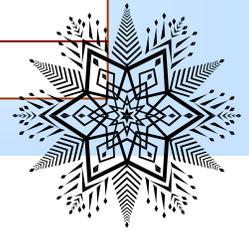


Garden

Atlantic County Master Gardener Program Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 11



A Message from the President

By Michelle Brunetti Post

This was a watershed year for our Master Gardener program, as our smaller groups of active volunteers from 2004 and 2005 were joined by a large group of energetic and knowledgeable graduates from 2006.

Having such a large group has made a huge difference in everything we do. Last year we barely covered half of the high-season days on the helpline. This year we covered virtually every day. And this year we put many more speakers into libraries, participated in more community gardening projects, and started forming the organization (committees and working groups) we need to be most effective.

It feels like we are coming together in a powerful way.

I am happy to continue another year as president, and am looking forward to using the winter months to plan next season's activities. Please call me at 601-1903 or email me at www.michellebpost@gmail.com with any suggestions, questions or ideas.

Thank you so much to Vice President Debbie Sandler, Secretary and Newsletter Editor Mary McDermott, former Treasurer Heather Boone and new Treasurer Daina Walters for your hard work and willingness to step up for another year! And, of course, thank you to the Atlantic County and Rutgers staff who provide the guidance and support necessary for a program like Master Gardeners: Mona Bawgus, Anita Wagner and Chris Dubois.

It has been great getting to know you all. I am sure the 2007 class will continue to add to our strength and make even more projects possible. Have a great holiday, and Happy New Year!



Hot Happenings

- January 12 MG Association meeting, 12:30 – 2:30; MG offices
- February 15-18 NJ Flower Show
- March 4 – 11 Philadelphia Flower Show



Congratulations!

Congratulations to the first members of the 2006 class to become Certified Master Gardeners:

- * **Anne Craig**
- * **Nancy Jansen**
- * **Bunny Mason**
- * **Kathy Olsen**
- * **Glenn Pavlis**



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HelpLine News and Info

Likely questions in January

Looking through the HelpLine logs for last year show some likely areas you can expect caller questions on through December and January. You'll find fact sheets and info on these topics in the file cabinets:

- Deer resistance / deterrents
- Seasonal house plants: Amaryllis, Christmas Cactus, Croton
- Wood ash from fireplaces – how to use in the garden
- Pruning hardwood bushes
- Transplanting hollies
- Pruning grapes
- Planting trees in winter, including Christmas trees



Green Thumb articles

You'll find these seasonally-helpful articles (as well as all previous articles) in a binder in the HelpLine office. You can share these with clients.

- **Black walnut** can be toxic to sensitive plants, November 3
- **Coldframes** extend the growing season, November 10
- **Boxelder bugs, Asian lady beetles, and cluster flies** in the home, November 17
- Winter rose protection, November 24
- **Brown leaf tips on houseplants** due to over-fertilizing salt build-up and fluoride toxicity, December 1
- **Fresh-cut Christmas Trees**, December 8
- **Greenhouse maintenance**, December 15

Time to continue learning

With fewer client calls in the winter months, it's an ideal time to use our HelpLine hours to expand our own knowledge as well as help continuously improve our HelpLine office and resources. Take the time to review the books in the library and peruse the files.

Copying and sending info to clients

Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind. We want to keep an original or "master" copy of each fact sheet or handout in the appropriate file. When you find info you need, use the master to make several copies; file the master and the extra copies back in the folder, and send one of the copies to your client. You may want to put a sticky note that says, "Master/Original" to help the next person not send it off in error.

Remember that all .edu, .gov, and .ext fact sheets can be sent to clients. However, course materials (lecture handouts, PowerPoint slides, etc.) cannot be sent to clients. Whenever you question whether something is suitable, simply check with Mona.

