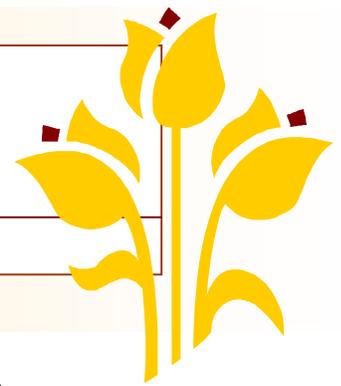
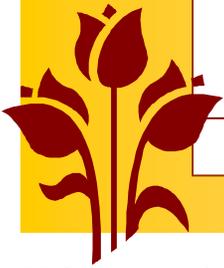


# Garden Tales

Atlantic County Master Gardener Association Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 4



## MG and ACUA Partner at Earth Day

This year's Earth Day event at the ACUA gardens was a great success! MG volunteers answered questions from the public, handed out fact sheets on plant and lawn care, and explained the MG program and services. Our ACUA partners were right next door, handing out dogwood saplings. When clients asked how to care for the dogwood, the ACUA folks sent them right to our table. We also gave out every tomato plant that we started back in March.

Many thanks to volunteers Bob Varrelmann, Ann Cinquina, Gloria Perakovich, Ellen Lichtenstein, Becky Daidone, Stacy Davis, Kathy Olsen, Vin Thoms, Bob Kruk, Beth Mauro, Bette Del Grosso, and Amy Menzel. Amy and Michelle Bellinger also supported the ACUA display.



## Plant Swap at May Association Meeting

It's becoming a very enjoyable tradition: Swapping and sharing plants in the spring and fall. As you're making room for new plants this spring, share your extras with your fellow MGs. Bring plants (labeled) to the May Association meeting. To get us started, Michelle Brunetti Post will offer a couple of elderberry bush youngsters, sweet woodruff groundcover for shade, some donkeytail spurge, "and I'm sure there's more."

## HOT Happenings

- May 1 MG Class: Vegetables II
- May 8 MG Class: Small Fruits I
- May 11 MG Association Meeting
- May 15 MG Class: Small Fruits II
- May 17 MG Class: Flowers for Gardens
- May 18 MG Yard Sale, Linwood
- May 20 Spring Fling, 4H Fairgrounds
- May 22 MG Class: Triple Oaks Tour
- June 8 MG Graduation Lunch/Assoc. Mtg.
- June 6 NY Botanical Gardens Tour

## Inside You'll Find

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Coordinator's comments        | 2 |
| Likely HelpLine questions     | 2 |
| Soil tests by mail            | 2 |
| Committee news & updates      | 3 |
| Volunteers needed             | 3 |
| Community projects            | 4 |
| Education                     | 4 |
| Everybody has a story         | 5 |
| Thanks and birthdays          | 5 |
| MG Plant sale                 | 6 |
| Hypertufa Pots                | 7 |
| Garden Alley Comics           | 7 |
| HelpLine Class                | 8 |
| Community Project Photos      | 8 |
| Growing <i>balsamina</i>      | 9 |
| African violets               | 9 |
| Critter corner: Bee fun facts | 9 |

**RUTGERS**

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

# Information and Sources

## Coordinator's Comments

By Mona Bawgus

I would like to thank all of the volunteers who worked so hard and long at our Plant Sale. I am continuously amazed at the dedication and effort of the Master Gardeners in making all of our programs a success. Some of the dormant plants seem to be waking up and poking their heads out of the ground. We had a very interesting variety and a few have had some nice surprises.

My favorite was the *Pulmonaria saccharata* 'Mrs. Moon'. The plants were full of pink bell shaped flowers that gradually changed to blue, so the plant now has a mixture of blue and pink flowers growing all over it. The plant is supposed to only get 10 – 12" high so it will work out well as a border plant.



*Pulmonaria saccharata*

My other favorite was the *Polygonatum multiflorum* 'variegatum' or Solomon's seal. The leaves are edged creamy white and I can't wait for the flowers that are supposed to be cream colored, tinged with green at the mouth. Another benefit is it naturalizes, which means more plants!

Overall the plant sale was a great success due to a lot of hard work by many dedicated wonderful people. Thanks again.

