



Master Gardener

Vol. 10 No. 3, May, 2005

News for Delaware County Master Gardeners



Calendar

Second Saturday, May 14th

**Container Gardening—
Smedley Park 10 AM to Noon**

Tuesday, May 17th

**Monthly MG Meeting
Picnic and Plant Swap**

Call Jen Dean to sign up for refreshment donations. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be provided. Bring your extra garden plants and enjoy an evening in the park.

Smedley Park— 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 4, 2005

Annual Bus Trip

Bowman's Hill Wildlife Preserve and Renny's Hortulus Farm Nursery and Gardens
Departs Granite Run Mall 7:45 a.m., Returns 6:30 p.m.
\$47.00 includes transportation and snacks

Saturday, May 21, 10 a.m. -1 p.m

Plant and Seed Pick-Up

Intergenerational Garden

6th and Morton Ave., Chester

For a donation of \$5.00, vegetable plants, seeds, seed potatoes, onion sets are available. Annual flowers will be sold at cost. Call the office if you need more information or directions.

Tuesday, June 21st Master Gardener Meeting

Garden Clean Up meeting. We will weed, plant, and mulch the Teaching Gardens in Smedley Park.

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From the Coordinator: *Linda Barry*

April was a flurry of activity for us, and I thank all of the volunteers who gave their time and talent, even though their own gardens were calling them. I wasn't able to attend every event, but did get to the Arbor Day activities in Smedley Park. The Cub Scouts had a great time. Tree planting was demonstrated by Steve Kosiak near Crum Creek. (I'm not sure they really understand 'Riparian Repair', but have had an introduction!) Thanks to Elsie Mueller who chaired the event, and the entire Arbor Day Committee.

The classes at Haverford Township Adult School were so well received that we have been invited back for a fall program. Joe Daniels and Janae Alberts coordinated this effort and taught many of the classes. If you would like to be part of the program for the fall, please contact Joe.

If you haven't entered your volunteer hours on line, or sent them to the office, please make your report. Thanks to Susan Johnson for offering to enter the volunteer hours submitted on the paper form.

I have copied a memo from Daney Jackson, Director of Cooperative Extension. On the back of the memo is a summary piece explaining state funding for the last five years. If you can communicate your concerns with your legislators, it could help to provide adequate funding for cooperative extension and agricultural research.

We have also enclosed a brochure for a Plant Health Care and Plant ID workshop. This flyer is going out to the green industry professionals, but could be very useful to us as community educators. Several of the presenters are Penn



State professors. If you are interested, I suggest you register as soon as possible.

Fall Fest Scheduled for September 24th at Smedley

Many of you have wished for a fall educational program, and your wishes will come true. An event will be held on September 24th, 2005 at Smedley park. Tentative hours for the Fall Fest will be 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., rain or shine. Plans include lectures with question and answer time by Master Gardeners, a plant sale, vendors, and a *Frugal Gardener* flea market.

This event will not be as formal as the Home Gardener's School but many volunteers will be needed. Mark the day now on your calendar. Call or e-mail Alyce Zellers if you would like to help. The next planning meeting is Thursday, May 12th at 6:30 p.m. in the Environmental Center. Please come.

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
Hortline: Liana Bauerle
Home Gardener's School:
Diana Breen
Ken Paulsell
Speakers Bureau: Joe Daniels
MG Recruitment: Marty Roelandt

NEWSLETTER STAFF:

Editor: Barbara Smith
Web Designer: Kathy Moyer
Committee: Cynthia Sabatini, Linda Barry, Joe Daniels, Carolyn DiPaulo, Barbara Meahl, Carl Pfeiffer, Arlene Pugh, Tina Coleman, Jane Baserga, Christine Gradel, Kathy Hornberger & Marion Nelson
Web site address: <http://delaware.extension.psu.edu/>
[MG/ Cooperative extension](mailto:MG@Cooperativeextension) - Email: Delaware-Ext@psu.edu



You Know You're a Master Gardener When. . .

