

The Compost

A Newsletter celebrating Charles County Master Gardener Projects

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CCMG Coordinator Update by CCMG Coordinator Julia Rycyna

Spring is here. The Master Gardeners are eager to get out in the garden as you will read in this issue of *The Compost*. I've been assisting with Plant Sale preparations. I hope you will visit us at the La Plata Farmer's Market on May 17th. We will be selling native perennials, vegetables and lettuce boxes.



I have enjoyed participating in the Master Gardener training where I've been able to co-host some of the training courses and provide after-class review sessions for the Charles County trainees. It has been a great opportunity to get to know the trainees better, and I am so excited to welcome them to our program.

This is why we let dandelions grow in the spring. At right is a male, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*), photo by CCMG Terry Thir.



Extension Demonstration Gardens

Winter Sowing Workshop

Article by CCMG Terry Thir, Co-Leader, Extension Demonstration Gardens

Photos by CCMGs Terry Thir and Rose Markham

The Extension Demonstration Gardens Committee held a winter sowing workshop for the public on Sat., January 25, 2025 at the Extension office. Mother Nature delayed our workshop presentation previously scheduled for Jan. 11th. CCMG Coordinator Julia Rycyna with CCMGs Kathy Jenkins (co-leader demo project) and Terry Thir conducted the workshop.

Nineteen participants of all ages learned about the popular winter sowing method of creating mini greenhouses that are kept outside during the winter. Participants learned about native plants, cold and refrigeration stratification, jug preparation and maintenance, and how to grow and transplant healthy native plants. Each person took home two sowed jugs. Left photo of participants (by Terry Thir) and right photo of Julia Rycyna, Terry Thir and Kathy Jenkins presenting (photo by Rose Markham).



CCMG Jackie Jenkins prepares a jug, with CCMG Brent Burdick (blue shirt) assisting other participants (photo by Thir).



Above, CCMG Karen Trundle helps her son with his first winter sowing jug (photo by Markham).

Extension Demonstration Gardens, cont.

Native seeds were collected and used from the Extension gardens. We want to thank Julia Rycyna, Home Horticultural Educator of UME, CCMGs Brent Burdick, Rose Markham and Karen Trundle for assisting with the workshop. Future workshops on native plants and habitats will be held during the year. Self-guided and scheduled garden tours are available. Below left is our collection of seeds from the Extension garden and right is a participant planting some of the collected, native seeds (photos by Thir).



Lessons from a Native Habitat for Migrating, Nesting and Overwintering Insects and Birds

Article and photo by CCMG Kathy Jenkins, Co-Leader, Extension Demonstration Gardens

You may be wondering why you are reading an article about overwintering in a spring newsletter. The answer is that the time to clean your native plants/gardens will be arriving soon in May. Some experts even recommend that the best time to clean the garden is NEVER! But we are not to that point, yet.

For many people, one of the dreaded fall chores is cleaning the garden before winter arrives, which may include cutting stems and stalks, deadheading spent blossoms, and cleaning up other plant debris.

The Bel Alton Demonstration Gardens have taught us to delay those chores. Why? Native plants, fallen leaves, and spent blooms offer nesting places for beneficial pollinators and food for birds. Here are a few useful ways to create a habitat for migrating, overwintering and nesting birds and pollinators from the late fall to late spring:

Extension Demonstration Gardens, cont.

Offer a rest stop/refueling station for migratory birds. In the fall, many native perennials such as Black-Eyed Susan, Orange Cone Flower, Aster, Golden Rod, Joe Pye Weed, and other plants offer seeds/food to migrating birds. Just as we humans need a rest stop when driving on a long trip, migrating birds need a place to refuel before continuing their journeys. Instead of cutting the stems back or deadheading seed heads to “tidy up,” leave them as a travel snack for those weary migratory travelers.

Redefine your perfect garden or lawn. During colder seasons, some native bees, moths, and other pollinators create nesting places inside the hollow stems of native perennials. Other insects, such as the cocoons of Luna Moths, live in leaf litter until they grow into their adult form. Also, fireflies spend a majority of their lives under the leaf litter eating the pests that most gardeners detest, such as slugs and snails. As much as possible, leave the leaves and stems! If you need to rake leaves, make sure to designate an area for fallen leaves, or place the leaves as borders around garden beds or mulch under trees or shrubs.

