

## Welcome to My Garden

Laura Robinson, Frederick County Master Gardener

In a few weeks I will be able to drop the term “intern” from my Master Gardener title. I have learned so much in the last year, yet I learned I have just scratched the surface of what the University of Maryland Extension can teach us. The purpose of the Master Gardener program is to educate. I have been involved with plant clinics, time at the Great Frederick Fair, but the longest reach has been through the gardening blog I started last February.

During our training, we had to give a presentation. Mine was on my raised bed vegetable garden that I built 3 months before I started the MG program. One of my classmates, Dale Johnson, gave a talk on blogging your garden. At that point I didn't even own a camera, but thought blogging looked like a lot of fun. Even though I operate very expensive, complex mammography machines, I felt blogging was beyond my technical scope.

Came November, (my birthday month), my first grandchild expected 2 months later, it was time to get a camera. Went online at the Costco website, picked a camera with a macro lens. Even then I was thinking about taking close up pictures of bugs! Not only does my camera have a macro feature, it has a SUPER macro feature as well.

Pulled out Dale's handout on how to set up a blog, started reading the huge instruction book on how to use my camera and created my own blog. [Laurasorganicgarden.blogspot.com](http://Laurasorganicgarden.blogspot.com). Little did I know how far this would go. My purpose was to document dates I planted, plants I chose, pests I dealt with. This was for my own learning experience. Very quickly I caught on that people were reading about my compost pile, my fascination with beneficial insects, and my new love of native plants. One of my projects involves renovating the Demonstration Garden at the Extension office. My classmate, Deb Keimig, talked me into working and planning the native plant section. Since this was something I knew nothing about, I said yes! I quickly learned that Sea Oat roots are as dense as concrete and spread like the plague.

The blog software keeps track of how many hits I have, how many “followers” I have and what countries are viewing my blog. Ready for this? USA, Canada, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Germany, UK, Singapore, Hungary, Thailand, Turkey, South Korea, India, Israel, Indonesia, Austria, Australia, and Ukraine so far. The biggest interest is in composting and bugs. I am still bewildered by the thought of someone in Singapore reading about how I plant tomatoes and potatoes in Maryland.

In the statistics section of my blog is a world map. As viewers from other countries log on, the country is highlighted. I would love to add China and South American countries to my map, a strange goal, but a goal none the less. If you have friends or family in China, Europe, or South America, please ask them to log on to [Laurasorganicgarden.blogspot.com](http://Laurasorganicgarden.blogspot.com). Not only will they see our neck of the Thurmont woods, but they will learn how to make awesome compost!

*For more information about the Frederick County Master Gardener/Horticulture Program, visit [www.frederick.umd.edu/mg](http://www.frederick.umd.edu/mg) or call Susan Trice at the University of Maryland Extension Frederick County office, (301) 600-1596. University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or national origin.*



Photo by Laura Robinson