



# Garden Tales

Atlantic County Master Gardener Program Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1



## Message from Mona by Mona Bawgus

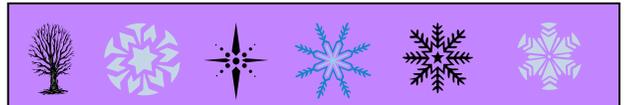
Hello Everyone! I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday season. Our new Master Gardener class has started and we have 26 very enthusiastic students. I will be asking a few of you to join some of the classes and explain what projects you have been working on. Remember: If you would like to take a class, just let Anita know, and you will receive three hours of continuing education.

I would also like to take a moment to share a wonderful book that was recommended to me by fellow Master Gardener Ann Fox: "The Earth Knows My Name" by Patricia Klindienst. This book was truly inspiring and touched my heart. Each chapter is a tale of an immigrant's life in a foreign land and how their garden helped overcome the hardships of adapting to a strange home.

Anyone with a love of gardening will relate to the experiences of these immigrants and how their identity was maintained through their gardens. Placing a seed or plant in the ground is so much more than just growing a plant. It is a connection to who we are, and can transcend any cultural barriers. If in your heart you can answer the question "Why do I garden when it is less work and cheaper to buy the food?" then you will enjoy this book. A copy is on order for the Master Gardener library and I hope you will take the time to read it. I know you will enjoy it.

## Hot Happenings:

Jan 23	MG Class: Pesticide Safety
Jan 30	MG Class: Arboriculture
Feb 6	Tropical Plants
Feb. 9 Friday	MG Association Meeting, 12:30 – 2:30, MG Offices.
Feb 13	Basic Botany
Feb 15 – 18	NJ Flower Show
Mar 4 – 11	Philadelphia Flower Show



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**Make sure your email is read:**  
Include "MG" in the Subject line.



# HelpLine News and Info

## HelpLine Likely Topics

Fact sheets and information in the HelpLine office are organized into six file drawers, by the topics below. Take a look at those fact sheets, as likely caller questions this time of year include:

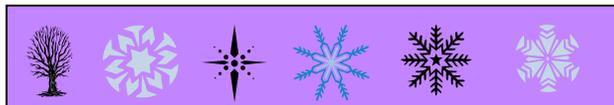
- **Lawn & Landscape:** Soil tests, lime applications, seeding
- **Ornamentals & Weeds:** protecting tender perennials; pruning ornamentals and fruit trees; houseplant care.
- **Vegetable:** When to start seeds indoors
- **Insect & Disease/Wildlife:** Oak galls, ants indoors, houseplant insects, deer.
- **Trees:** Storm damage/protection, watering, galls, spruce needle drop, live Christmas tree transition.
- **Culture:** The warm weather / cold weather changes (see January 19 *Green Thumb* article). Using fireplace ash in the garden/compost.



## New & Revised RCRE Fact Sheets

Check out these new fact sheets at <http://www.rcre.rutgers.edu/pubs>

- **Be Safe with Pesticides**, 1/2007, E261
- **Control Recommendations for Household and Structural Insect Pests**, 2007, E262.
- **Guidelines for Starting a Horticultural Therapy Program by Partnering with Volunteers**, 12/06, E311
- **Tree Decline in New Jersey Landscapes**. 12/06, FS1061
- **Integrated Control of Gray Leaf Spot on Perennial Ryegrass**, 11/06, FS1048



## Green Thumb Articles

These timely articles can help you anticipate and answer client calls – or questions from your friends and neighbors who know you're a Master Gardener. You'll find print copies of each in the Green Thumb binder in the HelpLine office; also check your January 12 "MG News Bits" email.

