Twelve thousand years ago Purple martins nested only in the abandoned nesting chambers of woodpeckers, or in the other natural cavities they could find in dead trees or in cliffs. Today, east of the Rockies, martins nest only in human-supplied housing; either in elaborate bird house condominiums known as "martin houses," or in natural or artificial gourds.

Over hundreds and perhaps thousands of bird generations martins gradually gave up their ancestral ways in a process now known as a "behavioral tradition shift." First, a pair of martins probably tried nesting in a long-handled dipper gourd hung near a pond by natives as a drinking utensil. When the Indians discovered this curiosity, they may have been amused and started hanging other gourds for martins around their campsites.

Because they were nesting near humans (where predators are scarcer) and nesting in chambers far larger than woodpecker cavities, these martins were able to lay more eggs and successfully raise more young to fledging age than martins nesting in natural cavities. It would have been adaptive for the surviving young from these gourd nests to seek them out for nesting sites when they became breeders the following year. Concurrently, the Indians may have discovered other benefits, uses, and pleasures from having martins nesting in their company. For instance, documents from the 18th and 19th centuries suggest that these early Americans attracted martins to their villages because they functioned like scarecrows, chasing crows away from their corn patches, and vultures away from their meats and hides hung out to dry. Additionally, they consumed huge numbers of insects, flies, mosquitoes and other annoying bugs. The mutually-beneficial relationship established then, still exists today.

It’s fun to speculate what additional benefits these Native Americans may have derived from their custom of martin attraction. Perhaps martins were like alarm clocks, since they begin singing so early and regularly in the morning. Maybe they were like both radios and televisions, since they continually sing such pleasant songs and their behaviors are so entertaining to watch. They certainly would have been like calendars, since every phase of their annual cycle (from arrival, territory establishment, nest-building, egg-laying, hatching, fledging, and departure) is done on a regular and predictable schedule. They may have been like watchdogs, since they are notorious for giving alarm calls when predators or strangers approach.

Gradually, over time, more and more martins chose gourds for nesting, and fewer and fewer chose natural cavities. When the European colonists arrived in the new world they too adopted the Indian custom of hanging gourds for Purple Martins. Eventually, by the early 20th century, the entire eastern race of Purple Martins nested only in human-supplied housing, and the tradition shift was complete. If humans were to stop supplying martins with homes, they would likely disappear as a breeding bird in eastern North America. So you gourder’s keep growing gourds, and hanging them up for our purple friends. I can’t think of a better use for gourds, can you?

Article written by Scott Nelson, thegourdreserve.com Photo Source: Purple Martin Conservation Association
INTERESTED IN SEED SAVING AND SEED STEWARDSHIP?
The Seed Savers Exchange has a great resource kit you can get with a simple application. It's called the Community Seed Resource Project - https://exchange.seedsavers.org/csrp/index.aspx

MEET THIS MONTH’S SPEAKER:
Dr. Sara Via, PhD is Professor of Biology and Entomology at UMD, College Park. She is interested in the effects of climate change on agriculture and home gardening, biodiversity, and human health. In association with the Maryland Master Gardeners and Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility, Sara works with community groups, high schools and universities to increase awareness of the scientific reality of climate change and to motivate effective action to curb its rapid progression.

SUCCESSFUL AND SUSTAINABLE GARDENING IN A CHANGING CLIMATE
Climate change is our new reality. Increasing temperatures have led to warmer winters, with significant impacts on both plants and animals. Spring now comes earlier, inducing changes in the timing of critical life stages in native plants and the species with which they interact. To the detriment of most plants, warmer winters have increased overwintering survival in many herbivores as well as in invasive plant species. Increased winter temperatures have also led to range expansion in several key pests of important forest trees. These diverse effects of climate change will continue to affect gardens. On a practical level, adopting climate-friendly gardening strategies will improve success in a time of climate change.
DEMONSTRATION GARDENS
Thank you to Judy Geggis, Cheryl Huyck and Susan Seth for helping with the Centreville Library Rain Garden this month. We didn’t do any work there in August because it was too hot, so we weren’t sure what the dogbane was going to look like. Fortunately, we have been able to keep it under control for the time being.

The county provided a cart for larger debris and contractor size bags for smaller weeds and pruning. In an hour and a half, we filled three trash bags as well as the cart! We did some pruning to open the walkway and cut back some of the hydrangea and elderberry.

