

The Compost

Autumn 2021

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

MASTER
GARDENER 

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2021 INTERNATIONAL MG CONFERENCE

The 2021 International Master Gardener Conference had representatives from the United Kingdom, South Korea, Puerto Rico, Canada and the United States. The excitement of the exchange was palpable and shared by all 1200 Master Gardeners that attended.

This year's host, the Virginia Extension Cooperative, made the difficult decision to provide a virtual conference. They provided an inspiring line-up of speakers, topics, Virginia Garden tours, and information panels for sharing successes and challenges between programs. Just imagine communicating with the volunteers from South Korea and/or the United Kingdom! I found it very exciting. AND because it was virtual, everything was recorded for future viewing.

My week started on September 12 with a 'Botanical Illustration Workshop' led by artist Heeyoung Kim from the Chicago area. With watercolor paper, brushes, and paint on hand I enjoyed two hours of instruction and was rewarded with an original watercolor of an Echinacea (coneflower) as a conference souvenir.

Monday, September 13, through Friday, September 17, the conference provided Keynote speakers who focused on topics such as 'Nature's Sustainable Systems', 'Living In the Human Age', 'Plant Science to Make You a Better Gardener' and 'Climate Change'. The balance of my schedule included classes on 'Home Hydroponics', 'The Future of Boxwoods', 'The Foodscape Revolution', 'Building Community Seed Libraries', 'Luscious Landscaping', and 'These are not your Grandmother's Annuals'.

There was not one session that did not keep my attention and peak my interest for further knowledge. In addition, time was designated for 'Search for Excellence' Awards.

Time flies when you are having fun, and the conference proved to be a lot of fun! Nevertheless, the closing comments included a sneak preview of the 2023 International Conference to be hosted in Kansas City. Stay tuned for more details!

Article by CC MG Carol Teets



COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello Charles County Master Gardeners!

The fall weather is certainly teasing us this year! We had a successful turn out for the Charles County Fair in September. 351 people visited our booth and we gave away over 400 seed packets. We also had a very interactive performance of the 'Peter Rabbit Puppet Show'. The kids had great fun!

Special Thanks to all our Fair volunteers:

Tom Belote	Brent Burdick	Terry Thir
Marlene Smith	Bill Allen	Gail Enid Walker
Molly Moore	Rose Gazarek	Paris Reed
Brian Larson	Jon Gazarek	Jerry Reed
Terri White	Rose Markham	Jackie Jenkins
Marguerita Harding	Sally Matts	Teresa Jones
Kathy Jenkins	Karla Costello	



Preparations have begun for next spring's Master Gardener Basic Training course. Please send out the information to anyone you think may be interested. The cost will be \$180.00. We will be holding an Open House on Wednesday, November 3rd from 6-7:30 PM at the Extension office for prospective volunteers. They can register online at

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/charles-county-master-gardener-open-house-tickets-186687706957>.

Thank you to those who have volunteered their time this year despite the new challenges we have faced! Please remember to record all of your hours and complete the 10 hours of continuing education to remain an active MG. I really hope we can get past this winter hurdle and have some normalcy next year.

Last, but not least, mark your calendars for our Holiday Meeting on December 7, 2021. It will probably be virtual again this year, but I will send out more information as we get closer. If you have any ideas how to spice up our virtual gathering, please let me know!

Best regards,

Kaitlyn Baligush

CC MG County Coordinator

WHEN FACED WITH A LEMON...



There's a good chance this situation may not occur for you, but in our woods, we found a solution to a problem that we consider a win-win. The photo shows the large Oak tree that died on our hillside, which meant carrying those large pieces uphill after the tree was felled. We had to do this before and it's a very slow and tiring process.

We then realized we could create the ultimate erosion control device on that same hill to protect the stream at the bottom of our valley. We lined the cut pieces parallel to the stream and then covered the row with numerous loads of mulch we got for free from the landfill. Again, probably not a project many can duplicate, but for us this was a great solution to two separate problems: rendering the dead Oak and stopping erosion leading to the stream.

