



Garden Tales

Atlantic County Master Gardener
Association Newsletter



Coordinators Comments:

By Mona Bawgus

Hello Master Gardeners:

I hope everyone is enjoying this beautiful fall weather and enjoying working in the garden. It was a rough summer for most plants but the stalwarts are putting on a beautiful show. The goldenrods are full of monarchs and according to Pat Sutton this year is a spectacular one for the monarch as well as the buckeyes. Many of you have taken the opportunity to get out and explore some local gardens and nature walks such as the Cape May Promenade and Cape May Point.

I would like to thank everyone who attended the MGANJ Fall Conference this year. We had a wonderful turnout and a great time. Congratulations to this years Award of Excellence winners, Bob Varrelman, Barbara D'Augustine, and Gay Pitz. Your dedication through the years has been very much appreciated.

We are gearing up for the next Master Gardener class which will begin in January 2011. The new schedule should be ready by the end of the month. Any Master Gardeners interested in a refresher are welcome to attend the classes.

Enjoy the weather and all the festivities that come along this time of year.

~Mona

Important Dates

October 8	MGA Meeting 12:30 PM
October 12	Pleasantville Library – 5 PM 'Putting Your Garden to Bed'
October 12	Helpline Roundtable 10 AM
October 19	Plant Sale Meeting 10 AM
October 21	Boys and Girls Club-AC 4 PM
November 5	MGA Meeting 12:30 PM
November 10	Helpline Roundtable 10 AM

Volunteer Opportunities

Mondays thru Oct.	Linwood Arboretum – 9 AM
Thursdays	Forsythe 10 AM – Noon



Inside This Issue

Helpline	2
A Perennial Identified	3
When a Weed Isn't a Weed	4
Pest Page	
Stink Bugs	5
Pandora Sphinx Moth	5
PPA's Plant of the Year	6
For The Birds?	6
Getting to Know you	7
Birthdays	8



New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

Topics to look forward to when working the Help-Line:

Bagworms
Spider Mites
Lace Bug
Fall Webworm
Scale Insects
Powdery Mildew
Galls
Black spot on Rose
Lawn Renovation
Seeding Your Lawn
Soil testing
Leaf/Needle Drop

“Green Thumb” Articles

Look to use the following Green Thumb articles as resources for clients while volunteering for the help-line. The articles are located in the “Green Thumbs” binder on the bookshelf in the help-line office:

Ants
Freezing Produce
Bagworms
Puff Balls
Squash Bugs
Hornworms
Fall Lawn Care
Crushed Eggshells and Coffee Grounds
Storing Bulbs
Fall Blooming Perennials

New or Updated Factsheets

FS1129 Cave Crickets
(Camel Crickets)

FS1130 Poisonous Plants & Children

E326 Rain Garden Installation
Services Directory for New
Jersey

FS1134 Bees and Wasps

Round Table Meetings Now Being Held!!!

The first Helpline Roundtable meeting was held on September 15. The Roundtable Meetings have been set up to help those that are working the helpline to see what type of issues are currently going on in the gardens and yard that might be brought in to the office for identification.

The first meeting was quite successful with master gardeners bringing in samples from their garden/yards such as Hibiscus with buds dying, lilacs and phlox with powdery mildew and loss of leaves on climbing hydrangeas, just to name a few.

The following are the dates for the future roundtable meetings: (Helpline is closed for December and January months)

October 13th
November 10th
February 16th
March 16th

Meetings begin promptly at 10am at the Mays Landing office and fall on the Wednesday after Association meetings. See you there!



Photo by Mary Stecher

A Perennial Identified

By Gail Fisher [10]



Photos by Gail Fisher

“Did you notice this bush with the white flowers outside the bedroom window? It’s alive with all kinds of creatures flying all over it.”, remarked my husband Jim. “What IS that bush, anyway?”