Other actions that benefit native pollinators and birds who travel through or overwinter in our area:

- Plant native shrubs and wildflowers for diversity.
- Leave a brush pile as a sheltering place for overwintering birds.
- When possible, leave a “snag” for nesting sites. A snag is a standing dead or partially dead tree. At our house, when we find a dead tree that needs to be cut down, we ask to have two-thirds of the tree to be left standing, as long as it does not pose a hazard to any buildings or humans.
- Add a safe water source.

Finally, enjoy the “look” of your native plants. You have created more than a garden; you have created a habitat, which supports our local wildlife while offering four seasons of beauty with a purpose. Below is a photo of the Bel Alton Pollinator Garden in March 2025.



Bay-Wise Land Management

Article by CCMG Rose Markham

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 **BAY-WISE**
A MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Looking for a tax break? We are looking for properties to certify! The Bay-Wise program promotes environmentally sound landscape practices to protect our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. When your property becomes certified, you receive a certificate and sign, and we can assist you in applying for a 50% stormwater remediation fee credit on your property taxes. This credit automatically increases each year and is worth applying for. This program is a perfect example of how local government, organizations and homeowners can work together to help reduce the negative impact our gardens and landscapes may have on our environment.

The University of Maryland Extension provides an easy to use yardstick as a tool to do a self-assessment of your property prior to you scheduling an onsite certification. Take a few minutes to acquaint yourself with the certification process by downloading a yardstick and application (fill-in Pdfs) found here: <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/charles-county/master-gardener/bay-wise>.

Scroll down the page and follow the three steps to download the [Yardstick for Landscapes](#) or for [Vegetable Gardens](#) along with the [Bay-Wise Maryland Yardstick Application](#). Email the application and your completed Yardstick to baywiseccmg@gmail.com, or contact us and we will assist you. A visit to your home will be scheduled to certify your property.

Thanks to CCMG Linda Bronsdon's efforts, we recruited 16 homeowners to sign up for Bay-Wise certifications at our recent Backyard Buffer tree give-away on April 12. Thanks to CCMGs Terry Thir and Harriet Beck for setting up and manning the Bay-Wise table at Celebrate La Plata Day and recruiting 4 more homeowners for certification.

Backyard Buffer Tree Give-Away

Article by CCMG Janet McGrane, photos by Terry Thir

Our third Backyard Buffer tree seedling giveaway took place on Saturday, April 12 at the Extension Office. This program is sponsored by the Maryland Forest Service and is designed for homeowners who have property with a waterway on or near their property. The program provides native trees and shrubs that can be planted to create a stream-side buffer to improve water quality along streams, shorelines, or other water bodies. The purpose is to help prevent pollution from running off into the waterways, absorb excess nutrients (like nitrogen and phosphorus) and reduce soil erosion.



Master Gardeners distributed 100 tree bundles consisting of American Persimmon, Swamp White Oak, Flowering Dogwood, and Buttonbush to 82 participants. Our volunteers were there to distribute trees, answer questions and give out information on the Master Gardener and Bay-Wise programs and provide tours of our demonstration gardens. Left: CCMGs Suzanne Trosclair, Janet McGrane, Connie Nesbary, and Intern Deborah Croan prepare to hand out seedlings.

Backyard Buffer Tree Give-Away, cont.



Left: CCMG Karen Trundle and her son choose their bundle with CCMG Janet McGrane and Intern Deborah Croan. Right: CCMGs Suzanne Trosclair, Janet McGrane, Coordinator Julia Rycyna, and Intern Deborah Croan.



I want to thank all of our volunteers who came out on a cold, blustery day to work at the event. Thank you to CCMGs Connie Nesbary, Rose Markham, Linda Bronsdon, June Leyland, Terry Thir, Kathleen Jenkins, and Suzanne Trosclair. We were also happy to have two of our interns join us, Deborah Croan and Aminatta Sesay. A special thanks to Connie Nesbary for providing registration support and to Broc Bowers Project Manager (St. Mary's and Charles County) Maryland Forest Service for providing the tree seedlings.

