The Compost



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VICTORIA PARK SENIOR APARTMENTS PROJECT

The growing season is ending and the gardens at the Victoria Park (Vic Park) Senior Apartments have been cleaned up for the winter. Our team will conduct one more session this year at the facility in Waldorf as part of the "Best Practices for Raised Bed Gardening" series. The residents of Vic Park will harvest Ginger (Zingiber officinale) from several containers and the teaching bed and plant Garlic (Allium sativum) that will winter over for harvesting in the late spring. We will also move the location of the teaching bed and assist the residents with any remaining end of season garden tasks.

Members of the CC MG Vic Park team dropped by to visit the beds throughout the summer. Participants harvested their crops from the potato ('Yukon Gold' and 'Purple Majesty') baskets, the 'Covington' sweet potatoes are going to be harvested this week. All in all, the baskets produced about 5 pounds of potatoes. The crop was shared and enjoyed at a potluck dinner hosted by a small group of residents. During one of our 'drive by' visits, we were told that the okra was harvested from the teaching garden throughout the summer and cooked with turkey necks, tomatoes and onions and shared by several residents (Yum!). They also enjoyed green beans, eggplant, watermelon radishes, squash, and peppers. The tomato plants and some of the other vegetables did not do as well as expected, but residents had issues with providing enough water for the beds this summer. To try and remedy this situation for next year, the team was asked by one of the property managers to prepare a proposal for a watering system to present to the building owners for funding. We are currently awaiting a response for the approval.

Thanks to the great team of CC MGs that worked with the Vic Park residents this past year: Donna Ball, Lori Guido, Linda Ivko, Brian Larson, Julie Nethon-Williams, Erika Smith, Gail Enid Walker, and Karen Westhead. We are all excited to start planning for the 2023 season. Future activities proposed include helping design the watering system for installation by the property staff, learning how to grow turmeric, growing more potatoes and other container crops.

The Vic Park Project meeting is held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6 pm via ZOOM. Contact Michelle Chenault (cell # 301-526-3225 or email vmchenault@gmail.com) for more information.









Autumn 2022

Photos taken during the 2022 spring and summer garden growing season

Article and photos by CC MGs Michelle Chenault and Donna Ball Page 2 The Compost

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Happy Fall Everyone!

We have been enjoying some wonderful temperatures over the last month. We had a beautiful weekend for the Charles County Fair this year. Over 500 visitors came to our booth, and we distributed 2 storage containers worth of seeds! We also received some great feedback regarding the types of programs the public is interested in.

Special thanks to this year's fair volunteers:

David Gardner Derex Thompson Rose Markham Meg MacDonald Jennifer Godlweski Mary Ellen Howard Bill Allen Marlene Smith Xavier Gray Kay Redman Brian Larson Gail Black Marian Brummer Matt Perez **Carol Teets** Marguerita Harding Kathy Jenkins

Recruitment is underway for the spring Master Gardener Basic Training. The class will be held Feb 1 - May 3, 2023 on Wednesday nights from 6-9 PM. Most of the classes will be virtual through Zoom with some in-person sessions. Details and registration can be found here. Please help me spread the word through your other communities and associations. If you would like printed flyers, you may pick them up at the extension office. The deadline to apply is Dec 1, 2022.

Please also mark your calendars for our wreath making workshop and holiday potluck awards ceremony on Saturday December 10th. We are planning to hold it in-person this year at the extension office! The wreath making workshop will begin at 10:00 AM with the potluck lunch to follow at 1:00 PM. If you have attended the wreath workshop previously and still have your frame, please bring it. An RSVP announcement will be sent next month.

As we are starting to wind down to the slower time of year, I wanted to thank everyone for the great work you have done! You all have really gotten back out into the community this year, and your efforts are greatly appreciated by the folks you reach.