“I think it’s some kind of Aster, but I don’t really know. It just grew there.” I responded. I was headed outside to work on a new garden path on this early September morning, and not interested in the buggy bush at the moment.

“What do you MEAN you don’t know what it is? You’re a Master Gardener, aren’t you? Aren’t you supposed to KNOW this stuff?” Jim has many wonderful traits – subtlety isn’t one of them.

The next day I was scheduled for the Helpline. Guess what I brought in to identify?

Mona and Paula Demarest helped me, and we discovered that it was Late-Blooming Thoroughwort (*Eupatorium serotinum*), a fall-blooming perennial related to Joe Pye Weed and Boneset. A new book in the MG library, *Wildflowers in the Field and Forest: A Field Guide to the Northeastern US*, by Steven Clemants and Carol Gracie, was the most helpful resource. It said the plant is a native and typically grows from 1’-6’. Clearly mine is happy, at more than eight feet, tucked in its southwest-facing, sheltered corner, beside Jim’s garden-trains shed (note the train track entering the shed, bottom left of the photo). It dies back to the ground each winter. My plant is about four years old.

The thoroughwort was full of feeders/pollinators. There were bees, wasps, wasp-like flies and a couple of Buckeye butterflies. But the most eye-catching insects by far were these cylinder-shaped, orange, black and white beetle-looking things that were all over the flowers. I had seen two of them a week before on my fennel, but now there were hundreds! Bad guys? Back to the research – www.bugguide.net . *Ailanthus* Webworm Moths (*Atteva punctella*). It said that the *Ailanthus* is their larval food plant. *Ailanthus*? One kind of *Ailanthus* is Paradise Tree (Tree of Heaven – an invasive) and it is native to China. Hmm...there must be one lurking in someone’s yard nearby because these guys had to show up from somewhere.



When I visited the plant near dark I was surprised to see a whole new set of clientele feeding – several little moths were taking their turn at the nectar, drawn there by a light, powdery fragrance I had not noticed during the day!

Late-blooming thoroughwort has certainly brought its share of delights and surprises this summer. Now that I know it’s a native, I will be moving it to my backyard native-species garden this fall, and letting the fig tree hidden beside it have a little more space in the sun.

When A Weed Isn't A Weed

By Grace Wagner [06]

When I first heard Mona mention Joe Pye Weed, I thought I was hearing incorrectly or maybe it was some mumbo jumbo garden language I had never heard before. Well at any rate, eventually, after hearing Joe Pye Weed mentioned many more times, realized it **WAS** a plant and a vital one at that. Two years ago, the Master Gardeners offered it up for sale at their plant sale. So, I bought it and planted it. I wanted to discover for myself, what was so great about this plant.



The name Joe Pye refers to a Native American healer/herbalist living in the 1800's. He was said to have cured typhus with this plant. Its scientific name, *Eupatorium fistulosum*, comes from the ancient king, Mithridates VI Eupator (*Eupatorium*). Therefore this is the weed for kings! This plant is also a member of the daisy family. It was used as a love potion and or a good luck charm. The hollow stems applied to potions were used as straws. Some Native American tribes today still think it is a natural healer and an aphrodisiac.

Since it's planting, I discovered many things about this perennial. Joe-Pye Weed, *Eupatorium purpureum*, is an amazing plant that is an herb, a wildflower, a butterfly plant and an ornamental. As a wildflower/herb it is also known as "Trumpet weed", "Queen of the Meadow", gravel root, kidney root, mist-flower, snakeroot and purple boneset. There are numerous varieties from which to choose, such as a dwarf variety and then others that grow 10 feet tall. Some are more fragrant than others, and they have a vanilla-like fragrance. It is a North American native perennial herb.