Filing Help Needed

Over the past two months, a new filing cabinet was installed in the HelpLine office, and the files are being reorganized and distributed across the two filing cabinets. The goal is to group files in ways that make it faster and easier to find information to help clients. If you've got some time during your HelpLine hours, check the file drawers and see if you can help organize the files in their appropriate drawers and in alphabetic order. The new drawer sections include:

- Lawns & Landscaping
- Plants & Weeds
- Insects, Diseases, and Pests
- Vegetables
- Trees
- Cultural



Supply Room Clean up

Grace Wagner and Sandy McAfee spent slow HelpLine time cleaning out our MG Supply Room (just outside the HelpLine office). The closet holds all kinds of materials and supplies for our various events and planting projects. Nice work!

Seasonal Question List Underway

Michelle will lead a small group (volunteers welcome) for a short-term project to assemble a list of likely topics callers will have questions about, by month/season. If you'd like to help, contact Michelle Brunetti Post.

Committee News & Updates

With our garden projects dormant until Spring, it's a great time to get involved in non-gardening MG activities – to help slake your gardening thirst, and to keep building your volunteer hours. Some projects have a limited time of activity – the Spring Plant Sale, for example – while others continue through the year. Join the members and leaders shown below by contacting the committee member.

Communications Committee: Coordinate communications from various committees into the monthly newsletter, sharing other chapters' interesting ideas, members' photo directory and other communications needs. Committee chair: Mary McDermott; current members: Michelle Brunetti Post, Mona Bawgus, Anita Wagner, and Janet D'Alessandro. The 2007 kickoff meeting will be in January.

Community Outreach Committee: Coordinate a wide range of community-engagement projects. Led by Kathy Olsen, this group helps prioritize projects, line up volunteers, coordinate activities, and ensure that our activities provide value to MGs and the recipients alike. Each project has a project leader, and volunteers are drawn from the entire MG community.

- Fairs and community events: Coordinating our activities at the 4H fairs and investigating other higher profile community events in our county (chair to be determined).
- Estell Manor Park (Kathy Olsen)
- Peace Pilgrim / Patriot Park: led by Kim Hesse and Estelle Berkowitz
- Pleasantville School, led by Kathy Olsen
- Forsythe Refuge (Judy and Evonne)
- Community Beautification (chair to be determined)
- MG Demo garden: Led by Judith Ryan-Heitz and Evonne Kaminski

Finance and Fund Raising: Coordinate how funds raised from various MG fund-raising activities are prioritized and spent. Chaired by Debra Sandler; current members: Grace Wagner, Daina Walters, Sandy McAfee, Kim Hesse, Cindy Krzyzaniak, Rita Wenig, Janet Longo, Michelle Brunetti Post.

HelpLine Committee: Coordinate ongoing improvements to the HelpLine process, based on volunteer feedback; communicate changes / advice to MG community on HelpLine processes; manage HelpLine Library additions and annual updates to the HelpLine Manual. Chair: Grace Wagner; current members: Bunny Mason, Kim Hesse, Carol Strahlendorf, Ann Cinquina, Mary McDermott, Gloria Perakovich.

Hospitality Committee: Coordinate meeting refreshments; special member events (such as our December luncheon); thank you, birthday, and get-well cards, etc. Chair: Bev Albertson. Current members: Claire Quigley, Debra Sandler, Carol Strahlendorf, Bette Del Grosso, Janet D'Allesandro, Gerel Pereborow.

Plant Sale Committee: Coordinate our annual Plant Sale Fund Raiser, which takes place in the spring. The committee will be looking at the types of plants to be offered; promoting the sale; organizing the plant distribution; and more. Chairs: Gloria Perakovich and Ann Cinquina with Mona Bawgus; current members include Ann Fox, Debby Sandler, Janet Longo, Camille Griffin, Nancy Jansen, Janet D'Alessandro, Michelle Post, Rita Wenig, Grace Wagner, Cindy Krzyzaniak, Bette Del Grosso, Kim Hesse, Estelle Berkowitz, Michelle Post, Mary McDermott.