- You carry pruners, baggies, bottled water and paper towels in your vehicle, just in case the opportunity for a "cutting" arises...
- Someone mentions aralia spinosa and you say "Oh yes, devil's walking stick"
- You actually had your soil tested
- You saved all the covers of the back issues from Plant Delights nursery.
- Your vacation is based on which gardens and nurseries to visit.
- You don't have any dress shoes, just eight pairs of garden shoes.
- You know the green side goes up, roots go down.
- You stop and weed strangers yards
- It's not a matter of if you will get a greenhouse; it's a matter of WHEN.
- Your husband gives you a diamond tennis bracelet and you think to yourself "gee, for the price of this, he could have bought me a Mantis tiller"
- Your friends and family don't bother to call you on a nice day because they know you're in the garden.
- You know that Sevin is not a number
- You take every single person who enters your house on a "garden tour"
- You ask for tools for Christmas, Mother/Father's day and any other day just because.
- When ever you are at the store or home center, without even thinking, you automatically go to the garden department to see what they have.
- You keep a shovel in the trunk of your car at all times...Just in case....
- You can't bear to thin seedlings and throw them away.
- You know how many bags of fertilizer your car will hold.
- You are excited over the amount of compost your worms are making.
- You drive around the neighborhood hoping to score extra bags of leaves for your compost pile
- Your preferred reading matter is seed/plant catalogs
- You call your local Lowe's Garden Center, and tell, them that while browsing their selection of Roses, you saw some aphids crawling on them, and thought they might appreciate knowing this, so they could spray them;
- You lay in your bed at night and plan the layout of your flowerbeds
- You hide your hands when you attend church, as they are so rough from gardening;
- You spend more money on plants than clothes each month.
- You buy plants before you know where you're going to put them.
- Your children are complaining of hunger because mommy is still in the garden and hasn't cooked dinner yet and the sun is going down.
- You drive down the road wishing you could jump out and prune various trees you drive by or eliminate the mulch volcanoes
- You find yourself talking to yourself and to plants in the garden.
- You assume that your neighbors think your nuts because you spend so much time in the garden.
- You have driven four hours to scout out a nursery that ended up not having what you wanted, but spent a hundred dollars anyway.
- You think about any aspect of gardening 50-75% of the day.
- The most interesting and exciting thing on the planet to you is gardening and the idea of saving, contributing to, and preserving the environment...because it is!

Landscaping Goofs

By Marie Hofer, HGTV.com

The best garden I've ever had was in my mind's eye—before changing whims, funky soil and various predators have had their say. Still, I'm successfully putting my brand on what had once been an open expanse of lawn. My neighbor was aghast when he saw me plowing large swaths through the front, side and backyards, so I confessed that prim borders aren't my thing. But now when I pull into the driveway after work, the frothy seed heads of various ornamental grasses—positioned where the late afternoon sun backlights them—fill me with joy.

The late great garden writer Henry Mitchell paid a reasonable amount of attention to texture, form and color in his own garden, but he cared more for the "progress of plants" than being a stickler for design. "If I want a few tiger lilies—as I certainly do—and the best site for them happens to be next to a crimson rose bush, then that's where they go."

Fortunately, gardening is an individualistic sport in which the main goal is to please yourself. And gardeners know that great gardens are a process, not a destination. We can all learn from each other's mistakes, though. Here are a few that come to mind:

Wrong plant in the wrong place.

The previous owner of our home loved dogwoods and planted them throughout the yard. The only problem: the yard is relentlessly hot and sunny all summer. The poor little dogwoods, meant to be understory trees, are struggling to survive. Know the conditions your prospective garden additions are going to want—light, soil, water—before you plant. And as the landscape changes—as it invariably does—note whether you need to move something to a more suitable location.



Dogwoods can be especially vulnerable to diseases and pests unless they get the conditions they prefer.

Subsoil on top. Builders and developers sometimes carve off the top soil from a site, leaving only the subsoil. "This is No. 1 on my list of landscaping mistakes," says Henry Nunnery, York County Extension Agent in South Carolina. "It means that people then are trying to grow things where it's almost impossible [to do so], and it's sometimes hard to work around." Nunnery suggests that prospective home buyers, when possible, work out an agreement with the builder at the beginning to preserve the top soil or to restore at least six inches of top soil back to the site.

Out of proportion. A nearby ranch home is all but obliterated from view by two gigantic white pines planted in front of the home. Years ago, these might have started out as cute Christmas trees. Seventy feet later (and 35 feet in width), they give only the slightest glimpse of the home hiding behind their needles. Accommodate the expected mature size of a plant when you plant it. That applies to girth as well: If you're planting broad-beamed trees and shrubs such as dogwoods and large viburnums near the house or driveway, be sure to allow for their eventual expansion. Don't plant them in areas where they won't have room to grow,

because many of these trees and shrubs are not meant to be confined to sizes smaller than nature intended.