Article and photo by CC MG Linda Bronsdon

GARLIC GOODNESS

Looking for something to plant in the next month or two that will reward you with an aromatic cooking staple no Italian dish or shrimp scampi can do without? If so, planting garlic just made your to-do list!

My introduction to growing garlic arrived about 8 years ago with a visit from my 'New York Italian' mother who was gifted a few heads by her Italian cousin who plants 100+ cloves every year! Once I dug that first crop, and lifted the absolutely perfect heads from the soil, garlic became an annual part of my garden. This past fall I planted 4 different varieties for a total of 60 cloves!

The process of growing garlic can be thought of as the plant equivalent of cooking meals in a crock pot ...you 'set it' and 'forget it' until harvest time with very little tending. Mid-October through mid-November is the planting window for our area as long as the soil isn't soggy or frozen. In order for the bulbs to form tight, fat-bottomed heads, garlic plants benefit from loose, non-compacted soil planted 4-6" deep.

Garlic varieties are grouped as either hardneck or softneck. If you've ever visited a deli that has neatly braided heads of garlic hanging from the ceiling, you've seen softneck garlic. The garlic I've grown is of the hardneck variety which requires the cutting of the curling stem that emerges 3-4 weeks prior to harvest. This is called the 'scape' and is removed to push more growth into the cloves. Scares provide a teaser reward in anticipation of harvest time as they have a garlicky flavor and can be chopped and used in dips and pesto recipes!

8-9 months after planting and when half of the plant's leaves are brown, the patient gardener can harvest garlic goodness! But wait...one more step before garlic is ready to be used in the kitchen: a curing time of 2-3 weeks in a well-ventilated, shady area! Make sure to set aside a few of the largest heads for the next year's planting!

Here is the UMD Extension link for more details for planting, growing, and harvesting garlic:
<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/garlic>.

If you have other questions about my experiences growing garlic, contact me at sccrgal@yahoo.com.



Mid-growth garlic plants mulched with 2-3" of straw.



Freshly dug garlic with 4-5" of stem left w/bulb. When digging, place pitchfork 3" away from plant so as not to pierce the head. Rock tool back and forth to loosen dirt, grasp stem near soil level and gently pull.



Peel dirty outer layer of brittle wrapping (L) to easily clean bulb (R). Roots can be trimmed flush with bottom of bulb and dirt shaken off after curing.



Cleaned, trimmed, and cured purple striped hardneck variety ready for cooking!



Mesh curing system hanging in my garage allowing good airflow for 2-3 weeks.

Article and photos by
CC MG Kay Redman

SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK GARDEN

– A SUCCESSFUL YEAR! –

The Southern Maryland Food Bank “Seeds of Hope” Community Learning Garden was a success this year! We harvested 379 lbs. of produce that the Food Bank distributed to families or used in their food truck operation. The Directors of Southern Maryland Food Bank & Outreach Services were quite pleased with the support provided by the Charles County Master Gardeners in redoing the entire garden infrastructure this year, producing such a bountiful harvest, and assisting in their garden outreach activities.

Ms. Brenda DiCarlo, our long-time primary contact, left as Director of the Food Bank at the beginning of October and Mr. George Mattingly, her second-in-command, took over as Director at that time.

We utilized trellises to have many of the crops grow up and not out. Framed trellises were used in the beds for watermelon, cantaloupes, pole green beans and Butternut squash. Teepee-style trellises were used for cucumbers. Rather than cages, we used interwoven twine to support our peppers. Small bamboo trellises were made to hold up sweet potato vines growing in our tire planters.

The gardening-by-the-square-foot bed was a success, as were the herb garden, demonstration patio garden, and pollinator beds. The pollinator bed brought in a plethora of pollinators and other ‘guests’ to the garden.

Though outreach activities were somewhat stymied by the lingering COVID pandemic, we assisted the Food Bank in conducting a youth activity in the garden and an open house for Food Bank hierarchy and community leaders.