## HelpLine questions to expect

May and June are among our busiest months – and the warm weather is guaranteed to make our phones ring. You can count on getting questions about:

**Lawns:** Grubs; watering and fertilizing; soil tests and how to read them; managing weeds.

**Shrubs & trees:** Winter damage; pruning flowering shrubs; siting conditions for newly purchased shrubs.

**Vegetables & flowers:** When to set out tender annuals; ants on peonies; getting wisteria to bloom.

**Pests:** Deer resistant plants; gypsy moths; oak galls; ants in the house; moles and voles; more grubs.

## Check out the Green Thumb Archive

Weekly articles written for *The Press of Atlantic City* address questions people are thinking about now. Browse the archive binder in the HelpLine office, share articles with clients, and read the latest articles. (Articles are also available via "MG News Bits" emails.)

- **Companion Planting**, March 23
- **Spring Lawn Care**, April 6
- **Gardenia Care**, April 13
- **Mountain Laurel Leaf Spot**, April 27

## USFS "Weeds of the Week"

The popular weekly email highlighting invasive and aggressive and generally problematic plants has been discontinued with the author's retirement. However, the WoW web site lives on. Make it a "favorite" of yours: [http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive\\_plants/weeds/index.shtm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/index.shtm)

## Ordering Soil Test kits by mail

If a client cannot come into the office to get a soil test, the client can send a letter requesting the soil test form and include a check for the \$15 fee. (Mailing address: 6260 Old Harding Highway, Mays Landing, 08330.)

Debra Sandler creating flower boxes at the Estell Manor Greenhouse. Greenhouse volunteers included Mary McDermott, Camille Griffin, Vin Thoms, Bob Kruk, and Michelle Brunetti Post.



Photo: Mary McDermott

Planting in the new MG Demo Garden flower beds: Nancy Jansen, Evonne Kaminski, Judith Ryan-Heitz, Glenn Pavlis, and Kim Hesse (taking the picture),



Photo: Kim Hesse

# Committee News & Updates

**Community Outreach**, *Kathy Olsen*: See page 4 for all the projects that are coordinated under this wide-ranging and energetic committee.

**Communications**: *Mary McDermott*: Stories, photos, and ideas are welcome for *Garden Tales* and "MG News Bits".

## Finance & Fund Raising:

- The **Plant Sale** was a huge fund-raising success (see page 6), doubling our Association funds over 2006.
- Our second annual **Yard Sale** will be May in Linwood. Details will be available at our May Association meeting. In the mean time, start collecting stuff you're in the mood to bid adieu. You can arrange with Michelle Brunetti Post to drop off your sale items at her house starting May 12.

## Hospitality

, *Bev Albertson*:

- All Association members are invited to congratulate and welcome the **graduating class of 2007 at a luncheon/business meeting June 8**. The lunch begins at noon, followed by a brief business meeting. This event replaces our June Association meeting. Attendees (not graduates) are asked to bring a dish for the luncheon; there will be a sign-up sheet at the May Association meeting.
- **Pull out your calendar!** We've booked ACCC's Careme for our **holiday party** on Friday, December 7, 11:30 - 1:30. Cost: \$20 per person.

## HelpLine

, *Grace Wagner*:

- The class of 2007 had their introduction to the HelpLine April 17 (see page 8).
- Experienced Association members are asked to sign up for HelpLine hours in June and July to **mentor new graduates**. The 2007 class will sign up in pairs, and a Mentor could join a pair. While the pair answers the phone and researches the answers, the Mentor can provide guidance and direction and help build confidence. Please sign up, adding "(Mentor)" after your name in the calendar.
- We also need current Association members to work the **HelpLine during May and June**; these are important -- and exciting -- times for client calls.

**Trips, Tours & Education**: *Vin Thoms*: Watch for sign-up information for a bus trip to the **NY Botanical Gardens**, June 6. At the May Association meeting (or via email), we'll share cost and logistics info.

## Volunteers Needed

- Estelle Manor Backyard Habitat: Tuesdays and Fridays, from 9 - 11. Contact Kathy Olsen.
- Estelle Manor Greenhouse: Planting at county sites each weekday starting May 7, 10 am to 2 pm. Contact Mary McDermott.
- Peace Pilgrim Park: May 15, 3:00 pm: Planting wildflowers and daylilies, and spreading mulch. Contact Kim Hesse.
- Forsythe Refuge: Thursday mornings, 10 - 12. Contact Evonne Kaminski or Judith Ryan-Heitz.
- Pleasantville school: May 2, Contact Mona.
- Ocean Life Aquarium: Contact Michelle Brunetti Post.
- HelpLine: Need volunteers for May.