Speakers Board Committee: Coordinate and developing opportunities for MGs to speak to community groups, libraries, and other organizations. Current members: Heather Boone, Carol Strahlendorf, Ann Fox.



Information & Resources

Officers in Place for 2007

The election process came to a close at the December meeting. Here are our Association officers for 2007:

President: Michelle Brunetti Post
Vice President: Debra Sandler
Treasurer: Daina Walters
Secretary: Mary McDermott



Speakers coming our way

Potential speakers for our early 2007 Association meetings include Barbara Fielder to speak about composting; Helen Biggs to speak about plant propagation and seed starting; and the owner of County Seat Florist in Mays Landing. Bring your suggestions (including contacts) for speakers to the next Association meeting.

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 mmcddmcn@comcast.net

Keeping Track of Volunteer hours

At the November Association meeting, a few questions arose about volunteer hour requirements:

Q & A

Q1. Interns must complete 85 volunteer hours in their first year. 40 of those hours must be on the helpline.

If an intern completes, say, 50 hours on the helpline, do the extra ten hours apply toward the 85 total?

A. Yes. You can do any number of your hours on the HelpLine. While 40 is the minimum required, you could do all 85 hours on the HelpLine.

Q2. How many volunteer hours must Certified MGs complete per year? A. Certified MGs must complete 25 hours of HelpLine or project volunteer time and 10 hours of continuing education.

Q3. How are "years" measured -- from June to June, or linked to each MG's certification date? A. Years are measured from graduation date, which is effectively June to June.

Q4. How are "lifetime hours" tracked? A. Your lifetime hours are the total hours from all your Activity reports.

Q5. Interns don't have an education requirement, so how do we "count" those hours? A. Until they're certified, interns should count any education credits under "Community Education" on the Activity Report.



USFS Weeds of the Week (WoW!)

The following are listed as invasive in NJ. To find out more, see http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants

- **Queen Anne's Lace:** *Daucus carota L.* (a.k.a. wild carrot, bird's nest). Because it tends to grow faster and larger than many native species, this weed can quickly invade open ground, competing with native grasses and forbs.
- **Weeping Lovegrass,** *Eragrostis curvula (Schrad.) Nees* (a.k.a. African lovegrass). This two-to six-foot high perennial grows well in hot dry locations in full sun and easily disperses seeds. It's known to choke out native grasses as early growth forms a ground cover.
- **Butter-and-eggs,** *Linaria vulgaris P. Miller* (a.k.a. yellow toadflax, wild snapdragon, flaxweed, Jacob's ladder). This aggressive plant forms large colonies that crowd out native vegetation in fields, pastures, forest edges and gardens.



Education

2007 MG Class Schedule

Here's the schedule for the new MG classes, starting January 9. Interns and Certified MGs may take one or more of these classes, specifically if you missed that class during your own training, or if a new topic is offered that was unavailable before. Each class counts as three Continuing Education hours. Please let Anita know if you plan on attending.

Date	Class
1/9/07	Soils and Fertilizers
1/16/07	Lawn Care & Diseases
1/23/07	Pesticide Safety
1/30/07	Arboriculture
2/6/07	Tropical Plants
2/13/07	Basic Botany
2/20/07	Plant Propagation
2/27/07	Plant Disease
3/6/07	Native Plants/Invasives
3/13/07	Backyard Habitats
3/20/07	Weed Identification
3/27/07	Flowers for the Garden
4/3/07	Insects
4/10/07	Landscape Design
4/17/07	HelpLine
4/24/07	Vegetables I
5/1/07	Vegetables II
5/8/07	Small Fruits I
5/15/07	Small Fruits II
5/22/07	Tour of Triple Oaks Nursery



Professional Landscape Programs

Rutgers and Cook College offer a series of professional-level courses to bring your skills and knowledge to the next level. Courses of interest include plant identification, pruning, basics of landscape design, garden design, and more. See the brochure in the HelpLine office, or go to <http://www.cookce.rutgers.edu/programs/landscape.html>



2007 Gardening Series starts soon

This annual series is designed to, "provide homeowners and Master Gardeners with ideas and techniques for improving the home garden - both inside and out! Come and spend a morning or an afternoon with other gardeners, as a variety of experts share their experience and knowledge."