October will probably be the last month we work there this year. We will be doing some serious pruning to get the bed ready for the winter. If we don’t, spring will find us with an overwhelming growth of who knows what. I know we’ll have to tackle more of the dogbane then.

We really need more than just the few hands we had this month to work in October. If we have enough people, we can get the work done in an hour. October 1st is a Thursday so the third Thursday is earlier than usual. Please mark your calendars to help out on Thursday, October 15th, starting at 9:00am.

BAY-WISE
The Bay-Wise committee met briefly after our regular monthly meeting in September. We have revised the letter that goes out to homeowners and will be sending a Bay-Wise brochure along with it instead of the Bay-Wise Yardstick. Feedback from many of us has led us to feel that the Yardstick is overwhelming. Many homeowners have backed out of visits after receiving the Yardstick so we are hoping this approach will interest more people. While we would like to have as many properties certified as Bay-Wise as possible, we feel it is just as important to be able to reach out to homeowners to teach them Bay-Wise principles. Once we are at someone’s property we can then assess if they would qualify and proceed with the Yardstick.

The Farmer’s Market on Kent Island continues to be a good source for Bay-Wise contacts. Nick Stoer and Cathy Tengwall (and others who have worked there) are doing a great job drawing people in and engaging them in conversations about our program.

Master Gardeners will have the use of the Centreville Library display case for the month of October. We plan to highlight Bay-Wise as well as other aspects of our program. If you are interested in helping with this, please contact Debbie Pusey at debbiepusey@verizon.net.

ANOTHER REMINDER: Advanced training for MG Bay-Wise Certification will be held on Wednesdays, November 4 and 11, 2015 from 9-3 at the Wye Research Center. The site visit time and place will be determined at some point during the training. It is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, November 18th after our regular monthly MG meeting. The cost is $50.00 payable to QACEAC. Please contact Molly to register.

Submitted by Debbie Pusey
FIRST ANNUAL TOMATO TASTING EVENT

On August 15 a group of enthusiast Master Gardeners organized a tomato Tasting event at Lockbrair Farms (just north of Chestertown). Farmer/owner Wayne Lockwood not only provided the space for this event, but he also supplied a wealth of heirloom tomatoes: red, pink, purple, yellow, orange and even some white varieties. It was an absolute joy to taste so many different varieties.

Here are the results for best tomatoes:

- Best red slicer: Australian Heart and with one vote less: Brandywine
- Best orange slicer: Golden Jubilee, with a tie for 2nd place: Persimmon and Pineapple
- Best plum/paste: overwhelming majority for Gilbertie

Thank you so much to the following people for helping out: Shane Brill, Jack Doub, Barb Flook, Pat Gannon, Bob MacFarlane, Pam McClean, Susan McRae, Lisa Spears and Robin Van Meter

BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION MEETING

On September 9, 2015 fifty three people came to the first meeting of a new Beekeeping Association for the Upper Eastern Shore-(Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties). Mike Embrey- Extension Apiculturist (Ret.) discussed the development of associations throughout the Eastern Shore and gave useful information on how to organize an association. The discussion was lively! About half of the attendees wanted to learn how to become beekeepers. Mike teaches the beginning beekeeping class at the Wye Research and Education Center (WREC) and indicated that he might teach a class in Kent County.

Some of the benefits of an association include: providing a network of resources to enhance the beekeeping experience; sharing knowledge of how to provide best management practices (BMP) for a specific area at specific times of the year; sharing equipment including honey extracting gear, wax melters, etc.; doing bulk purchasing of items to take advantage of volume discounts; offering free lectures on beekeeping and related topics; educating the public on the importance of honey bees to our existence; and increasing the representation of Eastern Shore Beekeepers with the State beekeepers association (MSBA).

The next meeting of the Beekeeping Association is scheduled for October 14, 2015 at 6:30pm. at the Kent County Library in Chestertown. A planning committee met and will be presenting an organizational structure and a slate of officers for the Association.
The longer I grow tomatoes, the more my preference to grow a particular kind of tomato seems to shift. Many years ago, I started with growing just regular slicers. However, once your kitchen is overflowing with slicing tomatoes and you need to start thinking about preserving them, you realize that perhaps you ought to start growing a different kind of tomato. When you want to use tomatoes for sauce, canning, drying or roasting there are simply better options than slicing tomatoes (they contain too much water and seeds). Enter the plum/paste tomatoes! Not only are they excellent for all your cooking needs, some are also just a good for eating raw.