## On the calendar: Committee Meetings

- Community Outreach: Friday, May 11, 11:30
- Communications: Tuesday, May 8, 12:30 - 1:30

## Wear your badge proudly – and often!

Remember to wear your MG name badge at all external events, as well as at Association meetings. We're still getting to know each other!



Thanks to **Judy Ryan-Heitz** and **Mary McDermott** for the April Association meeting desserts!

# Outreach Projects and Education Opportunities

**Bayfest, Michelle Brunetti Post:** This is our first presence at this one-day event, Saturday, April 28. Volunteers will work with the public answering HelpLine-type questions, selling plants, and promoting the Master Gardner program.

**Estell Manor Backyard Habitat, Kathy Olsen:** We will plant our new purchases on April 27, 9 - 11 am. After that, we will plant herbs in the raised beds. We will meet Tuesdays and Fridays in May. Volunteers are welcome!

**Estell Manor Greenhouse, Mary McDermott:** Since February, we've had up to four volunteers a week, starting and transplanting annuals and perennials. Starting May 7, volunteers can help plant at various county sites. Watch your email for a schedule.

**MG Demo Garden: Judy Ryan-Heitz and Evonne Kaminski:** Plant Sale purchases were planted this week in the theme gardens. Next activity: Purchasing additional plants we didn't get through the plant sale (watch for an email from Evonne for nursery/shopping date), and planting in the vegetable raised beds. NOTE: The Demo garden is looking for contributions from MGs for the themed beds; for example, plants for the native garden, butterfly garden, and shade garden. If you have extra plants you'd like to donate, or would like to volunteer, contact Evonne Kaminski or Judith Ryan-Heitz.

**Forsythe Refuge, Judy Ryan-Heitz and Evonne Kaminski:** Native garden planting and maintenance volunteers meet each Thursday morning, 10 - 12. Contact Evonne Kaminski and/or Judith Ryan-Heitz.

**Pleasantville School: Mona:** We've led classes with students each Wednesday, and have planted cool-season crops, including lettuce, broccoli, Swiss chard, pansies. A newspaper reporter was at our last meeting; be on the lookout for an article or photo in a local paper. Next meeting with students: May 2 for weeding and other activities; 3:00 pm. Volunteers welcome; contact Mona.

**Ocean Life Aquarium: OL** has completed the heavy infrastructure cleanup work, so we're ready to plant. Michelle Brunetti Post will hold a planning meeting shortly; volunteers welcome.

**Peace Pilgrim Park: Kim Hesse:** MGs Carol Strahlendorf, Estell Berkowitz, and Camille Griffin led presentations on weeping willow, sugar maple, and red maple trees to students, and then assisted students with planting those trees. Next activities: May 15, planting wildflowers and daylilies, and spreading mulch. Volunteers welcome.

**Port Republic School: Janet Longo:** Recent flooding has raised drainage issues. We are working with the school on alternatives and longer-term planning.

## 2007 MG Class Schedule

Classes are Tuesdays, from nine to noon, at the MG classroom. Certified MGs can earn three continuing education credits for attending classes that weren't offered or were missed in previous years. If you decide to attend a class, let Anita Wagner know the week before.

| Date    | Class                       |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| 5/1/07  | Vegetables II               |
| 5/8/07  | Small Fruits I              |
| 5/15/07 | Small Fruits II             |
| 5/17/07 | Flowers for Gardens         |
| 5/22/07 | Tour of Triple Oaks Nursery |

## Rutgers 2007 Garden Series Classes

Many of these classes earn Continuing Education Credits for your ongoing Master Gardener certification. Check out the web site ([www.rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu](http://www.rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu)) for more info on:

- Container Gardening- Terra Cotta and Beyond - May 5
- Butterflies - May 19
- Things that Slither, Flitter and Crawl - May 19
- Evening In the Gardens - May 24
- Color Combinations in the Border - June 9
- Plant Propagation - June 9
- Proper Planting Techniques - July 7
- Evening in the Gardens - July 19
- Autumn Garden Maintenance - September 8
- Mushrooms-Edible and Beneficial - September 8

# People Page

## Everybody has a story!

Each month we introduce two members of our Master Gardener Association. The next time you see these folks, say hello and introduce yourself.