The garden was lush this year



A bountiful harvest



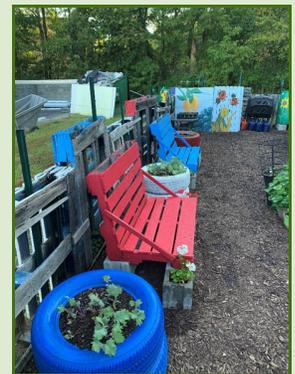
Cantaloupes on a trellis



Trellis for Sweet Baby Watermelon with Birdhouse Gourds



Gardening-by-the-Square-Foot



Tire planters replanted with Kale for fall

Article continued next page

SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD BANK GARDEN CONT.



Butternut Squash grows up, not out



Outreach - Youth activities in the garden



We are still harvesting tomatoes, peppers, and herbs.

Most of the garden vegetables have finished producing for the season. We harvested all ten potato baskets of red and white potatoes and all three tire planters where we grew sweet potatoes. The cucumbers, cantaloupes, watermelons, Butternut squash, zucchini and yellow squash, and green beans are all done for the year. The giant sunflowers were harvested and are being dried out in a storage shed for next year's seeds. Several Birdhouse gourds were harvested and are also being dried for next year's birdhouse-making activities.

For the first time, we planted fall crops. We planted half the cucumber bed with broccoli, the cantaloupe and green beds with spinach and kale, and the tire planters also with kale. All these plants were started from seed. (Our successive plantings of cauliflower seeds never did germinate.) Also, for the first time, we decided to plant a winter cover crop in the unused beds. We planted Winter Rye a week or so ago in those beds that were already empty, and it is sprouting.

While we were successful this year and still have tomatoes and peppers to harvest, we will have broccoli, kale, and spinach later coming in until after the first frost.

What a successful year – and our success was all due to the many Master Gardeners and Interns who toiled long and hard this entire spring and summer! Congratulations to each one of you!



Sunflowers harvested and being dried for next year's seeds

Planted Kale and Spinach for fall in Cantaloupe bed



Outreach - CC MG Marlene Smith helps Youth water plants in Demonstration Patio Garden



Bumper Sweet Potato harvest from one tire planter



Tire planters with Sweet Potatoes





VIRTUAL CORNER!



CC MG
Michelle Chenault

The Virtual Learning Team (VLT) provides virtual support and enhancement for current and new projects or Community Outreach activities. More specifically, over the last ten months, VLT members, organized as SubTeams, provided content development and assistance with various 'virtual' needs. These needs included interactive worksheets, presentations, educational products via surface mail, e-mail, social media posts and videos. All CC MGs and interns are welcome to join the VLT. For more information and meeting invitations, please send your name, cell # and email address to Michelle Chenault and Paris Reed.



CC MG
Paris Reed

VMS Directory) to the VLT Lead, CC MG Michelle Chenault (cell # 301-526-3225 or email vmchenault@gmail.com) and VLT Co-Lead, CC MG Paris Davis-Reed (cell # 301-717-3385, email paris.reed@verizon.net).

Curious about the Watermelon Radish mentioned in the COMPOST last quarter? This unique and savory vegetable is just one of the vegetables grown in the raised garden boxes by the senior residents of the Victoria Park (Vic Park) Senior Living Apartments in Waldorf, MD.

Watermelon radish (*Raphanus sativus*) is a member of the mustard family, which includes arugula, broccoli and turnip. It is a larger radish that is white with pale green shoulders on the outside and red on the inside, looking a bit like a watermelon! It grows to approximately 3" (the size of a tennis ball) and even larger if you let it.

The watermelon radish is a winter variety of radish that is best grown in cool weather. The seeds should be planted in late summer or early fall, in moist, rich soil with good sun exposure. Be sure to follow the instructions on the seed packet.

The watermelon radish takes approximately 60 days to grow to maturity. When ready to harvest, most radishes will bulge through the ground. If left too long to harvest, radishes tend to become pithy or spongy in texture and may develop a harsh flavor.