Classes start in March with:

- * **Pruning Techniques**
- * **Houseplants, Orchids and Epiphytes**
- * **Beginner Topiaries and Spring Centerpieces**

See <http://www.rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/classes.html> for specific dates and registration info.



Online Horticulture Programs

By Michelle Brunetti Post

How would you like to take an in-depth horticulture class this winter, without having to go to New Brunswick or elsewhere in the hinterlands? Consider taking a Cornell Distance Learning



Horticulture course. I am planning to take the one on propagation that runs from March 5 through April 29. Go to www.cce.cornell.edu/hortd/ for more information.

The course fee is \$325 and you should register early, as these courses do fill up. You can also contact the director Marguerite Wells at mw38@cornell.edu or (607) 255-9911. Cornell is also running distance courses on organic gardening. If you can't do the courses now, you can get on Ms. Wells's email list to be notified about future opportunities.

Recent Activities

Peace Pilgrim Park

by Kim Hesse

One of the newer MG projects begun before the winter break was at the Peace Pilgrim Park. In October, MG Volunteers joined fourteen children (and their teacher) from the Environmental Service Club at the Fanny D. Rittenberg School in EHC. Before we started, I had the opportunity to give a short lecture on "Things to Think About when Planting." Then the students broke into four groups; each took a pre-cut bed and:

1. Loosened the soil.
2. Mixed peat moss and super-phosphate in with soil.
3. Planted the bulbs (giving the children the chance to use their creativity).
4. Recorded the bulb placement.



Together, we planted Tulips (Lily Flowering Mix), Tulips (Little Princess), Hyacinths (Carnegie, Delft Blue & Jan Bos), Muscari (Blue Spike), Crocus (Flower Record), Narcissus (Daffodil). MG volunteers included Estelle Berkowitz, Carol Strahlendorf, Rita Wenig, Kim Hesse, Camille Griffin, and Mona Bawgus.

Make a Difference Day

by Michelle Brunetti Post

In late October, Nancy Jansen and Kathy Olsen helped about 60 Linwood kids plant pansies in plastic pots, and decorate them with red ribbon, to be donated to residents of the Linwood Convalescent Center. It was part of Belhaven Middle School's Make a Difference Day celebration.

Make a Difference Day is a time for people around the country to do something to help others. Our goal with the pansy planting was to allow kids to use plants to do something nice for others, and to teach them the proper way to transfer plants from flats to pots. We talked to the kids about the proper depth to put the roots in the potting soil, and the importance of "teasing out" the roots to keep them from being root bound. It was a popular activity and the school community really appreciated the help from the Master Gardeners.



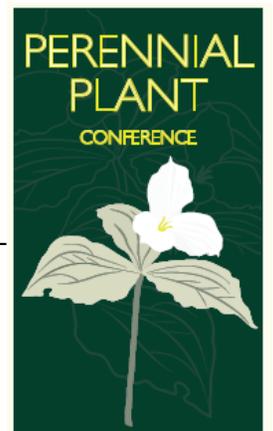
Perennial Plant Conference by Bunny Mason

Five MGs made the trip October 20 to the Perennial Plant Conference at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, and it was well worth the easy drive. The conference was co-sponsored by Chanticleer, Longwood Gardens, The Hardy Plant Society, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and Scott Arboretum. Here are some highlights:

- Fred Case, Jr., spoke about native plants for shady areas, and his love for trilliums was infectious.
- Denise Adams evoked an appreciation for simpler times and gardener enthusiasm, without which we could not continue to enjoy some of the exquisite plants we have today.
- John Friel enlightened us on the use of Latin binomials – genus, species, and variety – while injecting a good dose of humor.
- Dan Pearson shared his design work and showed us how to combine nature and client perspective to create wonderful gardens – large, small, and personal.