My absolute favorite plum/paste tomato is Gilbertie. Yes, I know, it is a bit tricky to grow. It is very susceptible to blossom end rot during the entire growing season. So it is important to give it some extra calcium and never to overwater this plant. Since it is an heirloom it is also susceptible to a number of diseases. On the other hand, it grows so rapidly that it often outgrows the diseases and it will keep on producing tomatoes until October. The tomatoes from this plant are large and very meaty: they make absolutely the best slow roasted tomatoes ever!

I have tried a number of other plum/paste tomatoes, mostly not very successfully. I have tried San Marzano and Amish Paste and I thought they were underwhelming at best. The plants got diseased before they really started to produce and I found the tomatoes kind of small. Who wants to skin that many tomatoes if you want to can them? I did not think the taste was all that great either.

I have tried Big Mama, but holy smokes, what a magnet for early blight and septoria blight and no taste what-so-ever. This year I am trying Granadero (Cooks Garden). I don’t think I will grow that one again either. It is also very prone to every blight known to mankind (and does not recover as well as Gilbertie for instance) plus the skin is super, super thick. Forget about trying to skin these tomatoes: way too much flesh sticks to the skin. In addition, the first several weeks, the skins where red, but the inside of the tomato was white and hard as a rock. I am giving Roma VF from Southern Exposure a 2nd change. But I find it just as blah and San Marzano and Amish Paste.

Slicing tomatoes I grew this year were Tropic VFN and West Virginian 63, both from Southern Exposure as well. They were okay, but not outstanding. Oddly enough, despite all the diseases, the trusted heirloom Big Rainbow, out-performed all the other slicers.

My favorite tomato to grow is Juliet! It is sweet, prolific and very versatile. One plant will keep the entire family well supplied for a season. (I should get royalty payments or something like that because I grow Juliet seedlings for neighbors and friends as well).

In general, I think this has been a tough tomato year. Lots of diseases and fewer tomatoes per plant than other years. I would love to hear what your experience was this year and whether you have any suggestions for plum/paste tomatoes to grow for next year.

By Sabine Harvey
On August 15, 2015, my husband Dave Kyger and I traveled to Doylestown, PA, for Burpee’s open house at Fordhook Farm. This is the former residence of the Burpee family, and the site of the business from 1888 – 1981. After W. Atlee Burpee’s death, his son David focused the firm on developing new strains of vegetables in support of the victory gardens of WWI. Although the headquarters and main operations are now in Warminster, near Philadelphia, many seed trials are still conducted at Fordhook Farm. The grounds and 15 demo gardens are maintained beautifully by a remarkably small staff of about six people (which includes three interns).

At least once a year, the gates are opened and the public can roam freely (mostly). Although it can be tricky to find the date of the open house online (at least it is for me), I noticed that some years had a spring open house, too – something to watch for in 2016.

This year’s open house had a full slate of lectures by prominent gardening gurus and Burpee experts, as well as cooking demos from some Food Network TV chefs. Speakers included Barbara Damrosch (author & Washington Post columnist), Mike McGrath (author & radio personality), Tom Philpott (writer from Mother Jones), and Rob Cardillo (photographer).

We enjoyed presentations about tomato seed development, flower hybridization conducted at Burpee labs in the Netherlands, issues with GMO seeds, attracting bees and other pollinators, the ease of growing garlic, and the best ways to capture our gardens in photos. George Ball, the owner and CEO since 1991, generously held a Q&A with an audience eager to ask questions.

Did I mention, the event is free! Nothing is for sale (well, except some books written by some of the speakers, which they will sign, too). Refreshingly, there is no push to buy Burpee seeds or gardening equipment – none of it is available. There is not even a food truck – so pack a picnic when you go next summer! It is a low-key, inspirational event that you can make as much of as you’d like. Dave & I liked it a lot, so we packed in as many lectures as we could and tromped through every single garden we could find until they closed the gates behind us.