Watermelon radish can be harvested at different sizes and the peppery flavor varies with the harvest time. Leaving the radishes in the ground longer than 60 days may produce radishes up to 5" and they may be very spicy (but not yet bitter).

This vegetable" is easy to grow and a pretty, zesty addition to salads, sandwiches and other dishes. (see: <https://foodformymfamily.com/recipes/watermelon-radish-and-arugula-salad-with-citrus-vinaigrette>) The fruit, root, and leaves of the watermelon radish are an excellent source of fiber, Vitamin C and other nutrients, particularly when eaten raw. The vegetable is also delicious pickled.



Article continued next page



VIRTUAL CORNER! CONT.



PICKLED WATERMELON RADISHES

- ⇒ 1 to 2 watermelon radishes
- ⇒ ½ cup distilled white vinegar
- ⇒ ½ cup water
- ⇒ 1 teaspoon sugar
- ⇒ 1 teaspoon salt
- ⇒ ½ teaspoon peppercorns, lightly crushed
- ⇒ 2 cloves garlic, peeled

1. Thoroughly wash radishes, slice into ½ inch-thick discs, and place into clean canning jar.
2. In a medium saucepan, bring vinegar, water, sugar, salt, peppercorns, and garlic to boil. Simmer one minute. Pour hot liquid over radishes in canning jar.
3. Let cool to room temperature, top with canning lid, and store in the refrigerator.

Yield: 1 cup

REFERENCES - <https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/live-well-eat-well/2021-05-19-eat-radish-top-bottom>
https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/radish_variety_can_add_flavor_and_crunch_to_your_meals



Vegetables from VICPark raised garden beds

In other news, the residents of Victoria Park started planting an inside herb garden consisting of containers of chives, oregano and thyme and 2 varieties of garlic in containers in the garden box area on October 15, 2021. CC MGs prepared educational materials on inside herb gardening and requirements for container garlic crops. CC MGs also helped the residents select the herbs, design the inside garden area and plant the seeds for the herbs and garlic cloves. The participants plan to continue to develop the garden and add more herbs through the winter months. The residents will learn to harvest and dry the herbs produced from the garden in a future educational activity session.

In addition, CC MGs forming the SagePoint Sub-Team in cooperation with the VLT Multi-Media Team developed an educational video entitled "Succulents" for an educational activity. This session is scheduled for November for residents of this senior facility. More about this event in the January 2022 COMPOST issue. In the meantime, Happy Holidays!



CC MGs assisted VIC Park residents with various activities.
L: Indoor herb garden



Article by CC MG Michelle Chenault/Photos by CC MG County Coordinator Kaitlyn Baligush

GROWING PAPERWHITES

I usually plant my Paperwhites in a glass container filled with stones. Press your bulbs into the stones nose up, and leave some of the top of the bulb exposed above the stones.

When planting in stones use a container without drainage holes, otherwise the water will drain out immediately and won't provide a benefit to the roots. Fill the container with water just up to the base of the bulb.

Put in a well-lighted area but not in direct sunlight. Paperwhites are much more difficult to get to re-bloom another year. Throw your bulbs in the compost pile when they're spent!

Stunting the Growth of Your Paperwhites - Follow this recipe to shorten the height of your paperwhites and prevent them from toppling over when they bloom.

- ⇒ Pot your paperwhites in stones and water, as you normally would.
- ⇒ Once the roots begin growing and the green shoot on top reaches about 1-2", pour off the existing water.
- ⇒ Replace the water with a solution of 4 – 6% alcohol, as described below.
- ⇒ Continue to use the alcohol solution for future watering.

Recipe For Alcohol Watering Solution:

- ⇒ The alcohol content needs to be less than 10%, or your plants will overdose and severe growth problems will occur. Many liquors are only labeled as "proof", not percentage of alcohol. Don't confuse the two. To determine what percentage alcohol you have, divide the proof in half. So an 86 proof bourbon is 43% alcohol.
- ⇒ You can use any hard liquor (vodka, tequila, whiskey...) or rubbing alcohol. Don't use wine or beer because they are too high in sugar.
- ⇒ Check the bottle for the percentage alcohol.
- ⇒ You will have to do some math to get the different concentrations of alcohol down to 4-6%. To convert your booze to 5% alcohol, just divide the percentage alcohol by 5 and then subtract 1. That will tell you how many parts water to mix with your 1 part alcohol.