This plant is **great** for beginning gardeners since it grows without much attention. No pruning or special soil is needed. However, I do pinch mine back so it doesn't become too tall where I've placed it. As for watering, do not bother providing any special watering each day, just during major droughts. I have noticed it will droop to let you know when it craves water. I have also learned it really likes its "feet" to be kept moist. If planted in the shade it won't grow as tall, and in the sun mine grows to at least 6-7 feet tall or taller. When in bloom, it attracts so many insects it is a virtual entertainment center for observing all kinds of bees, butterflies and flying insects (some of which I have no clue what they were). The bees become so involved in this plant sucking nectar, they don't even care how close you come and will bump into you or land on you! My grandkids could not believe

the variety of insects they observed. They were fascinated, and they are teenagers! Joe Pye blooms with clusters of lavender-pink flowers from July through October or till frost. Mine has been blooming very well, and I clip off the dead blooms to prevent sooooo many seedlings. I have already acquired two new plants this year from the original. They are still blooming and attracting the butterflies, bees, etc, etc.

If you purchase a Joe Pye make sure you check the height of the variety so you won't be surprised. If you are placing them in a bed, place in the back and give them room. Not only do they grow tall but they also grow wide. It combines well with butterfly bush (*buddleia*) *Liatris*, bee balm (*monarda*), yarrow, and anise hyssop. Mine is next to a large spirea, brown-eyed susans, daisies, and lilies. This plant is so beneficial to our gardens.

Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs – Anita Wagner [06]

I have seen the first of these pesky bugs on the inside of my back door. They were brought to my attention by my daughter who was coaxing them outside since, being the daughter of a master gardener, she knew not to crush them or we would suffer the smelly consequence.

Really folks, the Brown Marmorated Stink bugs are more of a nuisance than anything to the homeowner. The BMSB will not bite, sting, or cause structural damage to your home. They are an agricultural pest that damage crops such as apples, pears and peaches. The best way to rid them from your home is to suck them up with a vacuum cleaner or coax them back outside without crushing them. If you are coaxing them back outside, be sure to remove air conditioners from windows and caulk windows and doors where they might try to reenter the home.



Pandora Sphinx Moth – Anita Wagner [06]

This lovely moth was found outside of the RCE office in Mays Landing. Not knowing right off the bat what it was, I did a bit of research and identified it as the Pandora Sphinx Moth.

Adult sphinx moths are powerful fliers. Their slender wings have subtle and intricate patterns. The Pandora sphinx moth is a distinctive olive green color with black and pink markings. The caterpillar is green or reddish-brown with large, striking white spots along the sides of the body. All sphinx moth larvae have a horn-like appendage at the rear of the body. When the Pandora sphinx larva is half-grown, it loses its rear appendage and acquires a glassy eyespot in its place. The term “Sphinx” comes from the caterpillar raising its head and thorax into the air as a defensive measure when disturbed. They feed mainly on grape and Virginia creeper. Most sphinx moth caterpillars burrow into the ground to pupate. Their mouthparts develop in a distinctive handle-like structure.



Interestingly enough, while researching this cute guy I found that the Iowa State University Extension includes a recipe in their Wine-Grower News for hornworms and suggests pairing the delicacy with a light Chardonnay style wine with a good bouquet.

So, keep that in mind next year when you find hornworms in the garden. After handpicking them you can apparently eat them, too! I think I'll pass on the latter!



Perennial Plant Association's Plant of the Year



Baptisia australis (bap-TEEZ-ee-uh aw-STRAH-lis)
Common Name – blue false indigo, wild indigo, and baptisia

USDA Zone: 2-9
Exposure: Full Sun
Bloom: Spring with Deep Blue Color
Height: 3-4'
Spread: 3-4'

This perennial plant has been chosen as the Perennial Plant Association's 2010 Plant of the Year. And....what is not to like? *Baptisia australis* is a native plant that is drought tolerant (once established), has no serious insect or disease problems, is deer resistant, and its' violet-blue flowers are visited by many different butterfly species. Once it has become established blue wild indigo will remain healthy for several years. It requires a minimum of maintenance in a garden or outside setting.