Topping trees. Many homeowners get sold on the erroneous notion that topping trees saves branch drop and maybe roof damage. The truth is, removing a tree's crown sets the tree up for rapid decay and decline. Plus, the suckers that sprout from the cut trunk are weakly attached and susceptible to breakage—not to mention creating disfigured silhouettes in the wintertime.

If you have to reduce the height of a tree—perhaps because of nearby power lines—consider removing it and planting a smaller tree. There are plenty of wonderful, shorter versions of many of our favorites. Want a maple? Amur maples and paperbark maples make fabulous—and more diminutive—lawn specimens that won't take over the landscape.

Too much busy-ness. When you're an enthusiastic gardener, it's fun to have one of each thing, but try to congregate your experiments into one area. Or find a way to pull the look together by repeating some of the same colors and plants in other parts of the landscape.

Too much of the same thing. If you want to camouflage a 200-foot length of a neighbor's chainlink fence, there may be a better way than planting Burford hollies every four feet. Besides being monotonous, too many of the same type of plant sets up a monoculture, which may then become susceptible to an invasion of pests. How much more fun to have a selection of viburnums, hollies, elaeagnus, leucothoe, and other flowering and fruiting shrubs that will provide multi-season interest and feed (or house) the birds.

Planting too deeply. A tree needs to have a "basal flare," a widening of the trunk near the ground. If your tree is planted too deeply. It looks more like a telephone pole, it's planted too deeply. Plant all trees and shrubs at the same level as they grew in the nursery. If you dig the planting hole deeper than the root ball (you don't need to), be sure to tamp the soil well as you backfill so that the tree doesn't settle below its ideal planting depth over time.

Grade changes around already established trees can also wreak havoc on a tree's health. Adding as little as six inches of soil—and sometimes even less—on top of what's already there can reduce air circulation, and restrict the movement of water and nutrients. Some species are more susceptible than others. If you must change the grade, call in a certified arborist to help guide the process.

Not taking care of the big issues first. We can't anticipate every change of heart that will influence our garden plans, but we can try to take care of the biggies. If a retaining wall needs to be built or a new water line laid, best tackle those projects before you do any more planting.

And one of the biggest landscape mistakes, says Nunnery, is not taking care of drainage problems before you plant. "Our soils here are mostly clay, and if the water stands in place, plants get root rot and die—or just not grow. Drainage problems probably kill more plants than anything else." Recontouring your terrain, installing French drains, or simply ditching a problem site can help direct the water where you want it to go.



MAY TO DO GARDENING TIPS

BY Joe Daniels

Well it's time to get out the pain killers and start crawling and digging through your gardens.....the weather has been great so far.....nice and cool and wet...but you know what will be coming soon....Enjoy the month of May and all the fun gardening chores that are associated with it.....and here are a few more to try and accomplish.....

Houseplants

1. Divide indoor plants after new growth begins.
2. Root cuttings of many plants now.
3. Move plants outdoors when the night temperatures stay over 50 F. Place them in a shady area and gradually move them to their preferred light level as they adapt to the brighter outdoor light.

Bulbs

1. Allow the leaves of your spring bulbs to brown after flowering. The leaves need to remain to nourish the bulb for next year's flowers.
2. Plant tender bulbs of dahlias, tuberous begonias, gladioli.

Vegetable gardens

1. It is best to wait until May 15 or Memorial Day to plant summer crops of tomatoes, peppers, egg-plant, limas, squash, and other warm season vegetables.
2. Check for slugs....they could become a problem.
3. Apply 2 inches of mulch to plants after soaking the ground.

Herbs

1. Plant annual, biennial and perennial herbs outdoors for use in foods or for decoration.

Lawns

1. Mow your lawn regularly, generally once a week, but adapt this to the type of grass and how fast it is growing.
2. New lawns can still be sown and older ones re-seeded before summer heat takes its toll.
3. If you did not apply fertilizer earlier this spring along with an herbicide and turf growth is slowing down, you can fertilize to maintain its color and health. A general application rate is 0.75 to 1 lbs. of N per 1000 sq. ft with a fertilizer that has at least 50% slow release N. Best to schedule prior to a rain or irrigate after applying.

Perennials, Biennials and Annuals

1. Seedlings started indoors or purchased can be moved to the garden in mid to late May.

2. Divide crowded perennials if they are still small and have not set flower buds.
3. Sow seed in the ground of sunflowers, cosmos, and other direct seeded annuals for summer flowers.
4. Begin to stake weak stemmed perennials like delphiniums when they are 6-8" tall.