Ex: 40 divided by 5 = 8: 8 minus 1 = 7... 7 parts water to 1 part alcohol, or simply use the following chart:

Convert Existing Alcohol To A 5% Solution For Watering:

10% Alcohol = 1 Part Water to 1 Part Alcohol
 15% Alcohol = 2 Parts Water to 1 Part Alcohol
 20% Alcohol = 3 Parts Water to 1 Part Alcohol
 25% Alcohol = 4 Parts Water to 1 Part Alcohol
 30% Alcohol = 5 Parts Water to 1 Part Alcohol
 35% Alcohol = 6 Parts Water to 1 Part Alcohol



PETER RABBIT AT THE CHARLES COUNTY FAIR



Another great success!! CC MGs presented the puppet show “The Misadventures of Peter Rabbit in Farmer McGregor’s Vegetable Garden” on Saturday, September 18, at the Charles County Fair.

Farmer McGregor, Mrs. McGregor and Peter Rabbit talked to kids about vegetables! How they are grown, the nutritional benefits of eating vegetables in our diet, what are good bugs and bad bugs, and more. This year we added a new cast member, Mrs. McGregor. She added a lot of great information and humor. We had a rowdy bunch of kids (see below where a young boy tells Farmer McGregor to “better not hurt Peter Rabbit”) in the audience. They were a hoot and they just couldn’t understand how Farmer McGregor would turn bunnies into bunny nuggets.

Our puppeteers for this show were CC MGs Jerry Reed, Famer McGregor; Paris Reed, Mrs. McGregor, Gail Enid Walker, Peter Rabbit; Terry Thir, Ripley Rat; Sally Matts, Mother Rabbit; Janet Jenkins, Busy Bee; Teresa Jones, Butterfly; Rose Markham, Praying Mantis; Kaitlyn Baligush, Japanese Beetle; Karla Costello, Lady Beetle; and moderator Kathy Jenkins. Special thanks to Marlene and Bill Smith for taking photos and videotaping.

Article by CC MG Terry Thir



WELL SYSTEM MAINTENANCE



Usually, homeowners are very diligent about the maintenance of their septic system. On the other hand, they tend to take for granted their well system.

Most well systems function properly for years. However, it is recommended that the well system be periodically inspected and serviced. Inspection consists of a visual inspection of the well and its components within the house. At the same time a water sample will be taken to determine if any bacteria or other dangerous elements like arsenic have gotten into the aquifer that supplies the well. The water analysis can be simple, such as bacteria detection, or more complex when looking for hazardous elements.

Prices will vary depending on what the homeowner requests. My inspector also recommended that an inspection should take place every 5 years. The Bay-Wise course instructor recommends one every year. Prices vary from company to company, so shop around. Expect to pay \$75 to \$100 for a basic inspection and water analysis. As can be seen on the attached picture of the well, the silver plate has all the information you will need to pass on to your well inspector. Also note the black scuff marks on the well side. These were probably caused by a lawn mower. These type of accidents can be very expensive. Every effort should be made to protect the well from this type of damage.

Article and photo by CC MG Dave Lewis



BAY-WISE CORNER!



Happy autumn everyone. It's hard to believe that fall has arrived. The Bay-Wise committee has been busy since our last edition and I would like to share the happy news that we completed the Bay-Wise garden a few weeks ago and invite you all to come down to Bel Alton and enjoy the results of our labors.

We also assisted CC MGs Terry Thir and Kathy Jenkins and their committee in the Pollinator Garden. Many of us took several trips to buy native plants and tended to them until planting time. Other Master Gardeners picked up gravel, stones and mulch to put it all together.