- **Insecticides vs. Pesticides**, January 27
- **The warm weather's impact on plants**, January 19
- **Growing peanut plants in NJ**, January 12
- **Starting magnolia seeds**, January 5
- **Soil pH for plant health**, December 29
- **Poinsettia care**, December 22

## USFS "Weeds of the Week"

Find out more about these weeds, which are listed as invasive in NJ – and how to eradicate them at [http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive\\_plants](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants)

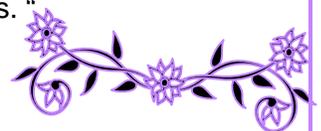
- **Oxeye Daisy**, (*Leucanthemum vulgare* Lam.). a.k.a. margarite, white daisy. This European import, though cute, can quickly replace up to 50% of grass species in pastures, increase the potential for soil erosion, and host several viral diseases affecting crops.



- **Sweet Autumn Virginsbower** (*Clematis terniflora* DC.): a.k.a. leather leaf clematis, yam-leaved clematis. This climbing vine can reach 30 feet high, with a 4-inch diameter bark. It forms a dense tangle that can completely overtake supporting plants and structures, running rampant in neglected areas, smothering native vegetation, and competing with native vine species for resources. “

Clematis:

“The first year they sleep;  
the second year they creep;  
and the third year they leap.”



# Committee News & Updates

**Communications Committee:** In addition to ongoing “internal” communications, the group is outlining “external” public-relations communications to increase awareness of RCRE/MG with the general public and county leaders, and support specific MG events (such as the Plant Sale). Contact: Mary McDermott

**Community Outreach Committee:** Most projects are still dormant for the winter. Plans are in place for Peace Pilgrim Park, including new trees, a wildflower garden, mulch, soil tests and amendments. The committee will produce a proposed plan for Estell Manor for submission to the Park for approval. Chairman: Kathy Olsen.

**Finance & Fund Raising Committee:** The group is considering several programs to support with funding, such as educational opportunities, specific project needs, communications materials, committee budgets, recognition, MG imprinted apparel, etc. Funding sources being considered include expanding the Plant Sale offerings (yard / book sales at the event, for example), as well as a second annual MG yard sale. The group will meet again close to the February Association meeting; watch for email from chairman Deb Sandler for the date/time. Volunteers welcome!

**HelpLine Committee:** The group will meet this month to plan the year’s activities. Contact: Grace Wagner.

**Hospitality Committee:** The committee will meet this month to plan the year’s activities. Contact Bev Albertson if you have ideas and suggestions.

**Plant Sale Committee:** The group is reviewing vendors, venues, plant choices, and promotions for this year’s sale. Members’ input to the plant list is needed ASAP – what plants, trees, and shrubs would you like to see on the plant sale list? A planning calendar is being tested. The sale date (mid-April) and ordering details will be shared at the Feb.9 Association Meeting. Next meeting: Jan. 24. Contacts: Ann Cinquina and/or Gloria Perakovich.

**Speakers Board Committee:** Gloria Perakovich, Ann Cinquina and Mona will give a presentation to the Northfield Garden Club January 24 on the Master Gardener program. Volunteers are needed to lead/staff this committee.

**NEW: Trips, Tours & Education Committee:** This new committee will gather suggestions for regional trips, tours, and educational opportunities. They’ll present options to the Association, and coordinate logistics. Send your ideas and suggestions to Vin Thoms, committee leader.



## Got a minute for the Minutes?

After each Association Meeting, minutes are distributed recapping the discussion, decisions, and next steps. Take a minute to review the minutes, as meeting dates, events, and committee activities are listed. You’ll also see who has volunteered for various actions. Because the minutes are used for the newsletter, let Mary McDermott know ASAP if any corrections to the minutes need to be made.



## Next Committee Meetings:

- **Hospitality:** Friday, Jan. 19, 1:00, MG offices.
- **Plant Sale:** Jan. 24, 1:30, Ann Cinquina’s house.
- **Community Outreach:** Friday, Feb. 9, 11:30, MG offices
- **Tours, Trips & Education:** Friday, Feb. 9, after Association meeting.
- **Communications:** Tuesday, Feb.13, noon, at MG offices.