Left: CCMG Rose Markham talks to a homeowner about the Bay-Wise program with CCMGs June Leyland and Kathy Jenkins. Below: Intern Deborah Croan, CCMGs June Leyland, Suzanne Trosclair (back row) and seated Connie Nesbary and Terry Thir at the tree give-away table.

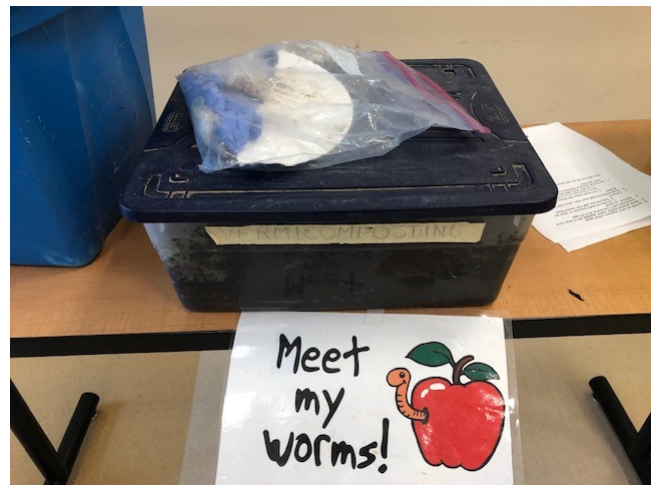


Junior Master Gardeners

Article by CCMG Rose Markham, photos by Rose and teacher Sharon Rabie



Our Jan. semester of the Neighborhood Creative Arts Center "Especially for Homeschoolers" (EFH) came to an end this month. We had a very engaging class and I would like to share some of the fun activities we did while learning about ecology and environment issues. For example, while teaching a class about recycling food and waste, the class expressed the desire to build their own worm bins. We talked about how to build them, what materials are needed, and we invited a 4-H teacher to talk to them about how to set the bins up. Miss Sharon Rabie (below) brought her worm bins in and explained to the class that earthworms live in the soil and help change dead plants and animals back into nutrients that plants can use. She showed the earthworms, read a story about what earthworms look like and told them the best worms to use for composting food scraps are called "Red Wigglers." After her presentation, she gave each student a number of earthworms from her bin, so that they can start their own bins.



Then we had a great activity for building habitats for wildlife. We found some used gourds and hollowed them out and then drilled holes to make a birdhouse. We supplied students with acrylic paint and brushes and let them paint their own designs. It was one of the best classes and a fun activity. Check out all of the photos!



Junior Master Gardeners, cont.



Another activity was when we began to learn about insects, the characteristics of insects and what they have in common. We invited Chris Wagnon, an entomologist and consultant with the Town of La Plata, to talk to them about insects and how they play an important role in garden life. He explained how there are so many insects, the different parts (head, thorax, abdomen and exoskeleton) and how they have so many different characteristics. They don't have blood like humans do. They have clear blood, no veins and no arteries. Instead of lungs they breathe through little tubes. There are well over 1 million insects in the world - more than mammals or birds or reptiles. Mr. Wagnon (right) asked for volunteers to come up and pick a bug out of a bag.



Junior Master Gardeners, cont.



There were beetles, praying mantis, caterpillar eggs, and more. It takes 1000 caterpillars to feed one baby bird. He shared a beetle collection with the class and had students hold them in their hand

and told them about different species of beetles. He also brought in a centipede and told them how to find centipedes in their own yard.



We also invited CCMG Beth Grem to teach a class on how to make lamp stands. The class wanted their own grow lights. She showed them how to use PVC stands and explained the importance of using the correct lighting. After her demonstration, she invited the class to come and break the stands down and put them back together (photos below). She handed out a how-to instruction sheet that listed the size of each of the stand parts. We had quite a few parents attend this class and they plan to help their kids put one together.



Congratulations to CCMGs Bill Allen and Karen Trundle for attending and completing the Texas A&M Training Conference in February. We will keep you posted on how we are progressing with plans for a future JMG Level-2 class program.

