

Garden

Atlantic County Master Gardener Program Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 7

Project Updates

- **4H Fair:** August 10 – 12: Watch your email for a meeting notice in early August to plan our activities at the fair. If you're interested but didn't get a chance to sign up at the Association meeting on July 4, contact Mona.
- **MG Demo Garden:** The committee will be getting together to discuss fall planting, long-term community involvement plans, and review a design proposal currently being developed. Mona delivered seven heads of cabbage from the garden to the Easter Service Workers, and MGs planted honeydew, watermelon, and cantaloupe.
- **Estell Manor Nature Center:** Volunteers are needed August 4, 8:30 am, for mulching in the community garden. Contact Mona or Anita to sign up.
- **Forsythe Refuge:** The work on the native garden is suspended until after Labor Day. In the mean time, the group will begin assembling ideas and materials for a slide show / library talk on the learning experiences of a native garden.
- **Atlantic City Library Presentation:** On August 7, MGs are getting together to lead a talk on Fall Gardening, Herbs, and Perennials. Kim Hesse, Carol Strahlendorf, Kathy Olsen, Grace Wagner, and Bette DelGrosso will host the talk.
- **Hammonton Garden Club presentation:** Heather Boone will lead a talk August 21 on Perennials and Landscaping.



No email?

If you don't have email and you want a paper copy of the monthly Association Meeting minutes, contact Anita Wagner.

Hot Happenings

- July 24 – 27 PANTS Convention, Atlantic City
- Aug 7 AC Library MG presentation
- Aug 10 –12 4H Fair
- August 18 MG Association Meeting, Noon – 2:00; Heather Boone's home
- August 21 Hammonton Garden Club Presentation

HelpLine Reminders

- At the end of your shift, call the next person on the calendar as a friendly reminder.
- Look for two new forms on the bulletin board that replace the "Open P/I list." One lists open inquiries requiring a MG response; the other lists open inquiries awaiting a sample.



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HelpLine News and Info

Recent HelpLine questions and anticipated topics

Over the last few weeks, some of the more common questions have been about (and may continue to be about) gypsy moths, oak galls, lawns (army worms, grubs, fungus), and voles.

Based on last year's log, expect calls over the next several weeks to cover blossom end rot (tomatoes, zucchini, fruit), greenhead fly control, hydrangea pruning, lawn stresses in summer (fungus, dormancy, crabgrass), plant hoppers, and rampant squirrels (maybe last year was a bad squirrel year?). You'll find fact sheets on all these topics in the file cabinets.

New RCRE Fact Sheets

- **Pest Management for Trees, Shrubs, and Flowers on Home Grounds (E014, Rev. 6/06)**
This 50-page bulletin covers insect, disease and pest management; environmental conditions; indoor plants; safe pesticide use and more. Download the pdf file from <http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E014>
- **Pest Control Recommendations for Lawn and Turf Areas, 2006 (E037, Rev. 7/06)**. This 33-page bulletin covers insect and disease control recommendations, and weed management. You can find the .pdf file at <http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E037>
- **Diagnosing and Managing Important Cucurbit Diseases in the Home Garden (E310, New 7/06)**
Cucurbit crops (cucumber, pumpkin, summer and winter squash, melon, and gourd) are common NJ home garden plants. This fact sheet reviews common diseases, diagnostics, and control measures. <http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=E310>



Pumpkin with phytophthora blight symptoms

July 2007

HelpLine Stats

In the past month, we sent mailings to 75 clients – more than three a day. With 15 walk-ins and 78 calls in the last month, the HelpLine is hopping!



HelpLine Library Books

We have some budget money available to purchase books for the HelpLine library. If you have suggestions for books that would be helpful in researching and responding to clients' questions, provide Mona with the book title and author (and, when the book is added to the library, consider posting a brief book review in "Garden Tales.")