## Did I sign up for this?

See the Nov/Dec *Garden Tales*, page 3, to see who signed up for our various committees. If you’d like to join a committee, contact the chairman. If you’re inadvertently listed or wish to be taken off a committee, send a note to Mary McDermott.

## Can’t make a meeting?

Be sure to let your committee chairman know if you’ll be attending meetings. A quick RSVP helps chairmen know that you’re still interested and active.

# Class of 2007

## Welcome Class of 2007!

The Atlantic County MG Association welcomes 27 students to the 2007 Master Gardener class! Classes began January 9, and all indications are this will be another great group of energetic and enthusiastic gardeners. Welcome to all new students, and we look forward to seeing you at MG activities this Spring!

- Raven Ahmed, Egg Harbor Twp
- Marie Benoit, Somers Point
- Rachel Bogatin, Margate
- John Collette, Mays Landing
- Becky Daidone, Egg Harbor Twp
- Barbara D'Augustine, Mays Landing
- Morgana French, Hammonton
- Rebecca French-Mesch, Hammonton
- Carla Glass, Ventnor
- Phyllis Hardy, Mays Landing
- George Hyatt, Somers Point
- Sharon Keys, Mays Landing
- Robin Lara, Egg Harbor Twp
- Ellen Lichtenstein, Margate
- George Lonkart, Northfield
- Beth Mauro, Absecon
- Amy Menzel, Hammonton
- Joyce Moran, Egg Harbor City
- Gay Pitz, Mays Landing
- Linda Risser-Hawn, Dorothy
- Kathy Schoonover, Linwood
- Thelma Snyder, Somers Point
- Mary Stecher, Northfield
- Sandra Templeton, Hammonton
- Robert Varrelmann, Egg Harbor City
- Greg Yost, Somers Point

## 2007 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
1/23/05	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
4/24/05	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

## 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](mailto:mmcddmcm@comcast.net)

## Happy Birthday!

**Evonne Kaminski**, January 9  
**Janet D'Alessandro**, January 15  
**Rita Wenig**, January 23  
**Mona Bawgus**, February 6  
**Grace Wagner**, February 10



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## Events & Education

### Rutgers 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Home Gardener's School

The March 24 Spring Session offers “expert instruction in the most innovative gardening and landscaping subjects available.” The one-day program is offered at the Rutgers Campus in New Brunswick; we'll likely have folks attending that may want to carpool. You can choose from 28 classes -- from houseplants, container gardening and flower arranging, through landscaping, plant selections, and plant care. To register (\$45 to \$65; discounts available) or to see the online brochure with detailed course descriptions, go to <http://www.cookce.rutgers.edu/courses/current/ah0201cb.html>

### Rutgers Bee-ginner's Beekeeping

This three-day course runs Friday, April 13, through Sunday, April 15, in Bordentown, NJ (near Trenton). Several of our own MGs have taken the course and now keep bees in their suburban back yards. The course covers basics of bee biology, hive management, honey extracting, hive assembly, and more. It's open to all existing beekeepers and those who would like to become beekeepers.



See <http://www.cookce.rutgers.edu/courses/current/AE0401CC.HTML>.

### Longwood Gardens Continuing Ed

Longwood Gardens offers a wide range of courses, from 90 minutes to multi-day and certificate programs in Homeowner Gardening Basics, Ornamentals, Workshops, Garden Walks, Botanical Art, and more. See [www.longwoodlearning.org](http://www.longwoodlearning.org) for more info.



### Rutgers 2007 Gardening Series

Three or more different classes are offered monthly, which provide ideas and techniques for improving the home garden. March classes include Pruning Techniques; Houseplants, Orchids and Epiphytes; and Beginner Topiaries and Spring Centerpieces. See <http://www.rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/classes.html> for dates and times. (Note: Gift certificates are available.)