We thank everyone who came to help us on a September weekend to put the gardens to bed, so to speak. We spent two full days to take up all the tarps, put in the river bed, laid the gravel, created a nice flagstone pathway in the Pollinator Garden and put in the plants. CC MG Terry Thir spent her Sunday afternoon tilling the Pollinator Garden and getting it ready for her team to complete the gardens. Both of our committees worked together and we are proud of everyone who made the gardens a reality. We would like to thank our membership for providing the means to accomplish our goal to educate and provide a host of gardens for the public to visit and learn to be good stewards of the environment.

For those of you who missed the Bay-Wise training in September and October, you missed out on some great workshops that Wanda MacLachlan, the UME Bay-Wise Program Coordinator, put together. Amanda Rockler, from the Sea Grant Program of UME, gave a presentation on the State of the Bay (its looking better) and offered some new workshops on the benefits of native plants, to name a few. Speaking of Bay-Wise, we are still waiting to hear from some of you who have submitted applications to have your property and gardens certified. Our closing date for certifications is October 31.



Article continued next page



BAY-WISE CORNER! CONT.

In other news, our committee has joined the ‘State Backyard Buffer program’, a tree stewardship program which offers different species of seedling trees and shrubs to homeowners, and is working with the Charles County Forester.

Nicole Basenback, a UME Watershed Restoration Educator, brought this program to our attention at one of our general membership meetings. The Potomac Watershed Partnership and the Maryland DNR Forest service sponsor the Backyard Buffers Program which we are bringing to Charles County in 2022. The program provides a free “buffer in a bag” to home owners who have a stream or waterway adjacent to their property.

Master Gardeners will be responsible for advertising, receiving applications, bundling the bag, planting instructions and distribution of the bundles to homeowners. Applications will be taken in early 2022 and distribution will take place in March or early April.

We also participated in the NCAC Fascination Fair in September. This was the grand opening for the Neighborhood Creative Center here in La Plata and we focused on the “Water-Wise Table”.



We provided info for all age groups on water quality and Bay-Wise landscape practices to help save the Bay.

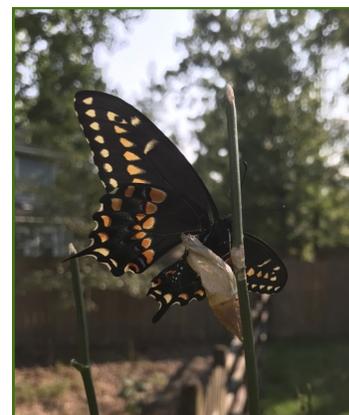
Lastly, we had a great display at the Fair and I want to thank everyone who came and volunteered their time. I want to personally thank CC MG Marguerita Harding who was our “Information-Vegetable-and-Flower-Seeds-Guru”. Folks carried off many seeds and future happy gardens. Many people also signed up for Bay-Wise certification information so it was a very successful event!



Article and photos by CC MG and Bay-Wise Coordinator Rose Markham Rosemarkham@comcast.net



“And just like that, my chrysalis turned into a beautiful butterfly.”
Photos by Linda Ivko





FACEBOOK CORNER!



As we expand our use of social media, I hope you take the opportunity to become an active Facebook user. Posts on our Facebook page include CCMG events, links to educational webinars, garden tips, garden humor, and more. We welcome your contributions to our Facebook page. If you'd like to write an article, share photos of your gardening projects, or share a page of interest to you, please send them to Terry (thirccmg@aol.com) or Marlene (nikhaven@comcast.net).

Recently, we showcased the progress of our demonstration gardens at the extension office.



Curious what other Facebook pages your fellow master gardeners follow? Each quarter, I will introduce a page that you may find interesting.

This quarter's Facebook page to visit is that of our neighbors, St. Mary's County Master Gardener's (<https://www.facebook.com/St-Marys-County-Master-Gardeners-University-of-Maryland-Extension-111823550482511>).

The St. Mary's County MG page provides information related to their local projects, including a new Grow It Eat It demo garden at St. Mary's College.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=376897440641786&id=111823550482511

Article continued next page



FACEBOOK CORNER!