Happy gardening,

Kaitlyn



Article by CC MG County Coordinator Kaitlyn Baligush

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MELWOOD HORTICULTURAL THERAPY PROJECT AUTUMN 2022 - UPDATE





Summer at Melwood, Nanjemoy was very busy with the summer camp *Accomplish Garden Club* for children, *Seed to Table* groups, *Adult Horticulture*, and even *Operation Tohiju* (*OpT* for short) which is part of the *Wounded Warrier Project*. 15 female Veterans from around the country participated in a 4-day retreat!

All these groups are assisted by volunteer Master Gardeners and working with them is very rewarding. What is there to do? Assisting with classes, establishment and maintenance of the gardens – from helping groups plant the seeds in the greenhouse, graduating them to hardening-off areas, planting them outside, making sure they are watered and free from pests, picking the fruits, etc.

This quarter, in addition to helping with classes, Master Gardeners established irrigation systems, trenched out flooding areas, assisted with watering schedules (there is no irrigation in the greenhouses so there is always a need for watering crews), and continued with maintenance of the gardens. The garden produced over **800 lbs** of tomatoes this year, which are used in the *Seed to Table* class or given to local food kitchens.

Pollinators love us! A lovely Teepee had been constructed with sunflowers surrounding the outside but unfortunately, during a storm, a large limb fell onto one side of it, crushing part of the support poles. Again, Master Gardeners went for a special cleanup day to take care of the gardens and what remained of the Teepee. Seasonal work continued throughout the period with deadheading, staking, weeding, and pruning gardens.

Coming up....fall/winter changes. Wait until you see the change to the learning garden!!!! Volunteers are always needed, but must be vetted first. For more info, contact Suse Greenstone, Manager Horticultural Therapy at sgreenstone@melwood.org.

Article and photo by CC MG Barbara Hill

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WHAT IS A DOCENT?

More important, do you want to be one?

In general, docents assist in the development of educational programs and conduct special activities for students, adults, and families – they conduct programs by greeting the groups and leading the tours and programs.

Recently, CC MGs Karen Westhead, Linda Ivko, Karla Costello and Brent Burdick, and CC MG Intern David Gardner travelled to Timonium, MD, to serve as docents during the Maryland State Fair.

The volunteers were given an opportunity to attend an hour-long docent orientation a few days before, conducted by Robert Cook, the MG Project Manager for the Learning Garden. In addition, each docent was emailed a Docent Handbook for the 2022 Maryland State Fair UME Master Gardener Learning Garden. The Handbook was also available at the Fair for ready reference. There were usually four to five docents on duty to assist garden guests.

The theme for this year's garden was "Different Paths to Success." It focused on different gardening techniques Maryland gardeners could use to have a successful harvest in their own gardens. These 'paths' included various styles of raised beds; types of containers; trellis systems for tomatoes, cucumbers, pole beans, sweet potatoes, and gourds; and various plant varieties.

There was much to discuss about our experiences with the UME MG Learning Garden, here are a few highlights:

The garden was lush with growth and healthy plants throughout. To improve the soil, they did not fertilize, but used a rich mixture of screened topsoil and mushroom compost in each bed. Docents from Baltimore City at the Fair stated that mushroom compost was available at a few outlets in Baltimore but had to be applied sparingly since it was heavier in salts than other composts.

CC MG Karen Westhead reflected that one thing that many garden guests were impressed with was the luffa plants. These large, green vegetables hung down from an overhead trellis, with people thinking they were hanging zucchini, cucumbers, etc. CC MG Brent Burdick thought luffa sponges originated in the ocean. He was surprised to learn they were actually dried fiber from the luffa vegetable, a vine-grown member of the pumpkin, squash, and gourd family, Cucurbitaceae. One guest mentioned luffa were grown in Louisiana and, when the plants were young, tasted like a mild cucumber.



These photos show luffa hanging from a trellis; CC MG Karla Costello helping a couple identify the luffa (on right); and later, CC MG Karen Westhead holding the exoskeleton of a dried luffa while helping other guests who were admiring the luffa plant.





Article continued next page

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WHAT IS A DOCENT? CONT.