### Regional Activities of Interest

- **Northeastern Organic Farming Association (NOFA)** Conference, Jan. 27, Cooks College campus in New Brunswick. See [www.nofanj.org](http://www.nofanj.org)
- **Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve's 2007 Winter Lecture Series**, now through Feb. 25; see <http://www.bhwp.org>
- **Butterfly Winter Conservatory at the American Museum of Natural History**, now through May: see <http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/butterflies>
- **Orchid Show:** Deep Cut Orchid Society 10<sup>th</sup> annual show, Feb. 8 – 11, Holmdel, NJ (GSP exit 117). “Orchid societies as well as local and commercial growers from the tri-state area will present landscaped exhibits.” See [www.deepcutorchids.com](http://www.deepcutorchids.com)
- **NJ State Agriculture Convention**, Feb. 12 – 14, Tropicana Casino/Hotel, Atlantic City.
- **New Jersey Flower Show:** Feb. 15 – 18, NJ Convention Center, Edison, NJ. See <http://www.macevents.com/show.cfm?eventID=121> Use your MG identification for a discounted entry fee.
- **New York Botanical Garden annual orchid exhibition**, Feb. 25 – Apr. 2. The exhibition is “distinguished as the only curated and designed, museum-quality orchid exhibition.” See <http://www.nybg.org>
- **Philadelphia Flower Show**, “Legends of Ireland, March 4 – 11; see <http://www.theflowershow.com/home/index.html>



# Information & Resources

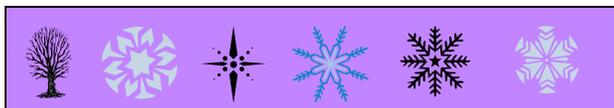
## Master Gardeners: Who we are and What we're all about

January is a good time to take stock and remind us of our program goals and *raison d'être*. As we plan our priorities for projects and funding, keep in mind that, "...the RCRE MG program is designed to increase the availability and outreach initiatives of University-based horticultural and environmental stewardship information to local communities and individuals

The program objectives are to:

- Expand the research and educational capacity of RCRE in order to provide research-based home ground information through a network of volunteers.
- Develop and enhance community programs related to horticulture and environmental stewardship. These programs are educational in nature and may involve environmental improvements, horticultural therapy projects, community and school gardening projects, or other programs as determined by local needs.
- Develop leadership potential of Master Gardener volunteers through a volunteer network designed to assist RCRE staff in managing local Master Gardener activities and programs."

We are "trained volunteers who assist RCRE in delivering horticultural programs and information to the general public. MGs receive in-depth training in horticulture from Rutgers University faculty and professional staff."



## Not on Email?

### Here's how to stay in touch

Much of our MG communications are distributed electronically. However, for those without email, the "Garden Tales" newsletter will be printed and mailed, and a paper copy of Association minutes will be in their HelpLine office personal files. To keep up with committee projects and meeting dates, members without email are encouraged to regularly phone their committee chairmen or colleagues.

## A Lawn in Winter

Now that the weather actually seems to have turned colder, try to avoid walking on frozen / dormant lawns to keep crowns protected and reduce leaf breakage. While winter watering may not be necessary for established lawns, lawns just started in the past year are especially susceptible to winter desiccation injury. In January or February, there are often long periods of very dry, cold air that pulls the moisture from the ground. Even though the lawn is dry and dormant, it may still need to be watered once in a while to maintain its moisture. Winter is a great time to learn more about your garden and your lawn in particular; RCRE has many helpful lawn fact sheets, and there are interesting winter lawn FAQs at <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/lawnfaqs>

## Need computer help?

If you're working the HelpLine and need assistance on the HelpLine computer, give Anita Wagner a call. She can talk you through the basics – turning the computer on and off, how to electronically search for information that you can't find in the file cabinets, and how to determine which Internet files are appropriate for our clients.