Facebook Stats

Last quarter (April - June 2021) we set a goal of reaching a total of 600 Page Likes and 700 Page Followers. Not only have we reached these goals; we have surpassed both. As of September 30, we have 628 LIKES and 718 FOLLOWERS. That's up 103 LIKES (19%) and 137 FOLLOWERS (23.6%) since September 2020.

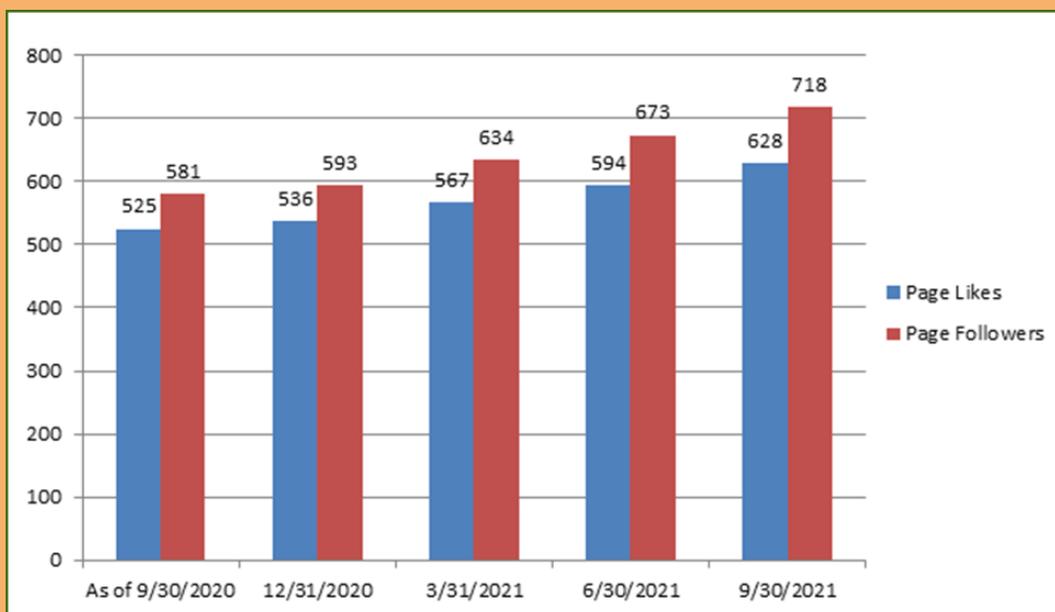
THANK YOU to those who contribute to our posts and to everyone who likes and shares our posts. We are starting to engage our community more. One of my favorite responses to a recent post about native plants supporting biodiversity was from Anne Stark: "More Native Plant Sales are needed in Charles County". Let's hope we can fulfill her wish with a plant sale in the spring!

Working together, we can continue to increase our social media presence on Facebook. New goals: 700 Page Likes AND 800 Page Followers. Anyone want to guess when we will reach these goals??

Please continue to help grow our Facebook Likes and Followers! Remember, the more sharing we do, the more people see our posts. Once someone new sees and "likes" one of our posts, we can then invite them to like our page and follow us. Please consider sharing CC MG Facebook posts that you like on your personal Facebook page or to a Facebook group that you belong to. With your help, we can reach and exceed 700 Page Likes AND 800 Page Followers!

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

MELWOOD'S HORTICULTURAL THERAPY PROGRAMS Fall 2021



Eastern Tiger
Swallowtail



Bee covered in nectar

As the summer is passing us by, so are all of the beautiful butterflies, birds and insects. This summer our pollinator garden reached maturity. Our plants averaged around 4 feet tall and were full of beautiful flowers. We were visited by so many varieties of butterflies, birds and beneficial bees.

This spring we built a 12-foot high tee-pee. We planted red scarlet runner beans on the poles surrounded by two varieties of sunflowers that reached up to 6 foot tall. Our plan was to provide a fun educational place for the summer campers to enjoy the tee-pee and engage in story time or other activities. We found many monarch and swallowtail caterpillars on our milkweed, parsley and dill plants. We will leave the flower seeds on the plants all winter to provide food and shelter for birds and insects.