The garden contained many flowers in order to draw pollinators. The center bed contained sunflowers that come back each year from sunflowers planted there in the past. Surrounding the sunflowers were Tithonia, or Mexican sunflowers. Below, CC MG Linda Ivko helps a couple identify the sunflowers and look at the Tithonia petals, which were bright orange with fine streaks of gold.





CC MG Brent Burdick found the red-noodle pole beans interesting. The beans were one of the "yard-long" varieties but were expected to have pods of only 18 to 20 inches.

The beans could be prepared like standard green beans, but would retain some of their color even when cooked.



Though not pictured, another interesting item in the garden was a variety of eggplants, especially the 'Turkish Orange'. CC MG Brent Burdick and CC MG Intern David Gardner were intrigued with this small round eggplant (a little larger than a golf ball) that ripened to a bright orange, with fading green stripes. They also drew a lot of interest from other visitors to the garden.

Docents were encouraged to have guests 'sample' plants in the herb area – crush leaves, smell different aromas, and taste leaves as well as flowers from the herbs to tantalize taste buds.

With this brief introduction in mind, does this not give YOU a taste for wanting to be a docent, too? **You can**– join your fellow CC MGs in supporting the UME MG Learning Garden – next year!

Article and photos by CC MG Brent Burdick

FROM THE GARDEN OF CC MG KAY REDMAN











The Compost



BAY-WISE CORNER!





Happy Fall Everyone!

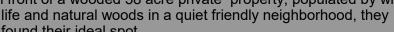
I have been in a wild world of "leaves" and enjoying every minute of closing down my gardens. The Blue Birds have stopped by every day on their way to their winter home, met up with a black snake in its last stages of shedding his skin and by the time I

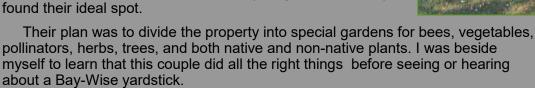


pulled out my phone he scurried away leaving behind his old, very messy shell. A box turtle (named him Squirt) showed up and has decided to stay awhile. I guess he is trying to figure out where he wants to hang out for the winter. The squirrels are out gathering food for the winter. I'm also bothered daily by a pesky woodpecker that flies in for breakfast every morning. Oh, the pleasures of fall and nature! It's my favorite time of year.

Bay-Wise Certifications

Since the last COMPOST publication, I had the opportunity to certify a home garden and landscape for a young couple in Southern Maryland. I must tell you that it was one of the best certifications I have ever encountered. Amanda and Jim grew up in White Plains and have a passion for living off the land, so to speak. When they moved into a one-acre lot home in 2018 that sits in front of a wooded 58 acre private property, populated by wild





As many of you are aware, the State of MD passed a law in Oct 2021 called the *Low-Impact Landscaping Bill* that gave gardeners more freedom to plant sustainable and ecologically friendly gardens on their property. The Cupps shared their plans with neighbors, researched permits and other laws to be sure they met any and all requirements before moving forward.

With confidence, and a no-till garden approach to planting, they designed several beds incorporating vegetable gardens for corn, potatoes, beans, carrots, asparagus and herbs. Along the parameter of the property they planted elderberry, peach, apple and pear trees as well as a strawberry patch.

They planted both native and non-native flower beds throughout the property along with a variety of milkweed. They also designed one bed to

handle all of the mixed varieties at the end of the season. They had so many visits from the Monarchs that they lost count of how many caterpillars were thriving on the milkweed. They had more fun with their children counting the caterpillars and then experiencing the thrill of who could find the most chrysalis. What a learning lesson for both the kids and parents!





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BAY-WISE CORNER!





In addition to the gardens, they maintain a bee hive colony and have time to raise and maintain a variety of animals, namely chickens, ducks, and rabbits, as well as a rooster and one gorgeous turkey. The animals serve as a main food source for the family but some are now there favorite pets. The Cupps are a perfect example of how one can live independently from the land and maintain a status quo.



Bay-Wise Advanced Training

Look for CC MG County Coordinator Kaitlyn Baligush's Friday announcements for the latest updates on our Bay-Wise training classes in November. Mark your calendars for Nov 2 and 9, from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm. Currently we have 17 Master Gardeners who signed up for a refresher and 30 newcomers. It is not too late to register!