Even without listening to one lecture, the event is worth the drive just to see the gardens. There are perennial gardens for sun & shade, and trial gardens for veg and flowers. And as you would expect, there is a very large vegetable garden to covet. We found some ideas for trellising cucumbers, and recorded the names of some flowers to include in our gardens next year….sigh, if only we had three interns to help us weed!

(See next page for pictures)
Outside the “Happiness Garden” at Fordhook Farm, Doylestown, PA (the big silvery tree is a 35”+ silky willow (Salix sericea))

Maybe a full acre was devoted to tomatoes of all varieties in this trial garden; each plant grew on a red wire cage. None of the plants had names yet; still just a cryptic number indicating its parentage.

Oodles of zinnias; these had names, so we made sure to note those preferred by the bees. (I’m lookin’ at you, Uptown Grape!)

In response to customer requests, a lot of veg, tomatoes in particular, are trialed in containers.
QAC MG Volunteer Opportunities

**Fall Kent Island Plant Clinic**
The Farmers Market is at Christ Church, 830 Romancoke Road (aka Route 8). We set the booth tables up at 3 to 3:15 pm to be ready for bugs, citizens, and damaged plants by 3:30 pm. We start knocking down the booth around 6 pm. Bring a beverage bottle to stay hydrated.

**Next Plant Clinic: Thursday, October 8th**
Please consider volunteering at YOUR MG table ONE day this year!
Nick Stoer 301-219-9098 nickstoer@gmail.com
Cathy Tengwall 443-994-2523 cathy1542@gmail.com

**Community Gardening + GIEI**
NEXT MEETING, Wednesday, September 30th 2:00pm at Extension Office
If you are interested in edible gardens and/or pollinator gardening as well as working with youth groups please consider being a part of this committee. This fall and winter will be an active time for us to layout the plans in hopes of breaking ground come Spring 2016.

**Young Gardeners Series**
Kent Island Library for Grades 1-3
Last session- Wednesday, October 28th 4:30-5:15pm
Topic– Different Varieties of Corn and Cornhusk Crafts!
To volunteer your time, contact Nancy O’Connor nanmart201@verizon.net

*Photos from last session by Linda Ellis (President of Kent Island Garden Club)*
Educational Opportunities

**Bay-Wise Advanced Training** — Wye Research & Education Center

**Wednesdays, November 4, 11 & 18, 2015 (9:30am—3:30pm)**

All Master Gardeners are welcome, including those already certified (but would like to attend for a refresher). Previously certified Bay-Wise Master Gardeners do not have to pay the registration fee but must register.

To register contact: Molly Garrett mgarret1@umd.edu  Cost: $50.00

**Trees Matter Symposium 2015**

The fourth annual Trees Matter Symposium focuses on the health and welfare of trees in our increasingly developed landscapes. Learn from some of the country’s leading experts about innovative efforts to plant, protect and preserve trees in urban and suburban settings.

Featured speakers: Dr. Michael Dirr, Dr. Kelby Fite, Dr. Chris Luley, Holly Shimizu

**Wednesday, November 4th, 7:30am—4pm** (Silver Spring, MD)

http://www.montgomeryparks.org/activities/things_to_do/fall/trees_matter.shtm

**Turning a New Leaf Conference 2015**

The Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council annual conference will feature some outstanding up speakers this year. This keynote speaker Larry Weaner, is the founder of New Directions in the American Landscape. He'll discuss how to use ecological restoration techniques in home landscape design. The plenary speaker, Lauren Wheeler, is a professor with George Washington University’s Sustainable Landscaping Program. She’ll discuss rating systems for residential landscapes - and what can go wrong. With four tracks, there are twelve other great talks to choose from. The conference will be **November 13th** in Towson Maryland.


**Online Workshops 2016:**

Horticulture Magazine Garden How-To University

http://www.hortmag.com/smart-gardening-workshops

**Master Gardener Training 2016**

**February 11th—April 9th**

Thursday evenings 5:30pm to 8:30pm
Saturday mornings 9:00am to 12:00pm

Eastern Shore Higher Education Center, Wye Mills (Chesapeake College Campus)

If you know of anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener please encourage them to sign-up!

Contact: mgarret1@umd.edu or call 410-758-0166
Sweet Pumpkin Biscuits (Yield 12 biscuits)

**INGREDIENTS**
- 2 cups self-rising flour
- ¼ cup shortening
- ½ cup whole milk
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 2 teaspoons butter, melted
course sugar for topping (optional)

**Directions**
Preheat oven to 475° F. Prepare a large baking sheet with a piece of parchment or a silicon baking mat. Set aside.

