Hello Master Gardeners,

My garden was looking pretty terrific until July 1, then all the bugs came out. I'm sure many of you are having the same plague of Japanese beetles - they are everywhere; defoliating everything! I started out carefully scraping them into soapy water, but soon realized it was like trying to hold back the ocean! I guess we just have to ride it out and hope the plants are able to survive. No stink bugs yet - but I am sure they are lurking around. Cabbage worms appeared to chew on my cabbages but bT took care of them. And so far my cukes and squash are looking good - but I doubt that will last. One develops a sense of fatalism about garden pests. My tomatoes in their different beds are doing ok, although several have leaf curling and some early leaf spot I sprayed them with copper fungicide to ward off blight. My fingers are crossed! I have been spending a huge amount of time weeding our new flower beds- I finally got all my seedlings planted but the weeds (even through the mulch) are really prolific. Hopefully it will get easier as flowers and shrubs become established.

We had a super meeting in July - I expected a low turnout since it was the day before the 4th of July, but many of you attended and there was a good spirit! Things have slowed down somewhat, although we have our farmers' market teams, our Garden Series classes, and our Ask A Master Gardener volunteers busy on the weekends. Joyce is busy gearing up for the new intern class in September. Anne Spelman is exploring setting up a Facebook page for us - if any of you have expertise (or experience!) in Facebook, contact Anne to discuss how we might best proceed.

By the time you read this at the end of July, summer's back will be broken and we'll be getting ready for the fall. Which brings to mind elections for officers in a few months. I've served as president for 3 years and feel that is long enough - both for me and for the organization. So, be thinking about who you think will make a good president of our group. The job is really not that hard - and is actually kind of fun! Eleanor Cone will be looking for candidates, so don't be shy. If you would like to serve as an officer, or if you have an idea of someone you think will be good, let her know.

Meanwhile, Happy Gardening!

Joan Parris ’09
Annual Training Day UPDATE

UMD Researcher Dennis vanEngelsdorp, Ph.D. gave an inspiring, awesome and truly fascinating keynote address at MG Annual Training Day, May 29 on Why We Need Bees. He gave us permission to post the address on YouTube, but not to put links to it anywhere. There are some borrowed photos in the presentation, so he can’t give it out or post it anywhere. But he does want all MGs to have it, watch it, re-watch it and work to make our landscapes as bee-friendly as possible. Consider using this for one of your educational monthly meetings perhaps showing it with a local bee expert. Or, just watch it and use it the best way you can. It’s about an hour long.

Here is the unlisted link http://youtu.be/ahrdHvPEOUM. Only those given this link can view the address – it will not show up on the HGIC channel or be searchable.

Robin Hessey is Retiring (repeated from last month)

My last official day with HGIC and the state MG program will be August 31, 2014. After that I’ll be officially retired. Please change my email address in your records or add rmhessey@verizon.net. The rmhessey@umd.edu address will cease to exist after 9/1/14.

I have been most privileged to work for the MG program for the last 17 years and look forward to continuing in a volunteer capacity as a Howard Co. MG. Working with the MGs has been a true privilege because

- MGs are inspirational. I’m constantly amazed at your wonderful ideas, creativity, resourcefulness.
MGs are hard working. You get a vision, you get a job and you do it with all of your heart.
MGs always want to help. Whatever, whenever, however. Whatever I’ve needed, there’s a willing, wonderful and skilled MG answering the call for help. And we in my office have needed a lot -whether it’s been for speakers, brainstormers, organizers, data entry, mailings, committee heads, researchers, communicators, writers or helpers on hundreds of varied projects. It’s a constant source of amazement to me that there are so many ultra-smart, knowledgeable, talented, skilled folks out there who want to help the program and the environment and who accomplish so much.
MGs care about the earth and constantly strive to do what is right by it. This gives me great satisfaction because I have the hope that I’ve helped you along the way in your mission, which is also my mission. MGs are one of the best parts of the U. of MD Extension. We are the ones out in the community, assessing the needs, educating ourselves and offering the best advice we can give, always striving for a better community and environment.

Working with the MG program has also allowed me the great pleasure of working with Jon Traunfeld (best boss ever!) and the wonderful HGIC staff, to surround myself with plant and bug issues on a daily basis – and to experience and learn about parts of the natural world that I might never have noticed or known about.
If you are interested in my job, please let Jon Traunfeld (jont@umd.edu) know. There will be an official job posting notice sent out sometime fairly soon, but I don’t know if everyone will end up seeing it.