Prince Frederick Library in Calvert County.

Classes will be held from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM Wednesdays, 11/2 & 9. The class fee is \$50.00.

Limited to 60 participants

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bay-wise-landscape-management-advanced-training-tickets-400637516597

Till next time, have a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday!

Article and photos by CC MG and Bay-Wise Chair Rose Markham

LA PLATA DAY FUN!





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SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK GARDEN

- A SUCCESSFUL YEAR! -

The Southern Maryland Food Bank "Seeds of Hope" Community Learning Garden was a success this year! Mr. George Mattingly, Director of Southern Maryland Food Bank & Outreach Services, was quite pleased with the support provided by the CC MGs. He said that the garden produced **530 lbs** of produce for the Food Bank! It was a significant increase over last year's 379 lbs. CC MG Project Manager Brent Burdick informed Mr. Mattingly that this was due to all the hard work and long hours put in by each of the CC MGs and CC MG Interns who worked in the garden this year.



Mondays with CC MGs Karla Costello and Sally Matts in the garden

A lot of the success was due to our watering crews, who did a FANTASTIC job keeping our beds from drying out during the late, hot summer months. CC MGs Karla Costello and Sally Matts not only watered on Mondays, but harvested as well. CC MG Tom Belote kept pace with watering on Fridays when needed, and CC MG Tina Bailem (with husband Lester) rotated watering duties on Sundays with CC MG Burdick in addition to working in the garden one or two days each week. Other CC MGs/Interns kept the garden watered during scheduled workdays on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.



CC MG Intern Sandee Heredia watering on a workday



CC MG Tom Belote

In August, we began sowing seeds for fall crops – spinach, kale, Swiss chard, broccoli, carrots, etc. (CC MG Brian Larson is pictured sewing fall crops.)

We continued harvesting several small bins of food each week throughout August, September, and the first week of October.







Article cont. next page

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SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK GARDEN, CONT.



Last week, CC MGs Tina Bailem and Brent Burdick harvested the remaining potato baskets and the sweet potatoes. WOW! They got 52 pounds of sweet potatoes from the garden's three tire planters! Pictured to the left is the last big harvest of the season.

As the season drew to a close, some of the garden beds were cleaned up, trellises dismantled, and Winter Rye planted as a cover crop. Below, CC MG Interns Sandee Heredia and Derex Thompson took down the trellis in the cantaloupe/butternut squash bed; the tomatillo and gardening-by-the-square-foot beds were cleaned up; the green bean and peppers beds were planted with Winter Rye, and both tomato beds were put to rest.







What a year! A few fall crops are still to come

– and more clean-up is still needed before winter finally sets in . . .

A great big thanks to all the CC MGs and CC MG Interns who made this year such a success!







Article and photos by CC MG Brent Burdick

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NURTURE NATIVES



4H Teen Ambassadors: L.-r.: Esther Bonney, Samantha Rutherford, and Abigail Bonney at the 4H National Summit.



Nurture Natives Oct 15, 2022: L.-r.: Malachi Perez (son of CC MG Intern Matthew Perez), CC MG Intern Matthew Perez, 4H Ambassador Esther Bonney, CC MG Marguerita Harding, CC MG Marlene Smith, and CC MG Carol Teets.

A Youth-Led Service Project

https://www.neighborhoodcreativeartscenter.org/nurture-natives

I can think of no better way to spend a warm, sunny autumn morning in October than joining the 4H Pollinator Ambassadors from Charles County in their mission to "increase biodiversity in our community by planting native species and supporting native wildlife."

Who are the Pollinator Ambassadors, you might be asking? Esther Bonney, Samantha Rutherford, and Abigail Bonney are members of the Rotary Interact Club (a service – oriented program for high school students) that meets weekly at the Neighborhood Creative Arts Center (NCAC).

In late 2021, NCAC, Charles County 4H, and CC Master Gardeners partnered to apply for a year-long, grant-funded pollinator project. As part of that project, Esther, Sam, and Abigail attended the national 4H Youth Summit in Agriscience in the spring.