Add flour and shortening to a large bowl. Cut shortening into the flour using a pastry blender, two knives or a fork until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add milk, pumpkin, brown sugar, and pumpkin pie spice to the flour mixture. Stir together until well-combined. Pour onto a floured paper towel or pastry cloth. Lightly flour your hands and carefully fold one edge over on top of the dough, repeating until all edges have been folded over. Lightly flour a rolling pin and cut your biscuits into large squares or use a round biscuit cutter. Place biscuits onto the prepared pan and bake for 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and brush with melted butter and sprinkle with coarse sugar for decoration.

Roasted Pumpkin & Sage Soup (Serves 6)

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 butternut pumpkin, cut in half and roasted
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 sprigs of thyme, removed from stem
- 3 tablespoons dried sage
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 1 cup coconut milk
- salt + pepper, to taste

**Directions**
Preheat oven to 350° F

Chop pumpkin in half, place on baking tray and roast for 50 minutes or until tender. Add coconut oil to a large pot with the onion and garlic and fry for approximately 8 minutes or until onions start to soften. Add sage and thyme and cook for another couple of minutes. Once the pumpkin is tender, scoop the flesh out and put in pot with onions. Add vegetable stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes. Add coconut milk and simmer for a further 10 minutes. To puree the soup add to a blender/food processor. Once the soup is smooth, season with salt and pepper and serve hot.
Outside the Garden Gate…

Adkins Arboretum Programs & Events Calendar
https://adkinsarboretumorg.presencehost.net/programs_events/event_calendar.html
2015 Symposium: Planting in a Post-Wild World
Sunday, September 27th 1 to 2:30pm followed by book signing
http://www.adkinsarboretum.org/programs_events/symposium.html

Ladew Topiary Gardens Fall Series
Fall Lecture Series:
http://www.ladewgardens.com/EDUCATION/Adult-Education/Lecture-Series
For more information, call (410) 557-9570

Longwood Gardens Nightscape
Open until October 31st
http://longwoodgardens.org/gardens
For more information, call (610) 388-1000

Mt. Cuba Center Classes & Lectures
http://www.mtcubacenter.org/education/continuing-education/
Fall and Winter Course Listings:
http://issuu.com/mtcubacenter/docs/fawi15_program_guide?e=14731861/14447371

Many many thanks...

To Connie Metcalf for helping out with the plant clinics in Chestertown.

Wellness Updates: Bonnie Conner recently had a hip replacement and is doing very well!
Kate Greer also came to our last monthly meeting and is moving right along!
Stay strong ladies!
### OCTOBER 2015

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Master Gardener Training 2016

Interested in improving the environment? Avid gardener or wishing you had a greener thumb? Dedicated Volunteer?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you should certainly consider becoming a Master Gardener and joining the next class of enthusiastic horticulturist! This rigorous 40+ hour course is designed to give you basic information in preparation for volunteering as a Master Gardener representative of the University of Maryland Extension. Topics will include: ecology, botany, soils, propagation, diseases, insect pests and control measures, among others. This program emphasizes community involvement and outreach as well as environmental stewardship. A fee of $200 is charged to cover all costs including the Maryland Master Gardener Handbook.

February 11th - April 9th 2016
Thursday evenings 5:30pm to 8:30pm
Saturday mornings 9:00am to 12:00pm

Location: Eastern Shore Higher Education Center, Wye Mills

For more information contact:

QAC Master Gardener Coordinator
Molly Garrett
mgarrett1@umd.edu
(410) 758-0166

Talbot Master Gardener Coordinator
Mikaela Boley
mboley@umd.edu
(410) 822-1244 ext 12

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November Newsletter Deadline: 
October 19, 2015

University of Maryland Extension
505 Railroad Avenue, Suite 4
Centreville MD, 21617
Phone: (410) 758-0166
Fax: (410) 758-3687
http://extension.umd.edu/queen-annes-county/about

QACMG Website:
http://extension.umd.edu/queen-annes-county/home-gardening

Master Gardener Coordinator,
Queen Anne’s County

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Centreville, MD 21617

Vision Statement: A healthier world through environmental stewardship