Senior Education Programs (SEP)

Article by CCMG Michelle Chenault

Spring is here! We started the 2025 gardening season in February with an All Seniors "Introduction to Winter Sowing" workshop at the **Richard R. Clark Senior Center**. The Senior Plus "Clark Gardeners" group also participated. The seedlings in the jugs they planted will be used to grow herbs and flowers for the Clark patio garden this year. The Lasagna Bulb (flowers including tulips, crocus, daffodils, hyacinths, etc.) planting activity completed by the Clark Gardeners in October 2024 has produced beautiful multi-colored planters to brighten the patio area.

We plan to provide therapeutic horticulture instruction in the form of 13 events to the Clark Gardeners during 2025. We also plan to provide a total of 4 horticulture events for the independent (All) seniors at Clark during 2025 and the Clark Gardeners will participate in these events.

Indian Head Senior Center – The SEP team is continuing to provide consultation for the Green Thumb Club (GTC) at this site. The soil amendments, based upon the commercial soil tests, were completed in March. The GTC planted some crops of kale, radishes, spinach and carrots and plan to add native pollinators in containers to their plant choices this year.

Nanjemoy Senior and Community Center – The first annual Arbor Day Event was held at this center on April 2. CCMGs Michelle Chenault and Janet McGrane led the event and shared information on Arbor Day and online tree resources. Broc Bowers, Project Manager and Forester of St. Mary's/Charles County DNR, provided a great presentation entitled "Tips for Identifying Common Trees and Shrubs in Southern Maryland." We took a short hike to practice using these tips on trees adjacent to the center. Approximately 10 attendees received information on the Backyard Buffer Program to help them plan for participating next year. One more presentation and one hands-on workshop are tentatively planned for this center in 2025. The Nanjemoy gardeners have formed their own Green Thumb Club. This group will primarily use containers, earth boxes and other planters as well as two large elevated raised-bed garden containers built by the National Park Service staff. They have started seedlings and will also use seedlings and transplants provided by the Clark Gardeners.

Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center – Two presentations and one hands-on workshop are tentatively planned for 2025. This includes providing a repeat of the very popular "Lettuce Celebrate" workshop to commemorate Earth Day on April 23 and make this an annual event. All participants will receive free lettuce plugs donated by a local nursery and seeds. We will show them how to build a lettuce box and learn about growing lettuce varieties.

SEP has officially ended horticulture activities for the gardeners at the Victoria Park Senior Living Development. SEP will focus on horticulture education for local government supported senior entities. Activities for private senior organizations will be managed on a case-by-case basis upon request to Dr. Julia Rycyna, CCMG Coordinator at jrycyna@umd.edu.

"DESPITE THE FORECAST, LIVE LIKE
IT'S SPRING."
— LILLY PULITZER



Grow It Eat It (GIEI) Education Project

Article by Meg McDonald

The mission of the CCMG Grow It Eat It (GIEI) Education Project is to educate members of the community on how to grow their own food in an affordable and sustainable way. To that end, the team planned six free public workshops for 2025 and have held three so far. Interest and attendance at the GIEI workshops has grown since 2023, with many workshops filling up quickly with waiting lists. Some of the attendees have become Master Gardener trainees this year.

One aspect of growing food is starting vegetable and herb seeds. By starting plants themselves, gardeners avoid the high cost of buying seedlings, have access to different varieties of crops, and control the growing medium and conditions of their plants from the start. The GIEI EDU team offered two workshops highlighting two different ways to start seeds – Indoors and Outdoors.

On Feb 1, the team presented “Starting Vegetable Seeds Indoors” at the College of Southern care of seedlings. Information about grow lights was provided, and CCMG Beth Grem (right) demonstrated how to build an inexpensive grow light stand out of PVC. Along with other CCMG volunteers, team members answered questions about exhibits and demonstration items such as heat mats, thermostats, timers, etc.



Below left, CCMGs Rose Markham and Tina Bailem with grow lights, while Kathy Jenkins answers questions (right).



Grow It Eat It (GIEI) Education Project, cont.

Then, on March 8, the project team held a workshop at the Charles County extension office demonstrating how to sow Vegetable and Herb seeds via Winter Sowing. Topics such as container selection, growing medium, watering and caring for seedlings and timing of planting were discussed. Participants each received two prepped milk jug "mini greenhouses," in which they planted herb and flower seeds to take home. Several CCMG volunteers were on hand to assist them in winter sowing and to answer any questions. Participants also received free seed packets. Below left, CCMGs Linda Ivko and Kay Redman with seeds and jugs. Right, CCMG Beth Grem leads the class.