The slide photography that accompanied each presentation was impressive. Learning about and being exposed to such lovely plants and the creative meanderings of these accomplished individuals was a good experience. I couldn't resist purchasing these books for my own library:

- "Trilliums," by Frederic W. Case and Roberta B. Case
- "Restoring American Gardens," by Denise Wiles Adams
- "Encyclopedia of Perennials – American Horticultural Society," by Graham Rice.





- To **Kathy Olsen** for putting so much time into both the Pleasantville School garden and Estell Manor Park. She has really taken the reins at Estell and gotten the park group organized to tackle planning for the long term.
- To **Bunny Mason** for her in-depth research into plants to use on the AC Aquarium project, and for her hard work on the design plan.
- To **Bev Albertson** and the entire Hospitality Committee for the wonderful planning and decorating for our holiday party!

Growing Figs

By Bob Kruk

I started growing fig trees in 2000. I had a lot of success growing the tree, but it didn't produce fruit. I never gave up, and this year I finally produced a lot of figs.

In our zone fig trees need to be wrapped and kept from freezing below 20°. Around Thanksgiving time I trim back unwanted branches. At the base I put hay or straw to protect the roots, then I tie all branches tightly together. I wrap all branches either with old quilts or burlap. You can even use tar paper or housing insulation.

To keep it dry I use a tarp; however this year I will try using white plastic. By using white plastic rather than black the tree will not overheat. I've learned to use two vents to let in some fresh air. I use 4" PVC pipe, letting it stick out of the cover once near the bottom and another midway up.

Around April when the weather warms up, I open the plastic so the plant doesn't overheat. At night when the temperature drops below 50° the wrapping must be closed. All covers come off around tomato planting time, about May 15th (our zone). Watch out for a late frost.

Propagating Holiday Cactus

by Michelle Brunetti Post

There are three closely related holiday cactus plants, the Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgessi*), Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*), and Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis Gaertneri*). They all require similar care, but at different times to induce flowering around the correct time. They can all be propagated from tip cuttings.

If you aren't sure what you have, here's the general rule. If the teeth on the flat, leaf-like stems are rounded, it's Christmas cactus; pointed and forward projecting it's Thanksgiving cactus; and if there are no teeth it's Easter cactus. They are named after the time they typically flower. Believe it or not, they are native to rain forests, where they are epiphytes found hanging in trees like many orchids and bromeliads.

Cornell Cooperative Extension recommends placing the cuttings in sand, peat moss, vermiculite or a combination of those materials. The key is when to take the cuttings to get flowering time right. Cornell recommends taking tip cuttings:

- in early fall for Christmas cactus.
- in late summer for Thanksgiving cactus.
- in late winter for Easter cactus.



But Rowan Gardens of Iowa State University recommends taking cuttings from all three in May, and suggests you get about one to three joints. Insert the cut end about an inch into moist perlite, water well, and cover with a plastic bag. Don't allow moisture to build up inside the bag, but keep the perlite moist. It says they will root in two months, and if you're lucky they'll flower the first year.

For more information visit these web sites; both give you tips on after-bloom care: www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/RG308.pdf and www.ccenassau.org/hort/fact_sheets/a112_holiday_cactus_nov01.pdf



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Address <http://www.rcrc.rutgers.edu/extension/> Go Links

Web sites of interest *by Bunny Mason*

Here are some web sites that you may find helpful:

- Garden Tools (pruners, loppers, hedge trimmers, etc): www.Smithandhawken.com, www.gardensedge.com, www.fiskars.com, www.Gardentalk.com
- Seed Collections: www.seedsofchange.com: heirloom tomatoes, early salad, butterfly garden, early bird garden, etc.
- Exotic Plants and Flowers: www.whiteflowerfarm.com: Amaryllis 'Grand Cru' bulbs, Connoisseur's Collection bulbs, etc.
- Containers: www.Burpee.com, www.Gardentalk.com : – garden hods, Sussex trugs, etc.
- Bird Feeders: www.duncraft.com : squirrel-proof, hummingbird, etc.