### Grace Wagner, 2006, Northfield

- Committees: Plant Sale, HelpLine, Finance & Fund Raising
- My favorite plant is the hosta.
- My least favorite is bamboo (see the 7/06 newsletter to see why!)
- If I didn't join MGs, I'd be a volunteer at the Humane Society or SPCA.
- My family thinks my gardening is great – IF I can help them with theirs.
- My favorite time of year is Fall.
- My favorite garden tool is a small shovel as I'm always moving plants around.
- Critters I don't mind in my garden are chipmunks and Carolina wrens.
- If I had my own farm, I'd grow strawberries like my great-grandfather did in NC.
- Most MGs don't know that I love sports and animals.



### Janet D'Allesandro, 2006, Cape May Courthouse

- Committees: Outreach; Hospitality; Communication; Trips, Tours & Education; Plant Sale
- Favorite Plant: 70-year old peonies that were my grandmother's.
- Most embarrassing gardening moment: Often! Especially when I can't tell if I'm pulling a weed or a new plant.
- If I didn't join the MGs, I would be planting perennials in very acidic soil. Soil testing really helps!
- My favorite time of the year is right now, as the trees, shrubs and plants constantly change and finally burst into full bloom.
- If I had my own farm, I would grow – and eat – fruits and vegetables.
- Most MGs don't know that I enjoy travelling, the beach, and golfing as much as I enjoy gardening.



## Bonefish Grill Extravaganza

by Michelle Brunetti Post

Eighteen lucky Master Gardeners enjoyed sumptuous martinis of many flavors, appetizers to die for, an incredible selection of red and white wines, samples of several main courses (mostly fish, of course), and two fabulous desserts at the Bonefish Grill April 2. It was all courtesy of the restaurant, which runs free excursions to introduce businesses and nonprofits to its menu.



Everyone had a blast socializing and swapping gardening and non-gardening stories, and we all plan to return with our families for more of this great food. Thank you so much to Bonefish Grill managing partner Jeff Schifrin, who made it all happen and took special care of us that night!



## Happy Birthday!

4/1 Virginia Mason  
4/20 Kathleen Olsen  
4/24 Nancy Amrhein  
5/1 Phil Cross  
5/26 Robert Kruk



## Thank you to my MG friends

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, I received a beautiful surprise from my fellow Master Gardeners. The Phalaenopsis graces my dining room table and gives me a visual treat every day of my recovery. The florist added an individual Dendrobium flower as an accent to the greeting card – nice touch! You brightened my mood and I feel grateful to be associated with such a thoughtful and good group of people.  
-- Virginia (Bunny) Mason

# MG Plant Sale

Our annual Perennial Plant Sale was a tremendous success. Thousands of plants, hundreds of customers, and dozens of volunteers – what a great formula! This year's plant sale doubled the funds we raised over 2006 -- and was a lot of fun to boot! For an event of this scale, there are many people to thank for the many, many roles each played – not only as volunteers at the event, but also for distributing the flyers, twisting the arms of friends and family, and for being some of our best customers! Congratulations to the entire MG community for a fantastic Plant Sale!

**Thank you  
Plant Sale Committee!**



The **Plant Sale Committee** was led by **Ann Cinquina** and **Gloria Perakovich**, above, and included Michelle Brunetti Post, Estelle Berkowitz, Janet D'Alessandro, Bette Del Grosso, Ann Fox, Camille Griffin, Kim Hesse, Nancy Jansen, Cindy Krzyzaniak, Janet Longo, Mary McDermott, Deb Sandler, Grace Wagner, and Rita Wenig. Thanks also to the Communications Committee, which supported the Plant Sale with press releases, communiqués to all Atlantic County workers, our paper and web-based flyer, and more.

**Thanks!**

Special thanks to **Mona Bawgus** and **Anita Wagner** for the incredible work (inputting orders, handling the money, putting the plant list and order form on the web, processing the order, dealing with the vendor, and more!), ongoing support, and wise counsel.