Wishing everyone lots of success in their MG endeavors and in eliminating urban use of pesticides and herbicides. See you in the garden. - Robin Hessey, MG State Advanced Training Coordinator.

### MG ADVANCED TRAINING

Plant diseases often seem like exotic mysteries left up to the experts to solve. Well, guess what- we MG’s can now begin to unravel some of these mysteries ourselves. In this course you’ll learn all about the bacteria, fungi and viruses that cause plant problems. You’ll also learn about their symptoms, cycles and controls.

In addition to the lecture and handouts you will get hands-on training using samples. We hope that you’ll feel comfortable enough with the basics of plant diseases to be able to recognize problems in your own gardens and to use the information to competently help clients at plant clinics. This class counts as your Plant Disease requirement for your Plant Diagnostics certificate.

### Native Landscaping to MD Shade Gardens
*(Coastal Plain)* – Calvert Co. Sept. 30, Oct.7 and Oct 14 (almost full)

### Youth Vegetable Gardening

Note: this 4 day course is being taught here at the Harford County Office next week, August 4-7, from 9 am to 4 pm. Class is full but MG’s are invited to attend one day free of cost. If you are interested please call our office for the schedule.

Presenters (alternating): Jon Traunfeld, UME Specialist in Vegetables and Fruit; Heather Buritsch, UME Associate Agent, FSNE Gardening for Nutrition Coordinator, Lisa Gonzalez (FNSE) and others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UME Montgomery County (Denwood)</th>
<th>Wed. September 24, 9am-4pm</th>
<th>Register by September 17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UME Anne Arundel Coounty (Dairy Farm- Gambrills)</td>
<td>Sat. September 27, 9am-4pm</td>
<td>Register by September 19</td>
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Youth and school vegetable gardening are hot topics with many schools and organizations requesting MG help. You can be an effective, active part of this effort!

This course will help build your confidence as you learn effective ways to work with kids in the garden. Learn the nuts and bolts about school guidelines, building a gardening team, and starting and maintaining a school program. Our panelists will inspire you with lots of fun and thrifty curriculum ideas. Focus- elementary age.
Native Grasses

**Location:** UME Harford County (Forest Hill)

**DATE:** Tuesday, October 21, 2014, 9:30-3:00PM

**Registration Fee:** $30

**Registration Deadline:** October 14

**Presenter:** Sara Tangren, Ph.D., MG Trainer and Asso. Agent in Native Plants and Sustainable Horticulture

Fall is the time that our native grasses strut their stuff! Join us for a fun, non-technical class: light on grass taxonomy and heavy on work with fresh specimens of indiangrass, little bluestem, switchgrass, purpletop, bushy beardgrass, purple lovegrass, and more. For each species we will discuss design/design aesthetic considerations for use in garden beds,

- use in native meadows,
- soil and light requirements,
- availability, establishment, and
- maintenance techniques

By the end of class you will be able to recognize the most popular native grasses for Harford Co. and include them in your garden/meadow designs with confidence.

Native Plant Essentials

**(in person or online)**

**Location:** UME Frederick County

**DATE:** Thursday, September 4, 9:30-3:30

**Registration Fee:** $35

**Registration Deadline:** August 28

**Presenter:** Dave Clement, Ph.D. Extension Specialist in Plant Pathology

Plant diseases often seem like exotic mysteries left up to the experts to solve. Well, guess what- we MG’s can now begin to unravel some of these mysteries ourselves. In this course you’ll learn all about the bacteria, fungi and viruses that cause plant problems. You’ll also learn about their symptoms, cycles and controls.

In addition to the lecture and handouts you will get hands-on training using samples. We hope that you’ll feel comfortable enough with the basics of plant diseases to be able to recognize problems in your own gardens and to use the information to competently help clients at plant clinics. This class counts as your Plant Disease requirement for your Plant Diagnostics certificate.

For more information call Robin at 410-531-1754, rmhessey@umd.edu

Information about all MG Advanced Training Classes can be found at: http://extension.umd.edu/mg/advanced-training
Panicum virgatum ‘Northwind’ is the Perennial Plant Association’s 2014 Perennial Plant of the Year™. (Panicum virgatum, pronounced PAN-ic-um ver-GATE-um, common name of switch.)