Heirloom Sources:

Heirloom Plant Specialists:

- www.heritageflowerfarm.com- perennials, vines, and unusual shrubs
- www.mtnbrook.com- primroses, auriculas, and violas
- www.oldhousegardens.com- heirloom flower bulbs
- www.osv.org- plant varieties and seeds
- www.antiqueplants.com- old time annuals, perennials, and herbs
- www.petalsfromthepast.com- cottage garden perennials and herbs, old roses, fruits and vegetables
- www.selectseeds.com- specializes in antique flowers
- www.twinleaf.org- heirlooms and seeds

Seeds:

- www.rareseeds.com
- www.edirectory.co.uk/chilternseeds- international seed list
- www.seedsavers.org
- www.fragrantgarden.com- antique sweet peas
- www.jlHUDSONSEEDS.NET
- www.mikamoki.com- flowers, herbs, and vegetables

Bunny's Book Recommendation:
 'Seedheads in the Garden',
 by Noel Kingsbury
 – great photos!

Bulbs:

- www.bdlilies.com
- www.brentandbeckybulbs.com
- www.mzbulb.com

Regional interesting activities

- **Longwood Gardens:** Interesting classes are offered starting in January, covering houseplants, gardening basics, and more. See www.longwoodlearning.org
- **Morris Arboretum:** Holiday Garden Railway Display, through December 31; see www.business-services.upenn.edu/arboretum
- Triple Oaks has an ongoing series of courses on a wide variety of plant- and decorative topics. See www.tripleoaks.com/classes.php
- **Philadelphia Flower Show**, March 4 – 11. See <http://www.theflowershow.com/home/index.html>
- **NJ Flower Show**, Feb 15 – 18. The 5th Annual New Jersey Flower & Garden Show is the only one of its kind in the New York, New Jersey Metropolitan area. **Volunteers are welcome; contact Mona.**



Photos

Florists donated luncheon arrangements

At our December luncheon, area florists donated holiday-themed centerpieces. After the luncheon, the flowers were donated:

- * Lang's Garden Market donated the flowers pictured; they're now in the Linwood Library.
 - * County Seat Florist's arrangement is in the Mays Landing Library.
 - * Bayview Florist's arrangement may go to the Northfield Library.
- Thank you to Michelle, Grace, and Carol for contacting the florists.



MG Holiday Luncheon



The first stage of the Demo Garden extension: hardscape and raised beds.



Carol Strahlendorf and students from Fanny D. Rittenberg School in EHC planting bulbs at **Peace Pilgrim Park** in October.

Estell Manor Park says "Thanks!"

Bob Kruk and Vin Thoms attended the Volunteer Luncheon hosted by the staff at Estell Manor Park. Bob, Vin, and all the MG volunteers were thanked for their contributions and support of the various projects at Estell Manor Park through 2006. After our November Association Meeting, Helen Biggs, Greenhouse manager at Estell Manor Park, stopped by the office. She took a few minutes to pose with Mary McDermott and the official thank-you plaque presented to our Association.



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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
Program Associate - Agriculture



Email Updates & New Member

In the August issue, we provided a list of all Association Members' email addresses. We have a couple of updates.

(1) Bunny (Virginia) Mason has a new email address.

(2) Welcome to Michelle Bellinger, who is a Master Gardener from Camden County now living in Atlantic County.

Contact Anita to update your lists for Bunny and Michelle. If you have a new or changed email address, send it to Anita, Michelle Brunetti Post, and Mary to ensure we have all our distribution lists up to date.



Happy Birthday Ann Cinquina!

(December 25)

If you haven't yet provided your month-and-date birthday (we're too polite to ask for years), send it to Bev Albertson of the Hospitality Committee via her email address.



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