## "Free to a good home"

If you have gardening-related items you'd like to give away, we'll run a column in each *Garden Tales* listing items and contact names. Possible items might include plant pots, seed starting equipment, live plants, saved seeds, garden art, garden-related books, etc. Send an email to [Mary McDermott](mailto:Mary.McDermott@urbanext.uiuc.edu) describing the item.

## Garden Quiz

From the Ocean County MG newsletter, *Through the Grapevine*:

1. What is the only fruit with its seeds on the outside?
2. What is the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked or in any form other than fresh?
3. What is the only natural food that never needs cooking or refrigeration, but always remains completely edible in its natural form?

Answers: 1. Strawberry 2. Lettuce 3. Honey

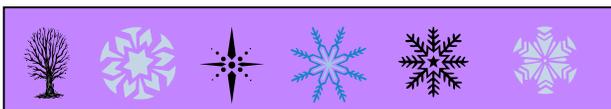
## Garden Memories by Michelle Post

I went to sleep each night, from earliest childhood until I left for college, listening to two crazy adults hurl insults and curses at each other. No, they weren't my parents. They were my next-door-neighbors. We'll call them the "Grants," an elderly, childless couple who were rarely sober.

My bedroom was in the corner of the house closest to their home, and they were loud. I can see Mr. Grant now, standing out on his back stoop with stogy in mouth, huge gut hanging out of a tiny t-shirt. He would grumble and curse at the neighborhood kids most of the time – that is, until he walked into his garden and became someone else. If you caught him there he would talk to you in a calm, friendly voice, about what he was growing, and actually smile once or twice.

Most of his tiny backyard was his vegetable garden, set off by a little white picket fence. It was one of the neatest and most organized gardens I've ever seen. I realize now he was practicing a high-intensity type of gardening, coaxing an amazing volume of yield from a tiny plot. My parents would never let us eat any of his donations, because they weren't quite sure what he used for fertilizer and you couldn't assume Mr. Grant would stop at anything. But it was beautiful.

Watching him over the years taught me the power of the garden -- even the most foul-mouthed, offensive person can be redeemed by one. It made him much less scary than he would have been to a child, knowing he had this soft spot in him. And it, along with my mother's shade plantings of hostas, lily of the valley, and old-fashioned flowers like lychnis (rose campion), made me curious about gardening. Many, many years later it would lead me to one of my strongest interests. Thanks, Mr. Grant.

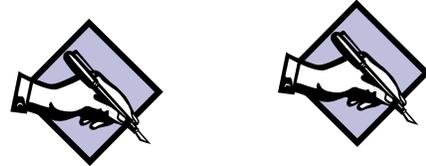


### Online Extras

The electronic edition of *Garden Tales* includes a ninth page, with a story by Janet D'Alessandro, "The gift...that keeps on giving?" and photos of plants with winter interest.

## Your Story: Great Gardening Gifts

Right after Christmas I saw out my kitchen window what I thought was a white plastic bag in the middle of a section of my garden. I stomped outside, grumbling and griping about trash blowing around. Then I discovered it was a white stone with the words, "The Garden Is Sleeping" written on it (definitely an apt description of my winter garden). A friend had placed it there while we were away. It was absolutely a favorite gift and one that I look at every day! – *Bev Albertson*



### Your stories in *Garden Tales*

**"Garden Memories:"** Send a story of up to 300 words describing a gardening/farming experience that influenced you to become the gardener you are today.

**"Your Story:"** Each month we'll highlight an interesting topic. For next month, tell us about your **strangest garden visitor**. Send along a paragraph describing an unusual visitor to your yard/garden. Photos are welcome.