## **THANK YOU to all the volunteers at the 4H center:**

Raven Ahmed, Bev Albertson, Mona Bawgus, Marie Benoit, Estelle Berkowitz, Rachel Bogatin, Michelle Brunetti Post, Ann Cinquina, John Collette, Janet D'Allesandro, Beck Daidone, Bette Del Grosso, Ann Fox, Morgana French, Rebecca French-Mesch, Camille Griffin, Kim Hesse, George Hyatt, Nancy Jansen, Evonne Kaminski, Bob Kruk, Robin Lara, Janet Longo, George Lonkart, Beth Mauro, Mary McDermott, Kathy Olsen, Glenn Pavlis, Gloria Perakovich, Linda Risser Hawn, Judith Ryan-Heitz, Deb Sandler, Kathy Schoonover, Mary Stecher, Carol Strahlendorf, Sandy Templeton, Vin Thoms, Bob Varrelmann, Grace Wagner, Anita Wagner, Diana Walters, Rita Wenig.

**A special thanks to  
4H for the use of  
their expansive  
facility!**



Photos:  
Mary  
McDermott  
& Kim  
Hesse

# Having some fun

## Vin Thoms Leads Hypertufa Class

After our April Association Meeting, Vin Thoms led a hands-on tutorial on making hypertufa plant containers. After stressing safety first (given the caustic nature of some ingredients), Vin led a lively and informative session on creating plant containers of various sizes, shapes, colors, and ingredients. Hypertufa pots can be made of combinations of cement, peat moss, perlite, vermiculite, sand, and nylon fiber mesh. The combinations determine carve-ability, look, texture, and color.

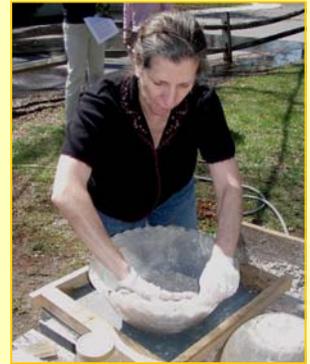
Each pot requires an outside and an inside mold – which Vin suggested you get creative with. The molds can range from inexpensive plastic bowls from the dollar stores to holes in the ground. Vin has made dozens of the hypertufa pots, and even visited the '07 Philly Flower Show twice to eye their oversize hypertufa containers. For printed instructions (and experienced, friendly advice), contact Vin.



“It’s like making a mud pie!”



Vin handles a stepping-stone mold; Glenn Pavlis gives Vin a hand; Kathy Olsen gets hands-on.



Photos: Mary McDermott

## GARDEN ALLEY

## BY DENNIS HYER



Garden Alley was contributed by Estell Manor Greenhouse's [Dennis Hyer](#).

On March 27, **Bob Kruk** led a team of volunteers to plant an impressive number of tomato and pepper seeds. The tomatoes were given at out Earth Day, and the peppers are for Spring Fling.



Photo: Mary McDermott

Thanks to Amy Menzel for tending the seedlings at the ACUA greenhouse.

## MGs at “County Government Day”

We held our own at the April 25 County Government Day at the Hamilton Mall. Volunteers Marie Benoit, Becky Daidone, Rachel Bogatin, and Rebecca French-Mesch joined Mona and Gary Pavlis to get the word out about the MG program, inform people about soil tests, and hand out lawn and garden fact sheets.

# MGs in Action

## Introducing... The HelpLine!

On April 17, the 2007 class was introduced to our most important client connection: The HelpLine. Mona opened with an overview of the HelpLine and procedures. Then student groups rotated through three sessions:

1. **Plant Diagnostics:** Mona led this group through asking client questions, researching, and making diagnoses. They discussed some actual HelpLine call topics, and reviewed the follow-up procedures and paperwork.
2. **The HelpLine office:** Grace Wagner introduced the basic processes and resources in the HL office, from answering the phone and using the PC, through the bulletin boards, file cabinets, and reference library -- dispensing experienced advice and calming jitters. While the students were learning from Grace, Camille Griffin responded to several live HelpLine calls and a walk-in client -- giving students a glimpse into what to expect. And Rita Wenig pulled each student aside to capture photos for the 2007 Directory.
3. **Outreach Activities:** Kathy Olsen and Janet D'Allesandro introduced all our current projects, whetting students' appetites for volunteer activities that they could get involved in. Students also offered ideas of their own for future projects. Kathy and Janet also described the activities of the Master Gardener Association.