**Hardy to:** USDA Zones 4 to 10  
**Light:** Performs best in full sun and will tolerate light shade.  
**Soil:** Adaptable to almost any soil.  
**Uses:** Great in full-sun, especially in native, meadow or prairie gardens. It offers golden fall color! The foliage and plumes are useful in arrangements.  
**Qualities:** ‘Northwind’ is very easy to grow. It works well in any sunny border and has a “refined” appearance and habit.  
**Maintenance:** It has no serious insect or disease problems. It is best to divide this plant in the spring and can be reproduced from divisions.

This warm-season perennial grass has blue-green foliage and stands more erect than is typical of the species. ‘Northwind’ is only the third ornamental grass to be named Plant of the Year™ following Calamagrostis ‘Karl Foerster’, 2001, and Hakonechloa macra ‘Aureola’, 2009.

The Perennial Plant of the Year was introduced in 1990 by the Perennial Plant Association. Since then the Association has received inquiries as to how they select the winner. The selection is simple. PPA members vote in the summer each year for the PPA winner. In addition, members may also nominate up to 2 plants for future consideration. The PPA members review the nominated plants (upwards to 400 plants) and selects 3-4 perennials to be placed on the voting ballot.

If you are interested in purchasing a new plant for your garden, check the Perennial of the Year Plant Database

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND GARDEN CLUB MEETING

While in New Zealand this past spring, I was privileged to attend two garden club meetings. I attended one in Auckland with my neighbor Gwen. She was giving a presentation to the garden club she and her husband recently joined. When they both became interested in organic food production for the family they felt joining the club was their first step. Many members garden organically, so they had help on how to start! Gwen took a college class on home organic food production and she was presenting her final class project to the club that evening.

The course required students complete a garden project. Gwen’s project was making and planting a raised vegetable bed. With her husband’s help Gwen selected the proper location for the bed, decided on the dimensions and assembled the raised bed. They filled it with top soil enriched organically and planted a number of salad greens and vegetables. Food production was more than her family could consume so she shared the bounty with neighbors, Ann and me! We enjoyed wonderful salad greens during the several weeks of my visit.

Gwen had to document the entire class project and show results of her efforts for her final grade. It was very educational to hear all the things she learned. She concluded her presentation with thirty-five minutes of questions from an intrigued audience. The group was so inspired that several friends decided to sign up for the next organic gardening class at the college.

But the meeting was not over yet! Many of the 45 attendees came bringing plants and produce. I thought maybe it was for their fundraiser or surplus give aways. Boy was I wrong! At club monthly meetings they have a horticulture judging competition! Qualified judges in floral and fruit/vegetables inspect and judge the items. Winners are announced in each category. What a fun meeting idea!

During the meeting, I was lucky to be sitting next to a lovely, little lady, who inherited her father’s love of gardening. Years earlier her Dad had donated a large rose garden to an Auckland park that is still flourishing years later. My new friend has a very large garden which she maintains by herself and she brought an award winning cauliflower for the competition. See the picture below. My only regret was that I was not staying in town long enough for her open garden tour. Club members say her garden is spectacular! Maybe I will get a chance on my next trip to NZ??

All in all it was a wonderful evening talking to gardeners half way around the world and learning about their concerns and successes in their gardens.
BOOK REVIEW: The Informed Gardener

Mary Trotta, 2008

In my first year as a HCMG, I spotted a brightly colored book on the “new arrivals” table at my local library. The Informed Gardener was a small, thin soft-cover, and I picked it up to skim through the short chapters. The font was large and the margins were deep, a good book for busy gardeners -- reader-friendly and not too daunting, even though I scanned a few words like Polyacrylamide Hydrogels.

As it turned out, the book really was more than reader-friendly. It became my go- to reference book as well. It examines common garden beliefs and practices to determine which anecdotal, word-of-mouth truisms, old-wives tales, and long-accepted gardening wisdom are actually myths to be dispelled and explains which gardening practices hold up under scientific scrutiny, backed by current research. The answers are often surprising. In fact, Dr. L Chalker-Scott turned my gardening world upside down! I could no longer count on my fundamental beliefs. I could no longer trust even the growers whose plant tags attached to the plant materials I purchase every year contain guidelines such as: “Dig hole twice as wide and twice as deep as the pot. Refill with half soil amendment and half native soil: water thoroughly. Fertilize upon planting. Finish with 3” layer of mulch.”