Participants prepare and fill their winter sowing jugs (right).



A workshop on Vegetable Garden Planning was held at the UMD Charles County Extension Office in Bel Alton on April 5. Several CCMG volunteers assisted the GIEI team in presenting to an audience of 18 residents. In addition to providing details on planning the site, prepping the soil, planting the crops in ground and in containers, and producing and maintaining a vegetable garden, the GIEI Team presenters promoted the UME HGIC "Year of Herbs." Below r-l: CCMG Kay Redman discusses planter boxes, Coordinator Julia Rycyna and CCMG Terry Thir answer questions, and CCMG Beth Grem presents.



Grow It Eat It (GIEI) Education Project, cont.



Everyone especially enjoyed CCMG Kay Redman's presentation (left) on growing Backyard Berries, a new topic added to the GIEI

lineup. Audience members asked many questions and shared their experiences. Master Gardeners were available during breaks at display tables showing various gardening items and answering individual questions from participants.



All GIEI presentations can be viewed at this link: <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/charles-county/master-gardener/grow-it-eat-it/>

Throughout the GIEI EDU workshops, information has been provided about the University of Maryland Home and Garden Information Center's (HGIIC's) declaration of 2025 as THE YEAR OF HERBS. Participants in the March workshop were given herb seeds to sow in one of their jugs, and education on growing and using herbs was provided at all events. CCMG volunteers are also growing herbs, in addition to other plants, for the CCMG Plant Sale to be held May 17.

2025 is The Year of Herbs

The Home and Garden Information Center at the University of Maryland Extension has declared 2025 "The Year of Herbs," and GIEI projects around the state will be celebrating all things herbs. Information on selecting, growing, and using herbs will be a part of our workshops and events. More information can be found here: [Year of Herbs | University of Maryland Extension](#).



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new posts

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When you're a gardener and an artist at the same time.



VFW Craft Fair

Thank you to Tiffany Daniels for manning a CCMG information table at the VFW Craft Fair on 4-12-25!

Dr. Samuel Mudd House

Article by CCMG Rose Markham, photos by Rose and Lead Docent Julie Hartshorn

Happy spring! The birds are singin', bees are buzzin' and early flowers are bloomin'. CCMGs Linda Bronsdon, Kay Redman and I visited the house grounds in March to help the museum board members spruce up the garden for their April 5th Open House. We met up with Julie Hartshorn, the new Lead Docent who oversees the gardens. Her first request was to help her change out the triangle bed of daylilies and replace them with native plants. We readied the bed and prepared it for Julie's plants. Then we spruced up the herb garden, pruned the overgrown plantings in the herb garden, raked the leaves, and prepared it for mulching in April. Big shout-out to Linda and Kay who cleaned up all the yard and garden waste and delivered it to the landfill.

CCMG Patti Faulkner joined us in April, and she and I finished up the herb garden while Linda started to remove more bulbs from a section of another daylily bed. Then we cleaned up the info booth and replaced the information sheets for the herb garden that lists all the herbs originally planted by Dr. Mudd! Tours now include the herb garden. In May we will replenish seed packets that are handed out by the docents.

For those of you interested in the history of the house, they are open every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday through October from 11am to 3pm. More info at this link: <https://drmudd.org/>.



Clockwise, CCMG Linda Bronsdon. Linda spreading mulch. Rose Markham, Linda, and Kay Redman. Lead Docent Julie Hartshorn.



The History – Southern Maryland Food Bank Project

Article by CCMG Brent Burdick, photos by various folks

"Wanna get your hands dirty? Wanna do backyard vegetable gardening? Wanna promote community food production? If so, we have just the project for you! The CCMGs have a project under the Grow It Eat It Program. We will help the Southern Maryland Food Bank's "Seeds of Hope" Community Learning Garden with its programs."