Two large fence areas where we planted Tithonian (Mexican Sunflowers) and Zinnias attracted tons of pollinators. Sunflowers were also planted in large containers next to the building. We have a dedicated milkweed patch along another fence to provide habitat, food and nectar for the Monarchs.

The Learning Center was bountiful with lots of delicious vegetables—okra, three kind of tomatoes, basil, peppers, cucumbers, 5 varieties of squash, lettuce, beans, beets, radishes, Swiss chard and many herbs. Vegetables were used by the Melwood kitchen staff in food preparation, given away to campers in the horticulture garden club and donated to the Southern Maryland Food Bank. Soon the vegetable gardens will be put to bed and prepared for next Springs planting.

Campers participated in a week long summer program that ran from June - August. Several MGs prepared and taught classes on various gardening and horticulture topics. The campers helped with daily chores in the gardens....watering, harvesting food and other activities.

The adult participants are returning to campus now on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. MGs will help with development of class curriculum and teaching. We are seeking more volunteers to help us. If you are interested, please contact Suse Greenstone, Manager, Horticulture Therapy Program at Suse.Greenstone@Melwood.org.



Black Swallowtail
Caterpillars



BEL ALTON DEMONSTRATION GARDENS UPDATE

Work moved forward with the Bel Alton UMD Extension Demonstration Gardens. On Friday, September 24th, a group of Master Gardeners prepped the areas to be planted adding hardscape. We refreshed the dry river bed in the MD Historical Garden with blue stone chips and created another river bed in the Bay-Wise Garden. Truckloads of 2" wash covered maintenance pathways that were created across the front of the building.

The next day, we built more paths on either side of the Bay-Wise and Native Pollinator Gardens that ran from the building to the front sidewalk. Additional plants were planted in the Bay-Wise Garden: several types of grasses, Goldenrod, and Blue Mist plants, as well as others. Finally, we planned the date and next steps for the Native Pollinator Garden. We covered the planting space in the Native Pollinators Garden with blue tarp before we left for the day.

On Monday, October 4, the third group of intrepid Charles County Master Gardeners gathered to install the Native Pollinator Garden. A truck load of top soil, rototilled into the garden, helped to break up the hard clay soil which also had been prepared the previous day. Then the planting began! Multiples of pollinator plants and shrubs were ready to be planted; including Robin's Plantain, Wild Bergamot, Asters, Mints, Joe Pye Weed, Goldenrods, and Beautyberry shrubs, as well as other plants. Donated flat slate stones created a mid-way path through the garden, and two truckloads of mulch finished the job.

Thank you to Kaitlyn Baligush, CC MG Coordinator, who worked with us. Thank you to the following CC MGs and Interns who helped to refresh and/or create the MD Historical, Bay-Wise, and Native Pollinator Demonstration Gardens: William Allen, Erika Smith, Gail Black, Tom Belote, Brent Burdick, Mary Ellen Howard, Mike Howard, Linda Ivko, Kathleen Jenkins, Roy Jenkins, David Lewis, Brian Larson, Rose Markham, Janet McGrane, Molly Moore, Marlene Smith, Terry Thir, and Karen Westhead.

Also, thank you to Linda Ivko, Kathleen Jenkins, Janet McGrane, Molly Moore, Paris Reed, and Terry Thir for donations of plants and hardscape.

Now we will need to maintain these gardens as we build new ones, which are welcome tasks. We count on our members to help make this dream into a continuing reality.



Refreshed river bed in MD Historical Garden



CC MGs building the Bay-Wise river bed



Laying the walkway in Native Pollinator Garden



Everyone pitched in

Article and photos by CC MG Kathy Jenkins

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Find us on the Web at:

<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 January 15, 2022 for the Winter 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.



Saddleback Caterpillar - photo by
CC MG Linda Ivko

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