There they developed their *Nurture Natives* initiative, a project focused on solving an agricultural issue within our community. Their issue: invasive trees that displace local farmland and attract invasive species. Their solutions: 1) Inspire youth to take action through educational programs, 2) Increase the number of native trees and pollinators within our community by hosting a native tree giveaway, and 3) Encourage customers to make educated purchases by providing local nurseries with *Nurture Natives* guides.

Nurture Natives was selected by the National 4H Council as one of twelve teams nationwide to receive a \$2000 grant. With a portion of their grant, they purchased 150 native trees and shrubs through *Butterfly Alley* - a local native plant stand located in Hollywood, Maryland. Esther worked with *Butterfly Alley* to select and order the trees/shrubs in the spring, then drove to *Environmental Concerns* on the Eastern shore to pick them up just days before the event.

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NURTURE NATIVES, CONT.



Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum), River Birch (Betula nigra), and Northern Bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica).

Plants1: Black Chokeberry (Aronia melanocarpa),

Esther was very appreciative of the contributions the CC MGs made to the event.

"Please give a huge 'Thank You' to the Master Gardeners who helped. They were an invaluable resource to the plants' new owners and a critical part of the giveaway. I couldn't have done it without you all!!"

One of my passions for volunteering as a Master Gardener is to make a difference in our local community, especially sharing my love of native plants with younger generations. Mentoring Esther in various parts of her Nurture Natives project has been very rewarding for me this year.

If you are looking for a way to make a difference, please consider volunteering with one or more of the projects in which we have established relationships with community partners. Examples are the NCAC, the Southern Maryland Food Bank, Melwood Recreation Center, or Victoria Park. There are great opportunities at all of these programs!

My wish for you is that you find a project with a purpose that makes you happy and brings you a sense of making a difference in the lives of others.

On Saturday, October 15, the pavilion at Tilghman Lake Park in LaPlata came to life with a flurry of activity. 150 trees and shrubs were unloaded and organized for distribution, the Charles County Master Gardener outreach table was set up, and Stuart the goat arrived.

From 10 am to 12 noon, approximately 65 families, including children and adults, came through to pick up their trees and get expert advice from CC MGs Marlene Smith, Carol Teets, Marguerita Harding, and CC MG Intern Matthew Perez and his son, Malachi.

Attendees also enjoyed other family-oriented activities. Children were able to play pollinator games organized on the lawn, create collages and mobiles from nature items collected around the park, speak to a beekeeper about honeybees, and visit the honey-tasting station.



Plants2: Red Chokeberry (Aronia arbutifolia), Willow Oak (Quercus palustris), Persimmon Tree (Diospyros virginiana), Pin Oak (Quercus palustris), Buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis), and Sycamore Tree (Platanus occidentalis).

Article and photos by CC MG Marlene Smith

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DR. SAMUEL MUDD HOUSE - UPDATE

In September we attended the annual Board of Directors picnic and installed the seed and information box. The Board expressed their gratitude to the Charles County Master Gardeners and wanted everyone to know how appreciative they are for the organization's support. The gardens and shrubs are thriving.







Article by CC MG Rose Markham

– A PROPAGATION DEMONSTRATION – AT THE SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK GARDEN

During early September, CC MG Brent Burdick conducted a propagation demonstration at the Southern Maryland Food Bank Garden. The purpose was to propagate rosemary from the garden into new plants. CC MG Intern Derex Thompson tried his hand at learning how to propagate herbs. He cut new growth from the garden's rosemary bush, cleaned the leaves and scraped the new bark off the bottom of the sprigs, dipped the tip of the sprigs into a root hormone powder, and then planted the sprigs into 3" pots.











Later in the month, new plants were also propagated from the garden's sage plant.

Earlier in the season, runners from the garden's strawberry bed were captured in pots. Hopefully, the new rosemary and sage plants will prosper enough to be available with the strawberry plants for inclusion in next year's CC MG Annual Plant Sale. A big thanks to CC MG Intern Thompson for his willingness to 'get his hands dirty' (and smelling of rosemary) to help out next year's plant sale project!