Baptisia australis is easily propagated by collecting the seeds. Division can prove to be difficult because of the large taproot. If dividing you must use a sharp axe and be sure to include several buds in each division. The divisions should be replanted with the crown just at ground level.

Uses for *Baptisia australis* include native plant gardens, cottage gardens, cut flower gardens, and as a specimen or in small groups. For more information visit <http://www.perennialplant.org/>.

For The Birds?? – Pam Wojcik [08]

Perhaps. For the past few summers I have found the perfect annual for under the bird feeder where the bird seed falls and makes weeds and the birds send their own type of 'waste' to the garden floor too. This flowerful yellow mounding *Melampodium* takes full sun, blooms until the first frost, is very hardy, and grows in well drained soil. Being extremely tolerant of heat and humidity, it is a mere 8" to 10 "tall, spaced 10" at planting...then they grow together in mounds much like impatiens, without the need to deadhead, or water regularly. It is a great survivor all season, and forms a beautiful tough border next to our paver patio.



Of course we are equal opportunity feeders, so the Crepe Myrtle, feeder, and LEMON DELIGHT (common name), hold up very well to the antics of squirrels and chipmunks. I hope some of my fellow Master Gardeners will find new ideas for their gardens as well.

Getting to Know You



Roz Herlands [09]

What committees are you involved in?

I am working on the Forsythe Refuge garden, the demo garden, and occasionally on the Galloway Library.

Favorite time of year? Fall

Least favorite plant? Cat or green brier

Favorite plant? All flowering plants, especially the old-fashioned ones like peonies and lilac.

If I had a farm I would grow.....

All kinds of heirloom tomatoes, eggplant, hot peppers, green beans, snap peas, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, and fruit trees. And acres of cutting flower annuals.

What is your most embarrassing gardening moment? I tried to prune my dogwood tree in the backyard when I didn't have a clue what I was doing; fortunately, I didn't kill the tree but it still looks lopsided many years later.

What most MGs do not know about me is.....
I was born in London, England and arrived in San Francisco on my first birthday.

My favorite garden tool is.....
My trowel

My family thinks my gardening is.....
A bit over the top in enthusiasm but my hubby is willing to visit public gardens with me whenever we travel

My favorite MG class was....
On native plants to attract hummingbirds and butterflies (Backyard Habitats)



Vici Butler [09]

What committees are you involved in?
Linwood Arboretum, Port Republic School Garden

Favorite time of year? Spring

Least favorite plant? I love them all even a lot of "WEEDS!" (and the dandelions in our yard will attest to that)

Favorite plant? Whatever I happen to be growing at the time. I especially love to grow perennial flowers and to plant seeds and watch them grow.

If I had a farm I would grow.....
More trees, especially fruit trees, a big vegetable garden and more flowers.

What most MGs do not know about me is.....
I have 15 grandchildren that are the light of my life. Whoops! I guess you know that already. I am a musician that loves to play and teach piano.

My favorite garden tool is....
My Hori-Hori and a good pair of gardening gloves. Right now I am wearing Atlas nitrile gloves.

My family thinks my gardening is.....
A little out of control, but watching my grandkids play in the garden and look for critters leads me to believe that they love my gardening.

My favorite MG class was....
Backyard Habitats with Pat Sutton and Plant Propagation with Mona.

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Published by:
Cooperative 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.

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**Happy Birthday
Master Gardeners!!**

Mary Stecher	Sept. 26
Rachel Bogatin	Sept. 30
Deb Sandler	Oct. 8
Enrique Lago Jr.	Oct. 15
Catherine Persello	Oct. 25
Gail Fisher	Oct. 28
Nancy Jansen	Oct. 28
Gay Pitz	Nov. 2
Sue Scarlett	Nov. 24
Anna Mae Maslinski	Nov. 27

**Want to contribute to
*Garden Tales?***

Send topic ideas, photos, or
material to Anita at
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Atlantic County Master Gardener Program
Newsletter