USFS Weed Alerts

Detailed profiles are at http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/index.shtm#R

- **Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus* L.)**: This old standby is invasive in KY, PA, TN, and VA as it escapes plantings to invade, crowd out, and displace native plants. Sterile cultivars include "Diana," "Helene," and "Minerva."
- **Narrow-leaved Cattail (*Typha angustifolia* L.)** is considered a riparian dominance type that limits biodiversity in many wetland areas. Dense root / rhizome mats and thick leaf litter limit other plants' ability to establish or survive.
- **Ricefield Flatsedge (*Cyperus iria* L.)** is reported invasive in NJ. Once established in wet situations, rice flatsedge can persist without wet soil, and can become a significant weed in container ornamentals, landscapes, and turf.
- **Piedmont Bedstraw (*Galium pedemontanum* (Bellardi) All.)** grows in yards, along paths and in grassy fields in sunny locations. It's common along rock/masonry walls at the base of buildings and sidewalks. It propagates easily and spreads to overtake native plant communities.



Information & Resources

“Weedbusters” Invasive Plants Conference

This Mid-Atlantic conference offers detailed and usable information on a wide variety of invasive plant issues, including government-sponsored programs, removing invasives from natural areas, field demonstrations, and plant identification. (RCRE Master Gardeners receive continuing education credits.) The conference is Wednesday, August 9, at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morristown, NJ. For more information, see <http://www.arboretumfriends.org/20060809Invasives/brochure.pdf>.

Soil Test price increase

Effective July 1, fee increases for the Plant Diagnostic Laboratory (PDL) and Soil Testing Services went into effect. Base PDL diagnostic services are now \$40 per sample, and standard level 1 soil tests are now \$15.

Green Thumb articles

Here are recent articles that can be shared with HelpLine callers; you'll find them in the Green Thumb binder in the HelpLine office:

- Oak Galls, June 23
- Harvesting Garlic, June 30
- Powdery Mildew, July 7
- Whitefly on tomatoes, July 14
- Succession planting, July 21

Rutgers Gardens Open House

On Saturday, July 29, The Rutgers Gardens will present the 42nd Annual Open House from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., rain or shine. The Open House features tours of The Rutgers Gardens and The Donald B. Lacey Display Garden, landscape plant sales, gardening talks, the “Ask The Expert” Clinic, and the latest Annuals releases. New events include music, Jersey Fresh vendors, activities for children, and food sales. All proceeds from sales directly benefit The Rutgers Gardens. Admission is free. See <http://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/openhouse.html>

“What’s in Season” via email

You can receive Rutgers’ twice-monthly email publication, “What’s in Season in the Garden State” by going to <http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu>. Recent articles include a discussion of pesticide residues on vegetables (the good news is that tap water and a paper towel effectively remove residues), and what’s in season right now for local fish and vegetables.

There’s also a primer on the **Colors of the Garden** nutrition program – eating Jersey Fresh according to food color. For example: blue at breakfast with blueberries on cereal; red and green at lunch with sliced Jersey Tomato with basil on a sandwich; and yellow and white at dinner with steamed or grilled cauliflower, yellow squash and zucchini.

“If plants could talk” TV show

Rutgers’ weekly TV show on gardening, landscaping, and agriculture in NJ airs on Saturdays at 1:00 on NJN Public Television. Don’t miss it!

Found a baby animal? Don’t take it home

Information on what to do (and NOT do) if you find young wildlife has been posted on the NJ Div. of Fish and Wildlife website. Generally, leaving the animal where it is will be the best course of action, but get the details at <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/youngwildlife.htm>. There is a printable brochure linked on the page, as well as a link to licensed wildlife rehabilitators.



2005 Rutgers Master Gardener Program Annual Report

You can see a pdf file of the annual report at <http://www.rcrc.rutgers.edu/mastergardeners/default.asp>

Powdery Mildew Organic Treatment

Contributed by Ann Cinquina

Researchers at Cornell University have developed an organic fungicide that helps control and prevent powdery mildew. It's easy to make at home:

- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon summer-weight horticultural oil (available at nurseries and garden centers)
- 1 gallon water



Mix well and apply to all surfaces of the plant (including tops and bottoms of foliage) with a pump sprayer. Shake before and during application. Repeat treatment weekly as needed. As with sulfur, test on a few leaves before spraying entire plant.

“Weed & Feed,” but not for trees

Before applying a “weed and feed” lawn product, be sure to carefully read the label precautions and product content. Many weed and feed products contain the active ingredient dicamba. “It is important that dicamba **NOT** be applied within the dripline of trees or shrubs. Dicamba can be absorbed by these plants [by a tree’s fine feeder roots], possibly resulting in damage.” Apply the product outside the dripline, and/or only in select areas of the lawn. (Source: Ohio State University, AGF-402-95.)