Article and photos by CC MG Brent Burdick

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FACEBOOK G CORNER!





This past quarter included posts on our monthly meeting held at Port Tobacco River Park and our booth at the Charles County Fair. If you have not done so, check out these posts. And remember, you do not need to have a Facebook account to view the public posts on our CC Master Gardener FB page!



https://www.facebook.com/ charlescountymastergardeners/posts/ 5432457803528919



https://www.facebook.com/ charlescountymastergardeners/posts/ 5463667540407945

Has your project been featured on Facebook?

If not, please share photos and a brief description of your projects to Terry (thirccmg@aol.com) or Marlene (nikhaven@comcast.net) so we can be sure to promote the great work the CC MGs are doing in our community! We also have the ability to add events to our Facebook page. If you are working on a project that has an upcoming event, we'd love to include it on Facebook!!

Curious what other Facebook pages and groups your fellow Master Gardeners follow?

This quarter's Facebook page to visit is 'Gardening with Maryland Native Plants' https://www.facebook.com/groups/mdnatives/about). "This group is for the dedicated purpose of discussing growing, promoting, preservation and observing of ONLY plant species that are NATIVE to Maryland, and REMOVING non-natives. We also welcome some discussion of wildlife, in particular their relevance to the native foods and habitats we're providing. What do we mean by "natives"? These would be species of naturally occurring origin to our general area in the United States. Species that are thought to have evolved here."

Article continued next page

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FACEBOOK G CORNER!

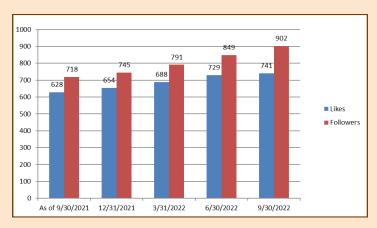


Facebook 6 Stats

As of Sept 2022, we have 741 LIKES and 902 FOLLOWERS. That's up 113 LIKES (18%) and 184 FOLLOWERS (25.66%) in the past year (since Sept 2021). **THANK YOU to those who contribute to our posts and to everyone who likes and shares our posts.** We continue to engage our community through our use of social media.

Working together, we can continue to increase our social media presence on Facebook. Thanks to those who follow our page, we have exceeded our goal of 900 Page Followers, and will continue promoting our programs to reach our goal of 800 Page Likes.





Facebook Corner is being retired with the publication with this quarter's article.

After writing this column for the past two years, I feel it is time to free up the space for more project articles and other articles of interest. Since early 2021 when the pandemic challenged our way of conducting business, it has been my pleasure to share with you a brief history of our social media presence on Facebook and to share with you our growth on Facebook, to share other Facebook groups or pages of interest to Master Gardeners, and to encourage CC MGs to contribute project photos and information for publication on Facebook.

I will continue as an administrator of our Facebook page. Please consider sharing CC MG Facebook posts that you like on your personal Facebook page or to a Facebook group that you belong to; this will help us continue to grow our social media presence.

If you have not joined our Facebook community, please like, follow us, share our posts, and invite your friends, too! https://www.facebook.com/charlescountymastergardeners

Article and stats by CC MG Marlene Smith



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https://extension.umd.edu/locations/charles-county/master-gardener

Submit articles, photos, reports, events, and other items for publication to Tina Bailem at nicholas8555@msn.com by October 15, 2022 for the Autumn 2022 newsletter. If you send a photo, please include a brief description of the activity and names of persons included in the photo, as well as the photographer's name. If you send a photo of a plant, please include the scientific name.



Photo taken
by CC MG
Cynthia
Gariepy in
August - Joe
Pye Weed,
bought as a
small seedling
at the
CC MG
Annual Plant
Sale in
May of 2022.

University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.





Check out the new Charles County Master Gardener page on Facebook! If you haven't already, please like us and share with your friends. This will be a great way to expand our reach into the community!

https://www.facebook.com/charlescountymastergardeners