We are starting our seventh year with this project. In mid-January, eight of us on the project team had a reflection of last year's garden, of what worked and what did not. We also planned what we would be doing for this year's garden. It was still winter but we noted our garden was growing with red, white, and yellow onions; garlic; cauliflower; broccoli; turnips; and kale that we planted last fall. We were anxious to see how the crops we planted last fall to "winter over" in the garden would turn out. (We later noted that only the onions, garlic, and a few broccoli plants survived the several cold spells of this past winter. The onions and garlic are still growing. We harvested 1 lb. of broccoli on April 5, before it started bolting.) Our reflection and planning meeting participants included CCMGs Alex M., Bob P., Linda I., Derex T., Laura M., Karen W., Sally M., and Brent B.

We officially began our actual planting season on Valentine's Day. We conducted our annual Winter Sowing workshop. CCMGs Sally M., Gail B., Elveta G., Linda I., Karen W., Rose M., Harriet B., (Trainee) Carol C., and Brent B. planted chives, Swiss Chard, broccoli, collards, kale, spinach, kohlrabi, mustard greens, sage, fennel, turnips, Cardinal Climbing Vines, Bee Balm, and Shasta Daisy seeds – a total of 30 winter Sown jugs. We also planted five varieties of sweet potatoes in soil to generate vines to create slips for later transplanting into the garden. The sweet potato varieties included Jewell, Garnett, White Hannah, Japanese, and Purple. Photos below are from our Valentine's Day Winter Sowing team in action. We prepared 30 jugs!



Southern Maryland Food Bank Project, cont.

We conducted our next workshop on Saturday, March 22. We planted 23 laundry baskets with seed potatoes. Varieties included Yukon Gold, Russet, Norland Red, German Butterball, Purple, and Huckleberry Gold. Participants included CC MGs Brent B., Sandee H., Connie N., Harriet B., Bob P., Karen T., and Jennifer G., and CCMG Interns (Trainees) Aminetta S., Deborah C., and Heather S. CCMG Intern (Trainee) Carol C. helped CCMG Brent B. prep/cut the seed potatoes the previous Thursday (3/20) in preparation for Saturday's workshop. Below is a photo of some of the participants from the Potato Basket Workday.



We conducted another workshop on Tuesday, 3/25. CC MGs Brent B., Linda I., Karen W., Gail B., and Bob P., along with Julia Rycyna, the UM-E – Charles County Home Horticulture Educator, guided Wills Group employees in planting 70 Winter Sown jugs for the Food Bank Garden. Seed plantings included several varieties of winter squash, summer squash, cucumbers, cantaloupes, tomatoes, and peppers, along with eggplant, tomatillo, and okra. There was now a total of 100 Winter Sown jugs to generate plants for the Food Bank garden. Below are photos from the Wills Group Winter Sowing workshop. We will be returning to the Wills Group on Thursday, May 1, to participate in their annual Wellness Day festivities. They will plant Winter sown jugs with herbs for the Food Bank garden.



Southern Maryland Food Bank Project, cont.

We began actual work in the garden on Thursday, March 27. A work schedule was set up for Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings. We started cleaning up the beds, amending the soil, and cleaning out the water barrels. CCMGs Bob P., Gail B., and Brent B. removed the old trellises of thin wire mesh that had collapsed last year and replaced them with cattle panels. This year, these heavy-duty trellises will hold cucumbers, cantaloupe, and Butternut and Spaghetti squash. CCMGs Bob P. and Brent B. built a new horizontal trellis with pieces of the cattle panel that will later support tomato plants. They also used the old thin wire to build vertical trellises that will support pole beans. Two new raised beds were also built for the entrance gateway trellises. These beds will hold flowers and Coral Honeysuckle that will help bring pollinators into the garden. Right, CCMG Gail B. builds new cucumber trellises. Below l-r: New gate trellis with new raised beds, a horizontal trellis, and new bean trellises.



Below left: CCMG Bob P. lays out a demonstration bed for the Square Foot gardening method. Right: CCMG Karen W. cleans up the strawberry bed.



Southern Maryland Food Bank Project, cont.

Below: CCMG Intern Deborah C. waters winter sown jugs, and CCMGs Sandee H. and Brian L. water the garden beds.



On Monday, April 28, CCMGs Gail B., Linda I., and Brent B., along with CCMG Intern (Trainee) Deborah C., conducted a workshop to generate sweet potato slips. Vines were cut above each leaf node and stems were placed in small cups/glasses of water to start rooting. The slips will remain inside until roots develop and nighttime temperatures average at least 60 degrees.