Vin Toms on a tree-root chair at the Morris Arboretum. About a dozen MGs toured the Arboretum in June.

July 2007

Critter Corner: Great Leopard Moth

By Anita Wagner

I found this moth on my way out of the front door right here at work! The great leopard moth, *Hypercompe scribonia*, is white with black open circle spots on the forewings and a metallic blue abdomen with orange markings. Its wingspan is a whopping three inches!



This moth occurs in forests and woodlands from extreme southern Canada to Florida and Texas. The fuzzy black caterpillars with an underlying body color of red to orange, grow to about 2 inches. They feed on an array of forbs and woody plants including, dandelion, plantain, sunflower, violet, oak, cherry, and willow. The adult male moths are commonly found at night around lights. Look for them -- they are quite a sight!

Bats in your belfry? Count ‘em up!

The DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife invites the public to help conduct the Summer Bat Count. Documenting summer roosting locations, and collecting important distribution and status information results in an accurate range map for the state's nine species of bats. The count will be conducted twice this summer. Survey participants who know of a summer bat roost should count the bats as they exit at dusk to feed. For info, see <http://www.nj.gov/dep/fqw/ensp/batcount.htm>.



Thanks to Ann Cinquina
for hosting the
July 14 Association Meeting!

Cedar Apple Rust

By Michelle Brunetti-Post

I found out the hard way why it's so important not to plant serviceberry trees (or many relatives of the rose) near red cedar. There is a trio of related fungal diseases called cedar-apple rust, cedar hawthorn rust, and cedar quince rust. The one infecting my serviceberry is cedar quince rust, and it may be fatal. The fungus overwinters on the cedar, then makes the jump to the deciduous tree in the spring.

I first noticed a problem this spring, when the leaves on the serviceberry suddenly turned brown. It's on my side yard, well away from the house (but close to several native red cedars) and so I may not have noticed right away. By the time I did, almost every fruit and most leaves and twigs had a bizarre, alien looking orange fungus growing in tubes out of them. The stems and twigs were swollen, and it was a major mess.



Cedar apple rust gall

After research I discovered that this fungus occurs on a wide range of rose family plants, including mountain ash, hawthorn, quince, flowering quince, serviceberry, crabapple, and apple (apples are somewhat resistant). In addition, eastern red cedars, common, prostrate, Rocky Mountain, and savin junipers are possible evergreen hosts. I found fungal bodies on the cedars around the tree too.

Cedar apple rust and cedar hawthorn rust aren't quite as bad as cedar quince rust, which is the only one to cause stem swelling and to allow the fungus to overwinter in the swellings. So unlike the other two rusts, once you've got it, removing nearby cedars won't get rid of it. We're probably going to have to cut down the serviceberry, since we don't want to spray fungicides and there are so many native red cedars in our neighborhood, it would probably be a losing battle anyway. So if you have a lot of red cedar around, you might want to do some more research before planting a susceptible tree.



New Committees being formed

At the July 14 Association Meeting, sign-up sheets went around to engage MGs in the startup of various committees to manage our growing number of activities. If you weren't at the meeting, you can still be a part of one or more committees. The committees include (but are not limited to) these listed; see the meeting minutes for more details or contact Mona to join a committee.

- Hospitality
- Demo Garden
- Community activities and outreach
- Plant / Perennial Sale
- HelpLine
- Finance & Fundraising
- Communications

Bucket those Beetles!

During July and August, take a quick walk through your garden a few times a day, with a bucket of soapy water (and gloves for the squeamish, like me). When you see Japanese Beetles on your plants, give them a nudge and they instinctively fall toward the ground before flying off. With your bucket strategically placed, they'll land right in there, and the soapy water does them in. The more beetles you remove now means fewer eggs laid in the next few weeks, sparing your lawn and reducing beetle numbers next summer. (By the way, I leave the soap out of my bucket and let the chickens "dunk for apples" – this way they enjoy all the yummy beetles normally out of their reach.)



Shirley, Puddles, and Quasi making short work of Japanese Beetles

Want to contribute to Garden Tales?