## Re-Cyclamen

Cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*) is a classic winter gift houseplant, but most folks discard it after the blooms fade. You can keep yours beautiful longer, and keep it for next year. To prolong the blooms, keep Cyclamen cool (50 to 60 degrees in the day and even cooler at night), moist (a pebble tray works), and well lit with bright, indirect sun for 6 to 8 hours a day. You'll be rewarded with flowers for weeks, and even months. Cyclamen is sensitive to salt, so avoid water-softener-treated water. Fertilize every two to three weeks during winter and early spring at half the recommended strength. The Cyclamen tuber becomes dormant in the summer, after the leaves turn yellow and fall off. During this dead-looking phase, reduce watering to every two or three weeks. In the early fall, the plant will resume active growth. Once you see new growth emerging from the base of the tuber, begin to water more frequently and resume fertilizing.



## Atlantic County Master Gardener Newsletter

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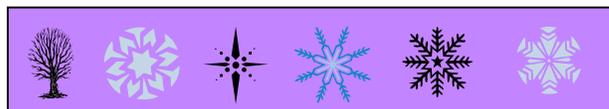
Edited by:

*Mona Bawgus*

Mona Bawgus  
Program Associate - Agriculture

## Home Gardening Tips

- Water evergreens during winter thaws.
- Check perennials for frost heaving. Firmly press down any that have lifted, and cover the soil with mulch.
- Pamper houseplants: pinch back to encourage bushy growth; water with room-temperature water; check for and treat infestations.
- Remove weak branches and thin overcrowded areas on dormant landscape plants such as butterfly bushes and hybrid tea roses. Make sure the pruners are sharp to avoid splintering or tearing.
- Place catalog orders early for unusual / hard-to-find seeds before the supply runs out.
- Check seed-starting equipment now – replace fluorescent tubes, repair/replace heat mats, sanitize pots, stock up on plant labels, etc.



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Atlantic County Master Gardener Program Newsletter



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## Online Extras

### Your Story: The gift...that keeps on giving? *By Janet D'Alessandro*

"I'm really excited about your gift," my friend Alice said as she extended the beautifully wrapped box toward me, two weeks *after* Christmas. Intrigued by the Smith and Hawkins logo on the box, I quickly opened it. Alice went on, "I wanted to get something special for the 'Master Gardener'."

Inside the paper box was a tin box. It sported a brushed pewter finish, an octagonal shape, and measured about 6 x 3 x 3.

"What gardening gadget fits in here?" I wondered as I slipped off the band and popped open the top. The mystery remained as I eyed the white cloth sack with a drawstring, nestled in the box.

Lifting out the sack, I peeked inside to find--are you ready?--a handful of sphagnum moss, a flat brown disk and...3 bulbs.

"These will be paper whites," Alice said excitedly. "They were displayed so beautifully in the store. I know it's after Christmas, but you can still use them now for this year and then you can repot them for more blooms next year."

"Thank you so much," I said. "I have grown these before... but they only last one season." (I always say the right things).

"Really? Well, you can plant them and enjoy them now," Alice said, ignoring my rudeness.

I examined the brown disc that sat between the moss and the bulbs.

"This is a mystery," I said. "Let me check out what this does." The instructions said: Put your soil wafer in a bowl and add water. "Hmm, I never used soil for paper whites before," I said as I went on reading the instructions, "Select a container that has a drainage hole..."

"You mean you can't plant them in this tin?" Alice asked. "That's how they were displayed in the store," she said, obviously disappointed...

"Well," I said, "You'll just have to wait and see. We'll be at your house for your Valentine's Day dinner and by that time they should be in full bloom. I'll bring one back to you."

Later, I secured a pot with drainage holes (small enough to fit inside the brushed pewter tin). I buried one bulb in it with the soil from the expanded soil wafer. Then, I placed the other two bulbs in water and pebbles, (as I did it in previous years) just in case that wafered soil doesn't work. And, I plan to deliver paper whites to Alice on Valentine's Day.

### What's in your garden?

Plants with winter features help cheer up the winter blahs. Here are a few winter performers in Mays Landing. Send **your photos** of plants with interesting winter features to [mmcddmcn@comcast.net](mailto:mmcddmcn@comcast.net)



**Moss**



**Witchhazel**



**Miscanthus**