Left: Growing sweet potato vines. Below: CCMGs Linda I., Brent B. and Intern Deborah C. cutting vines to create slips. Bottom left: Sweet potatoes in water under grow lights.



Southern Maryland Food Bank Project, cont.

The Food Bank conducted an Open House and Spring Food Drive on Saturday April 5. The Food Bank had a total of 29 visitors and volunteers at the event. CCMGs Gail B. and Brent B. gave garden tours and staffed a display table. Several local businesses hid eggs in the garden for children to conduct an Easter Egg hunt. At our display table, we had our usual brochures and information sheets/cards for dissemination. We also discussed and explained the two Winter Sown jugs that were ready for transplanting to the garden; a potato basket that was already sprouting; a dried Bird House gourd that had been grown in the garden along with a completed/painted bird house made from one; and passed out seeds to 15' Mammoth sunflowers that we harvested from the garden last year. We even had a visit by the Easter Bunny! Below: Gail B. staffs the display table, the Easter Bunny meets CCMG Brent B. and then gets a tour of the garden.



Then a garden visitor hunts for Easter Eggs, and the Easter Bunny looked too!



Southern Maryland Food Bank Project, cont.

Now that the weather has been warming up, several beds in the garden have been planted, either through transplants from winter sown jugs or by direct-sown seeds. These have included pole and bush beans; zucchini and yellow summer squash; okra, tomatillos, dill, Swiss Chard, kale, kohlrabi, spinach, eggplant, turnips, Birdhouse Gourds, Mammoth Sunflowers, acorn squash, and rhubarb. The potato baskets were relocated to the garden and topped-off with soil since the green tops of the plants were reaching the brim of the baskets. Some pollinators were also planted in the garden – marigolds, borage, pansies, and Spotted Bee Balm. We had a hard time finding some, but finally obtained Coral Honeysuckle for each of the small planters by the garden gate. In the Gardening-by-the-Square-Foot demonstration garden, some squares were planted with carrots, beets, chives, and marigolds. More beds will be planted as the weather continues to warm up. Items left to be planted include several varieties of tomatoes, peppers, cantaloupes, and sweet potato slips. We still need to also lay down landscape cloth and mulch.

Food Bank Tours

MG and UME-related program groups can schedule Food Bank Garden tours/activities by contacting the CCMG Project Coordinator, Brent B. Other community members and groups can schedule garden tours and other gardening learning activities by calling Monica Bumbray, the Food Bank Community Outreach Program Manager, at (301) 274-0695.

Needs for Seeds

Article by CCMG Lori Guido

Charles County Master Gardeners continue to support gardens at school sites in conjunction with the Maryland SNAP-Ed program. SNAP-Ed works with limited income families across the county in schools, food pantries, and farmers markets to help create healthier environments and improve the health and well-being of those families. Overall, SNAP-Ed programs focus on increasing healthy food access and consumption, drinking more water, and promoting physical activity through comprehensive programming.

At schools, SNAP-Ed looks to focus on nutrition education in the classroom through before- and after-school programming, and site-level efforts aimed to create a healthier environment. With Needs of Seeds, Master Gardeners assist with supporting after school garden clubs at community schools, as well as provide technical assistance for on-site school gardens. This gardening and programming support goes hand-in-hand with increasing food access for many of the county's limited income residents. SNAP provides us a list of potential activities to do.

If you have a landscape, insect, or plant disease question, please use the [Ask Extension webpage](#) to submit photos and other details.

Save the Date

May 3 – Port Tobacco Market Day

May 17 – Plant Sale Fundraiser at La Plata Farmer's Market

The following GIEI workshops are free and open to the public, but because of space limitations, registration is required. Email Dr. Julia Rycyna at jrycyna@umd.edu to register or for additional information.

July 26 – Vegetable Plant Pests and Diseases – 10:00 – 12:00pm at the Waldorf West Public Library.

August 30 – Fall Vegetable Crops – 10:00 - 12:00, Venue TBD

October 18 – Winterizing the Garden and Composting – 10:00-12:00, Venue TBD



The mission of the Charles County Master Gardeners is to support the University of Maryland Extension service by educating residents about safe, effective, and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.

The Compost

is published quarterly by the
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