Garden Tales is written and produced by Mary McDermott, following each Association meeting. Send topic ideas, photos, or material to Mary at mmcddmcm@comcast.net

A Devil in the Garden

By Janet Longo

Two years ago I went through the Master Gardener Program, and at the same time I caught a bad case of poison ivy. Well that was embarrassing! However I sure learned to identify poison ivy real fast! The poison ivy came from a line of trees between my house and the neighbors', just a few feet away from my garage and driveway. My neighbors are not into gardening as much as I am, but when I called their attention to it they sprayed the low-lying poison ivy with the herbicide RoundUp. They did a good job and the plants disappeared.

Well, I recently spotted the poison ivy again in the same area. This time it was growing at ground level and also about ten feet up a tree. The vine was about .75" in diameter. I covered myself head to toe, summoned up my courage, sprayed the low-lying plants with RoundUp, and clipped the vine at the base. I thought that was a job well done.

However, a few days later I looked at my handiwork and happened to look farther up the tree further. Oh my gosh! I followed a vine as thick as a man's fist snaking its way up the tree for about 20 feet. There it was again, as healthy as could be, way up in the air with no telltale signs at the base other than what had already been destroyed.

That vine had to have been there for many years. In fact, I noticed an old, rusted metal spike with a rounded head driven into the bottom part of the vine. Perhaps that was a poison ivy remedy of the past! I notified my neighbor rather quickly, and he removed a large portion of the vine at the base and sprayed the area. Now that's a very good friend and neighbor! Hopefully my neighbor will make good on the promised free yoga classes.

We all know the expression, "Leaves of three let it be." I propose we add "...and look up to see what you can see, and look up AGAIN to see what you can see!"



Attack of the bamboo

After the July 14 meeting, a few MGs visited a gardening war zone. Grace Wagner ('06) has been battling bamboo growing rampant in her back yard. Previous homeowners hoped to limit the bamboo with a cement-block containment, but the highly invasive bamboo has spread across Grace's yard and into the neighbors'. Grace is using a variety of methods simultaneously – repeated cutting, herbicide, and digging up the thick mat of roots. It's a multi-year and labor-intensive job. The photo shows the thick roots of each 1 – 1.5" diameter stump. If HelpLine callers want bamboo, there are several "non clumping" varieties that are hardy in our zone and not invasive.



Summer tree care

By Phil Cross

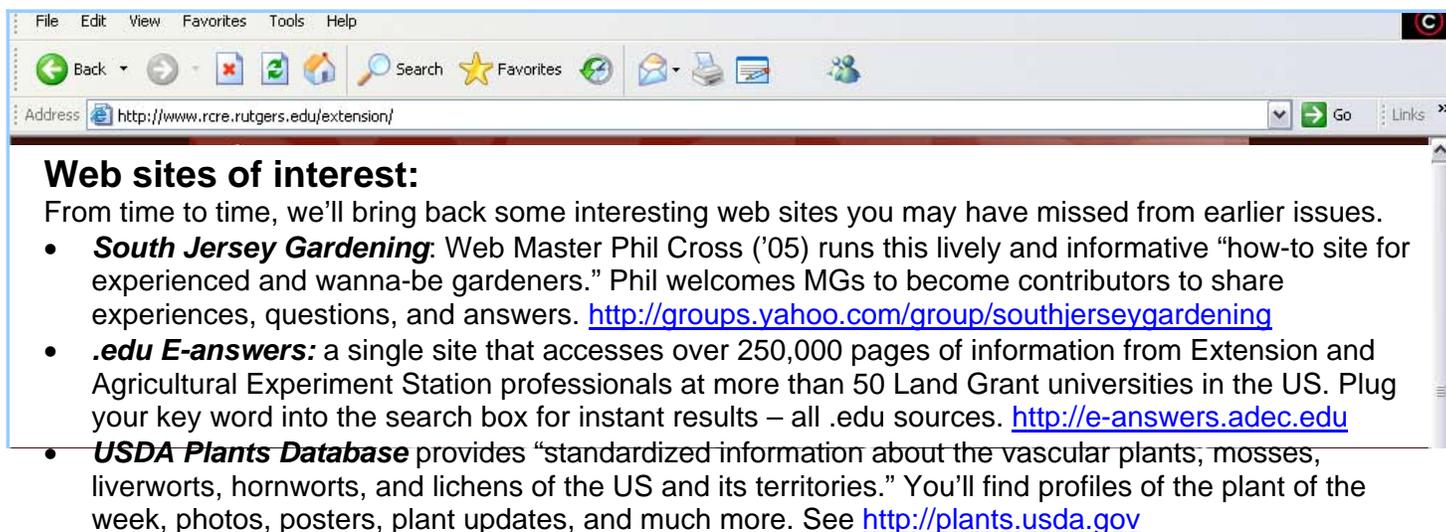
- **Watering and fertilizing:** In the summer your trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials manufacture the carbohydrates needed to support on-going growth, and to be stored for a vigorous start-up next Spring. You can help them by proper watering and fertilizing throughout the summer and into the fall. For example, remember that regularly watering your lawn doesn't usually provide sufficient moisture to bordering plants, or to those located within a lawn. It doesn't, simply because the grass and evaporation account for practically all of the water, leaving little for the more deep-rooted plants. (In fact, one reason why borderline trees may develop surface roots in lawns is their attempt to obtain water.) Those deep-rooted plants need to be watered directly and regularly—best done by hand, via a drip hose, or injected into the soil with a garden hose root feeder attachment. The same applies to fertilizer, which should be applied to each plant in keeping with its nutrient requirements and not be neglected because the lawn has been fertilized.
- **Insects and disease:** Avoidance and control, as always, is an on-going must. One very important measure, needed to give plants a fighting chance, as well as when damage has already been done, is proper watering and fertilizing. A case in point is the ravaging of trees by Gypsy Moths. Having lost substantial amounts of foliage to these creatures, trees need your help more than ever. The same applies to fungal diseases that reduce photosynthesis by damaging leaves or needles. Providing nutrients and the vehicle by which to absorb them must be the order of the day.