Photos: Mary McDermott

## Peace Pilgrim Park

Students from the Environmental Service Club at Rittenburg School, EHC, join MG Volunteers Bob Thornton, Camille Griffin, Estelle Berkowitz, Carol Strahlendorf, and (taking photos) Kim Hesse. Students filled holes, watered trees, named each tree.



## Port Republic School

School children and MGs planting among spring bulbs they planted last fall.



Photos: Kim Hesse



## Fun Facts & Features

### Something old as something new:

#### ***Impatiens balsamina***

by *Kathy Schoonover*

When growing plants from seed, there's nothing better than trying something new and winding up with troops of robust seedlings. This has been my experience with some *Impatiens balsamina* (the annual commonly called balsam or rose balsam) that I sowed a few weeks ago. While initial sturdiness doesn't guarantee final success, it's always reassuring when plants get off to a strong start.

*Impatiens balsamina* is an heirloom plant from which many modern *Impatiens* cultivars are derived. Native to Southeastern Asia and India, it was introduced to America during Victorian times.

The mature plants reach 1 to 3 feet tall with subsucculent stems and double flowers that bloom from the leaf axils. Its alternate leaves with serrate edges can grow to 6 inches. Plants with fewer than 4 shoots bloom best, so weak shoots that form at the base of the plants should be removed. An interesting feature is that the seed capsules ripen quickly, and explode with the slightest touch, sending seeds far from the mother plant. We don't often see this trait, as modern garden varieties are bred to not set seed.

Balsam is touted as being popular with pollinators because of the sweet nectar it produces. On the flip side, it's not drought-tolerant, and requires rich, well-drained soil—in its native habitat it thrives in the waste areas in and around villages.

Should my sturdy seedlings reach maturity, I intend to plant them among the hydrangeas on the northeast side of my house. (Info sources: University of Vermont Extension; Michigan State University Extension).



Kathy's robust balsam seedlings reaching for the sun.

Photo: Kathy Schoonover

### Unique African Violets

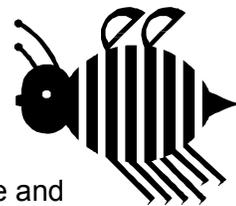
Claire Quigley plants African Violets in unique and interesting glasses she finds at yard sales, antique stores, and craft stores. No two planting designs are alike and all flatter the beautiful plants.



### Critter Corner: Bee-lieve it or not

With the current concern about the bee colony die-offs, it seems all we read is bad bee news. Here are some upbeat facts about our buzzing buddies (from the March, 2007, *Discover Magazine*):

- There are 16,000 bee species; only about five percent are social like the honey bee.
- The Queen was known as the King until the late 1600s, when a Dutch scientist dissected the hive's big bee and discovered ovaries.
- Australian researchers discovered that honeybees can distinguish human faces. The insects were shown black-and-white pictures and given treats for right answers.
- In the Stealthy Insect Sensor Project (I did *not* make that up – Editor), Los Alamos scientists have trained bees to recognize explosives.
- The oldest known bee lived 100 million years ago, based on remains preserved in amber.
- Bees dance to alert fellow workers: A round dance indicates food is close by; a waggle dance means food is distant.
- An old wives' tale says that a bee entering your house means a visitor is on his way. If you kill the bee, the visitor will be an unpleasant one!



**Atlantic County  
Master Gardener Newsletter**

Published by:  
Rutgers Cooperative Research &  
Extension of Atlantic County  
6260 Old Harding Highway  
Mays Landing, NJ 08330  
(609) 625-0056 ext. 6123  
Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

*Mona Bawgus*

Mona Bawgus  
Program Associate - Agriculture

**Beyond the usual Mother's Day plant**

Start now to have a robust – yet manageable --  
container garden for Mother's Day.

Try a pasta bowl garden with  
oregano, rosemary, and other  
cooking herbs; or an oversize  
teacup or teapot garden with  
chamomile and mint plants.



**Want to contribute to  
Garden Tales?**

*Garden Tales* is written and produced by Mary  
McDermott, following each Association meeting. Send  
topic ideas, photos, or stories to Mary at  
[mmcddmcn@comcast.net](mailto:mmcddmcn@comcast.net)



**Official Business**

Atlantic County Master Gardener Program Newsletter



NJ AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION  
**RUTGERS**  
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM