No. 2 February, 2005
News for Delaware County Master Gardeners



Calendar

Second Saturday—February 12
Seed Starting by Leslie Trimble
Smedley Park—10 AM—Noon

Tuesday, February 15
Monthly MG Meeting
Speaker: Chuck Feld, owner of
Birmingham Gardens on Grafting.
Smedley Park— 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Tuesday, March 1
MG Board Meeting
Smedley Park—6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Second Saturday—March 12
Pruning by Rick Ray
Smedley Park—2 PM—4 PM

Tuesday, March 15
Monthly MG Meeting
Smedley Park— 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Save the Dates:

Saturday, March 10
Berks' County Gardeners' School
8:00 AM to 3:30 PM, Registration —\$45
For more information contact Beth Finlay

Saturday, April 2
Home Gardeners School
Register deadline: 3/22/05
American College—Fee: \$50

Friday, May 6
2005 MG In-Service
State College, PA—Fee \$65

Saturday, June 4
Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve
& Renny's Hortulus Bus Trip

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From the Coordinator . . .

We have spent January planning and organizing our committee lists and matching volunteers with projects.



olding and stuffing envelopes for the Home Gardener's School.

Left to right: Barbara Meahl, Robert Meahl, Jane Baserga and Carl Pfeiffer.

We are sending the Master Gardener Directory for 2005 with this issue of the newsletter. If you did not submit your committee selection sheet, your listing will show that you have signed up for the same committees as last year. However, if you wish to change or add committees, please send me the changes, and I will

get your name to the committee chairs. If any of your information is incorrect, contact me and we will print corrections in the next newsletter. We have also been asked to distribute the form that you find with your newsletter so that we can assure the College of Agriculture that our volunteers understand that this MG Directory is not to be shared with anyone who is not a member of Delaware County Master Gardeners. If you receive it electronically, you may fill it out and e mail it. If you are receiving it by U.S. mail, please send it to the office or bring it to the next meeting.

The **Home Gardeners' School Committee** has also been busy in January. Diana Breen has organized the speakers, brochures have been mailed by Office Management volunteers, news releases have been sent by Martha Van Artsdalen, and Alyce Zellers is scheduling vendors for the *Marketplace*. Ann McCloskey is chairing the registration for the event, and we have had a number of early registrations – some who have been disappointed in the past when the event sold out. If you wish to work with the HGS committee in any capacity, please contact Ken Paulsell.

Kathy Moyer has updated our web site, and it is looking very impressive! We now have the newsletter as well as other information for Master Gardeners only. Log on and see what's new. If you have suggestions or information that should be included, please let us know. Cynthia Sabatini is the MG who communicates directly with Kathy. Our address is delaware.extension.psu.edu.

Congratulations to our newly elected and re-elected officers. Alyce Zellers was elected president, and Kathy Hornberger elected vice-president at January's

meeting. Tara Clarke was re-elected secretary, and Ken Paulsell remains our treasurer. Thanks to these volunteers for sharing their talents, time and energy.

We have had many compliments on January's newsletter. Congratulations to Barbara Smith on her first issue as editor of the Master Gardener Newsletter. It was a hit!

Linda Barry

GREEN THUMB DINNERS



All Master Gardeners are welcome to join us for dinner. We meet once a month at a local restaurant. This month we will meet on Thursday, February 24th at Vinny T's Restaurant in Wynnewood at 6:45 PM.

RSVP to Janae Albert at
Future dates are Wednesday, March 23rd and Thursday, April 28th.

Directions to Vinny T's: Restaurant is on Lancaster Avenue (Rte. 30) in Wynnewood, 5 miles east of I-476 in the shopping center with Super Fresh. If you are traveling Rte. 1 North (Township Line/City Line) cross over Rte. 3 and Haverford Road, turn right at Rte. 30 (St. Charles Seminary) to the shopping center on your left.

Restaurant telephone #: 610-645-5400

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

Editor: Barbara Smith
Web Designer: Kathy Moyer, Cynthia Sabatini
Contributors: Linda Barry, Joe Daniels
Office Support: Carolyn DiPaulo, Barbara Meahl, Carl Pfeiffer & Arlene Pugh

Artillery Fungus and Mulch

A field study of sporulation of artillery fungus on 27 different mulches by Donald Davis of PSU reported in the September issue of *Journal of Environmental Horticulture* reports that artillery fungus appears to be most severe in the Northeast where the cool, moist climate is likely conducive to growth and sporulation of the fungus in spring and fall.

However, recent complaints have

been received from Alaska and from Maine to Florida on the east coast. The reasons for the recent, rapid rise in notoriety are unknown. Wider recognition and awareness of the artillery fungus by the public certainly has led to a perceived increase in the problem. However, other factors that have recently favored the artillery fungus might include increased use of landscape mulch, possible introduction of new strains or species that more readily colonize mulch and /or sporulate at greater levels; and recent changes in mulch composition more suitable to the artillery fungus.

Mulches of large, hard, dry pieces of pine bark, such as large pine bark nuggets, generally failed to support as much artillery fungus as did mulches made of shredded wood or shredded wood-bark mixtures. Likewise, cypress mulch and 100% spent mushroom substrate prevented colonization and sporulation by the artillery fungus. Also, artillery fungus may not grow well on fresh "pine straw" mulch.

The finer nature of shredded mulch ensures that it will retain greater moisture levels, which in turn favor colonization and sporulation by the artillery fungus. The initial water repellency of some dyed shredded mulches might delay growth of the artillery fungus. Almost all organic landscape mulches lose their



ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Toby Farms Elementary School

The Toby Farms Elementary School garden will start again in its new site this spring. The school is located in Upland (near the Redwood Playhouse). There are dedicated teachers involved in the project, and the school administrator is very supportive. If you would like to be involved, please call Linda at the office. Students will be starting some of their own plants from seed in the classroom.

Presbyterian Village

The Broomall Presbyterian Village volunteer committee meets the first and third Monday of each month. They work with the residents to plant a garden cart, containers, and indoor plants. During the second and fourth weeks of the month, these plants do not get the attention they need, and often don't survive until the next planned session. If you would be willing to help the committee by visiting the plants every other week to check on watering, etc., please contact Mary Evans.

Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation

Jana Maxwell has offered to chair the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation Committee. If you are interested in being involved with this project, please contact Jana. The Plantation is located in Ridley Creek State Park.

Philadelphia Flower Show Barrier Aides

Barrier Aides work with the flower show judges to keep visitors back from the area being judged. Master Gardeners who wish to volunteer should contact Jenny Carey.

Barrier Aides
work for about three hours and receive a free pass to the Flower Show that is good for the day.

GARDENING EXERCISES



In anticipation of warmer days of springtime and the bending, stretching, lifting, squatting and otherwise weird positions we

can get into for gardening, here are some basic exercises that can help get us into shape.

Warm up by walking briskly around the yard for 5 minutes, and always stretch slowly, with control, holding each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds.

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, raise right arm overhead, clasp elbow behind head with left hand and pull down toward the back of your neck. Switch arms and repeat. Extend left arm across chest towards your right shoulder. Place your right hand on your left elbow and apply pressure. Reverse and repeat.
- Sit on the floor with legs apart. With your left knee on floor, bring your left foot in to right knee. Extend left arm up from shoulder over your head, bent slightly and lean upper body to the right. The right arm should be in front and across the top of your right thigh and lower abdomen. Reverse arm positions and repeat stretch.
- Lie on your back with hands clasped behind your head, legs together, feet off the floor. Bend your knees, roll legs to the right and slowly twist upper body and arms to the left. Reverse and stretch.
- Stand facing the seat of a chair. Hold the back of the chair with hands, slowly place right foot (toes up) on seat, lean forward and stretch. Reverse legs and repeat.
- Holding a chair back for support, bend right knee and lift right foot straight behind you so you can hold it in your right hand. Right foot should be aimed upward and left leg should be slightly bent. Repeat with opposing foot.

- Stand three feet behind a chair and grip the top of the chair back. Move right foot forward about one foot and left foot back a foot. With both feet flat on the ground, bend right knee and almost straighten left leg behind you. Reverse and repeat.

Now you're almost ready to begin gardening. Use the same exercises to stretch your muscles when you're finished and you can avoid the stiff and soreness from straining too quickly.

HELP WANTED

We need about 5 people to help with Registration packets for Home Gardening School.

Date: Wednesday, March 30th — 1:30 pm

RSVP to Ann McCloskey

MG OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

President: Alyce Zellers
Vice President: Kathy Hornberger
Treasurer: Ken Paulsell
Secretary: Tara Clarke
Hours Keeper: Chantal Wildman
Coordinator: Linda Barry — 610-690-7669
lrb16@psu.edu

Committee Chairs:

Newsletter : Barbara Smith—

Mentoring : Marty Roelandt
Field Trips: Gerry Eunson
Social Events: Jennifer Dean
Arbor Day : Mary Sambor
Elsie Mueller
Garden Select : Robin Queenan
Gail Brewer
Flower Show: Gayla McCluskey
Hort Therapy: Delilah Fordes
Hotline: Liana Bauerle
Home Gardener's School:
Diana Breen
Ken Paulsell
Speakers Bureau: Joe Daniels
MG Recruitment: Marty Roelandt

FEBRUARY TO DO'S IN THE GARDEN

by Joe Daniels



Seasonal/Planning

1. Most of your gardening efforts will continue to focus on indoor gardening and planning activities.
2. Seed and plant catalogs can still be ordered to assist in your selection of plants for the garden.
3. This is a good time to continue your review of garden books and magazines.
4. Check notes from last year to see what you want to do the same and what should be changed.
5. Chart vegetable and flower gardens on graph paper. This will help in rotation of vegetables from last year and assist in knowing how many of each plant will be needed.

Houseplants

1. Continue to check on indoor humidity levels. Plants may need to be misted to supplement the existing humidity.
2. Orchids can be repotted after they have finished blooming.
3. Indoor plants will begin to need more water towards the end of the month. Start fertilizing the plants soon after you increase watering..
4. Try germinating plants from fruit seeds: oranges, grapefruits, lemons, tangerines or pomegranates are all good candidates. Put them in warm, moist soil and check for germination within six weeks.

Bulbs

1. The premature emergence of spring bulbs can sometimes be delayed by watering the soil and applying a layer of organic mulch.

2. Start tuberous begonias in late February or early March.
3. Check stored summer bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any with soft spots or disease.

Small fruits

1. Fertilize grapes and blueberries.
2. Remove dead and infested wood and mummified fruit from grapes and blueberries.

Tree fruits

1. This is a good time to prune, as long as it is not done right before a heavy freeze. Best time to prune apples.
2. Peach and nectarine trees can be pruned heavily, removing half of last year's growth to produce new shoots for next year's crop.

Trees and shrubs

1. Most ornamental trees can be pruned in late February, except maple, birch and walnut.
2. Prune summer flowering trees and shrubs now. Select relatively warm days in late February or early March where the weather is predicted to not be very cold for a few days.

Enjoy this time to observe and view the bare look of your garden for ideas as what to add or eliminate. Start exercisingyou know those backs and knees will be getting a work out in the next few months. Relax and enjoy the peacefulness and quiet of the winter garden to reflect on the season to come.....as always good gardening, and see you at the February meeting.

Chocolate Garden

by Marie Hofer, Gardening editor, HGTV.com

There can be a world of chocolate in your garden. I'm not talking about the plants that look milky brown and have chocolate in the name-- 'Chocolate Ruffles' heuchera (brown foliage) or the 'Chocolate Soldier' columbine (brown flowers) or even 'Chocolate Chip' ajuga (new leaves are brown). No, we're talking about walking through the garden and *smelling* chocolate. A sniff of the plants below can be very satisfying. Unfortunately though, if aroma makes you hungry, you'll need to carry a chocolate bar with you. The only two of these that are edible (the geranium and the mint) have only the vaguest of chocolaty flavors.

Chocolate flower (*Berlandiera lyrata*). The chocolaty aroma that wafts from these dark-eyed daisies is best in the morning. A wildflower that's native to the Southwest, the chocolate flower thrives on minimal water. In moist, humid climates, try planting in containers; that will also allow you to place the plant where you can best appreciate its fragrance. This hardy perennial is short-lived but freely reseeds.



Chocolate-mint geranium (*Pelargonium tomentosum* 'Chocolate Mint'). Scented geraniums come in apple, pineapple, orange and even pink champagne, so obviously a chocolate-mint was needed too. The foliage, not the flowers, carry the fragrance. Enjoy as an annual during the growing season and then bring inside for the winter.



This young chocolate mint is as vigorous as its other mint cousins. If you're concerned that it may outgrow its space, keep it in a container.

Chocolate mint (*Mentha x piperita* 'Chocolate Mint'). Call the fragrance on this mint nine parts mint to one part chocolate. Like others in its family, this mint spreads aggressively via rhizomes. If you want to keep it in bounds, plant in containers or install ground barriers. Mint is tolerant of almost any soil, but in moist, rich soil, growth will be rampant.

Chocolate cosmos (*Cosmos atrosanguineus*). Velvety, black-maroon flowers give off a wonderful chocolate scent from midsummer to fall. This plant needs full sun and well-drained soil with even moisture. In spring, plant tubers three feet apart in full sun. In the fall, treat as you would a dahlia; lift and store for the winter. Enjoy the aroma but don't eat: this plant is toxic.

Not on the list:

Somehow the sweet shrub (*Calycanthus floridus*) has gained the reputation for having a chocolate aroma. Not so. The brown-maroon flowers of the sweetshrub have a lovely fragrance, but it's fruity (or sometimes spicy). The other common names for this large deciduous shrub: strawberry bush, spicebush and Carolina allspice.

RESOURCES:

plants

Mountain Valley Growers

Website: www.mountainvalleygrowers.com

Artillery Fungus and Mulch

Continued from Page 3

resistance to colonization by the artillery fungus over several years. Homeowners have reported that applying a fresh layer of mulch each year will minimize the artillery fungus, but this study did not test this practice. In critical situations, the best control for the artillery fungus problem can be achieved by replacing organic landscape mulch with black plastic overlain with stone.