Trees and shrubs

1. Keep newly planted conifers well watered.
2. Deciduous trees can still be planted before summer heat makes it inadvisable.
3. Prune spring flowering trees and shrubs after they flower.
4. Add more nitrogen fertilizer to areas where fresh wood chips or bark mulch is added.
5. Avoid damage to trees and shrubs from lawn mowers and string trimmers.
6. Watch for caterpillars eating the needles off pine trees, they are often the larvae of sawflies.

Roses

1. Prune out deadwood.
2. Water regularly, especially roses planted this spring.
3. Apply 2-3 inches of mulch to help retain water.

*Don't forget to dig out those extra plants for the swap at the May meeting...and hope to see you all there....hungry and having a good time.....
Enjoy spring.....*

SECOND SATURDAYS FOR 2005. . .

May 14th—Container Gardening
June 11th—Perennials
July 9th—Pressed Flowers
August 13th—Planting & Care of Bulbs
September 10th—Garden Design
October 8th—Scarecrow Making,
Pumpkin Painting
November 12th—Holiday Ornaments
December 10th—Wreath Making

All programs are held at Smedley Park and run from 10AM to Noon. Cost is \$5 per person, except for the July, October, November and December workshops which are \$10 to cover materials for a take-home project.

Rain showers, drizzle and dark clouds on the morning of April 23 dissipated, thankfully, by the time our Arbor Day celebration started that afternoon. The sun came out as the first Brownies and their families arrived. The Cub Scouts and parents came along to make up a substantial group of participants. They were invited into the building to receive a welcome and introduction by Steve Kosiak.

I was pleased with the enthusiasm and knowledge shown by the young people during my brief educational segment. When we filed out to walk down to the banks of the Ridley Creek, Carl Pfeiffer started preparing the two charcoal grills for the picnic. Energetic girls and boys gathered around Steve as he explained the proper way to plant a tree. He and Gordon Jungbluth encouraged the youngsters to help as they planted two green ash trees, two service berries, black gum and seedling from the Lansdowne Historic Sycamore tree (known as the William Penn tree) estimated to be more than 350 years old.

The next activity was in the building while Carl stayed outdoors to grill the hot dogs. The Scouts and Brownies were delighted to plant flowers in styrofoam cups to take home. Joe Daniels provided flats of salvia and celosia. Cheers were sounded with the announcement that the hot dogs were ready (they were provided by Carolyn DiPaulo.) The first group brought their food in, but the next bunch out got raindrops falling on their heads and hot dogs. So the food was transported inside where the final count was 80 hot dogs consumed with juice and cookies. We estimated 50 to 60 people attended.

The event was fun thanks to wonderful help from Mary Sambor, Susan Johnson, Marion Nelson, Helene Maculaitis and family, and Jennifer Dean. Tracking our needs, Linda Barry was an important component of the sometimes confusing operation. Martha Van Artsdalen helped get the word out with a fabulous story with photo in the News of Delaware County.

From the County Extension Director:

Spring has sprung! Homeowners are inspired and frustrated by their gardens...and come to the Extension Office for answers...what frustration ensues when we have no Master Gardeners for the Hort Line!

As Master Gardeners, your willingness to **find** the answers for resident gardeners is what our customers seek. You are not expected to know all the answers off the top of your head...you are expected to be willing to seek the answers. Please volunteer your time to work the Hortline.

Helpful attitudes are the most useful attribute – followed by enough gardening knowledge to use the reference books and files before sending specimens to PSU. The office staff will help you with the voice mail, postage meter and copier. We need you! Please sign up and staff the Hort Line.

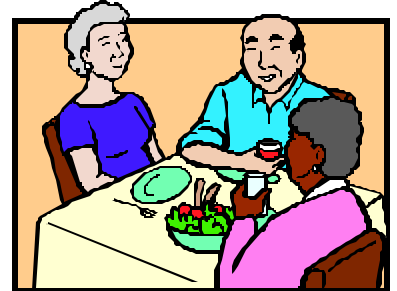
Thanks for all your service to your fellow gardeners....

Joyce Morrison, County Extension Director

GREEN THUMB DINNERS

The Green Thumb Dinner group is scheduled next for May 25th at La Na Restaurant on State Street in Media, 610-892-7787. We always meet at 6:45 pm and all Master Gardeners are encouraged to join us.

Let me know if you would like to join us, so I can reserve the correct size table.



RSVP to Janae Alberts