Dr. Chalker-Scott dismisses the first myth by advising the reader never to dig a $5.00 hole for a $.50 plant, and she corrects a second long-accepted but erroneous gardening practice by directing you to only fill the hole with what came out of the hole – native soil. As an enthusiastic gardener who had been planting my plants, shrubs, and trees with one half native soil (or less since I never measured) and the rest compost, Leaf Gro; mushroom soil; potting soil; peat moss; etc.(whatever I had on hand), I was stunned, and skeptical. But Dr. Chalker-Scott backs her information with careful and clear explanations of the scientific research which disproves these myths.

Her rationales are written simply, smoothly and lucidly, allowing the reader to absorb the basic science, plant physiology and chemistry involved. The book goes on to expose many more gardening myths. The chapter titles indicate the topics covered in the book: “The myth of Hot-weather Watering,” “The Myth of Native Plant Superiority,” “The Myth of Drainage Material in Containers,” “The Myth of Beneficial Bonemeal,” and “The Myth of Soil Amendments.” This last subject gets three chapters exposing the many misconceptions and erroneous practices associated with this important facet of landscaping.

It is not only Chalker-Scott’s lucid prose that makes the sometimes complex material easy to comprehend; the physical layout of the book helps as well. The material is covered in short sound bites. The reader can locate the topic in the well-organized table of contents, turn to the page, and read the information in ten minutes or less. And the reader could skip the full explanations and details and go to “The Bottom Line” section at the end of each chapter, which summarizes the fallacy and the reality. If the reader wants to go a little more in depth about the topics, there is an extra page at the end of some of the chapters with bulleted facts on that topic along with a bibliography of the studies, journals, publications Dr. Chalker-Scott cites to support her findings.
In spite of some of the startling information and counter-intuitive findings which Dr. Chalker-Scott presents in her book, these findings and the new landscaping practices they indicate are all supported by strong research. *The Informed Gardener* is packed with information that anyone seriously interested in gardening should be aware of in order to practice sustainable and environmentally sound landscaping.

In addition to providing helpful advice for installing and cultivating healthy plants, shrubs, and trees, Dr. Chalker-Scott can also save gardeners money with her enlightening information on the many products and additives lining the shelves of most gardening centers that should never end up in your shopping cart. Many are not necessary and can even be harmful to your landscaping and to the environment. To illustrate some of the practical information covered in *The Informed Gardener*, test yourself with the short quiz below.

**TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ:**

1. Wire baskets will not interfere with the root growth of transplanted trees.
2. Organic products can be just as harmful as synthetic ones.
3. Gravel or other coarse material added to the bottom of a container will improve drainage.
4. When transplanting trees, amend the backfill soil with organic matter.
5. Healthy soil has high organic content.
6. Phosphate fertilizers will stimulate the root growth of transplanted trees and shrubs.
7. Adding bonemeal to the planting hole is good horticultural practice.
8. Adding polyacrylamide hydrogels to clay soils will not improve the irrigation qualities of those soils.
9. Shredded bark mulch is not a good product to use in your landscape.
10. The addition of sand will improve clay soil.
11. Newspaper and cardboard sheets are good mulching material.

The answers (many of them surprising) can be found in Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott’s award winning book, *The Informed Gardener* as well as in her newer book, *The Informed Gardener Blooms Again*. Both books can be purchased used at Amazon.com. Author: Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott (associate professor at Puyallup Research and Extension Center at Washington State University)University of Washington Press, 203 pages, $18.95

Dr. Chalker-Scott also has an online column, “Horticultural Myths” and a new blog at gardenprofessors.com. Search these sites for the quickest way to access.

*Weather means more when you have a garden. There’s nothing like listening to a shower and thinking how it is soaking in around your green beans. ~Marcelene Cox*
DATES TO REMEMBER

Harford County Fair – Thursday, July 31– Sunday, August 2

August 7, 2014  7 pm – General MG Meeting
August 20, 2014  1 pm – Daytime Study Group
August 26, 2014  6 pm – GIEI Meeting- HCEO
August 28, 2014  10 am – Executive Board Meeting

Yellow Swallowtail on Buddleia
By Marlene Lynch

University of Maryland Master Gardener

Our Vision: The Maryland Master Gardener vision is a healthier world through environmental stewardship.

Our Mission: to support the University of Maryland Extension mission by educating residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.

Harford County Master Gardener Coordinator
Joyce Browning  jbrowni3@umd.edu

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