Digital Garden Diaries

If you're like me and never remember to bring your pen and paper into the garden, but love taking pictures, you might want to try this approach. Many digital cameras also have audio capabilities; if yours does, you can keep an ongoing photo/audio diary of your garden. Simply tour your garden with camera in hand, and take pictures of what you like, what you don't, and what you'd do differently. Depending on your camera, you may be able to add your audio commentary while you shoot ("liatris is too big for this spot") or you can add audio as you look at each photo in the review mode; check your manual. Periodically download the pictures (the audio comes with them) into a garden folder on your computer. In the fall or next spring as you do your garden planning, you can review your "slide show" and the audio segments will remind you why you took pictures of that sad looking tickseed.

Interesting regional activities

- **NJ Peach Festival**, July 27 – 30, Fairgrounds, Mullica Hill; <http://gloucester.rcrc.rutgers.edu/fairfest>
- **Farm Aid Concert**, September 30, Camden; http://www.farmaid.org/site/PageServer?pagename=concert_home



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <http://www.rcrc.rutgers.edu/extension/>. The page content includes the following text and links:

Web sites of interest:
From time to time, we'll bring back some interesting web sites you may have missed from earlier issues.

- **South Jersey Gardening:** Web Master Phil Cross ('05) runs this lively and informative "how-to site for experienced and wanna-be gardeners." Phil welcomes MGs to become contributors to share experiences, questions, and answers. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southjerseygardening>
- **.edu E-answers:** a single site that accesses over 250,000 pages of information from Extension and Agricultural Experiment Station professionals at more than 50 Land Grant universities in the US. Plug your key word into the search box for instant results – all .edu sources. <http://e-answers.adec.edu>
- **USDA Plants Database** provides "standardized information about the vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, and lichens of the US and its territories." You'll find profiles of the plant of the week, photos, posters, plant updates, and much more. See <http://plants.usda.gov>

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Mona Bawgus
Program Associate - Agriculture

Fun Quiz: What's a forb?

In her *Critter Corner* story, Anita mentioned "forbs."

Define "Forbs"...

- a. Orb-weaving spiders
- b. A popular business magazine
- c. Weeds

Correct Answer: C: Weeds!

A forb is a non-wooded, broad-leaved plant other than grass, especially one growing in a field, prairie, or meadow. A scientific definition would be "herbaceous plant other than those in the true grasses, sedges, and rushes families, i.e., any nongrass-like plant having little or no woody material." For further forb fotos and facts, see <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/modiv/lavender.htm>



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