Hello Master Gardeners!

Our Volunteer Recognition Dinner was terrific! As usual, Anne Lee did a fabulous job setting up this great event. And, she toiled for hours tallying up our volunteer hours to present award pins for hours served. I hope that more of you will join us next April for this event. It’s an important evening where we treat ourselves and thank everyone for the many hours of volunteer service the Harford County Master Gardeners completed. Our Volunteer of the Year for 2012 was Eleanor Cone. Congratulations Eleanor! The Volunteer of the Year is the Master Gardener who served the most hours during the previous calendar year. No one is more deserving than Eleanor - she works in many of our programs and is always willing to help out with a class or an event. Make sure and thank her for her hard work as a volunteer next time you see her. We also recognized Joyce for the many hours she puts in to the Master Gardener Program. Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious and it is always a pleasure working with her. She would probably appreciate a thank you or a high five when you see her.

It has been a tough spring for getting the vegetable garden started. I finally got a flat of cool-season vegetables in the ground. Even as I was planting them on a sunny windy day I realized that conditions were not ideal and I carefully protected each seedling with a yogurt container so they wouldn’t be wind-blowen. But I did not pay attention to the forecast and we had a very cold night. The plants looked somewhat bedraggled the next morning, but hopefully they are not dead, however, they have some catching up to do. The weeds, on the other hand, seem to thrive in these cold windy conditions.

I am starting a new adventure this spring - beekeeping! My husband and I are just finishing the class and it has been fascinating to learn about these incredible insects. Our “package” of bees is due to arrive sometime in the next few weeks and our journey with the bees will be launched. I am a bit intimidated by the idea, but also excited. I will keep you posted on our progress.

We have so many events going on this spring that will not try listing all of them. Joyce has sent out an update listing of upcoming volunteer opportunities. I hope that many of you will participate in some of the various tree-plantings, earth day events, and classes. And then, make sure you turn in your hours so you can get a pin at next year’s Volunteer Recognition Banquet. Happy Gardening!

Joan Parris ’09
LANDSCAPE DESIGN FOR WATER MANAGEMENT

Learn design techniques that help manage water in the best possible way. Learn about plants for conservation landscaping, how to install rain barrels, and how to make site assessments. This year the Maryland MG Program and UME Sea Grant are partnering to bring you this course in 3 locations.

**Montgomery County** - UME office in Derwood and DEP office in Rockville - May 11; 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM, plus optional field trips and exercises

**Queen Anne’s County** - Wye Rec in Queenstown; May 8, 15, 29; 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM, plus optional field trips and exercises

**St. Mary’s County** - Soil Conservation office in Leonardtown; June 5, 12, 19; 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM, plus optional field trips and exercises

**Fee:** $49.00  
**Deadline:** one week before class begins  
**Class Limit:** 25

Course goal: Increase the knowledge and ability of Master Gardeners to effectively conduct water management outreach in the community by providing assistance to organizations and individuals who wish to undertake a water management project, but do not have the horticultural knowledge or critical understanding required for a successful project.

Secondary goal: To develop a core of county-based MGs who are specifically trained in storm water stewardship to conduct assessments, assist others, and support the counties with storm water BMP verification.

**You will learn:**

- design techniques that help manage water in the best possible way
- specific information about plants used for conservation landscaping so that you can advise clients on plant selection and placement
- how to install rain barrels
- how to make good design decisions including resource protections, microclimates, amount and type of hardscapes, material selections, maintenance requirements and best management practices (best design principles) for water management
- how to assess a site

This is an in-depth course which will help you understand the scale of the problem and the Master Gardeners’ role in the solutions. It will include field trips to various sites.
INTENSIVE TECHNIQUES AND SMALL SPACE GARDENING  
(Will count for 2 days)

Dates: June 18, 25, 2013, 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Location: Frederick County Extension and field trip locations

Get more out of your vegetable gardens with less work and expense. Find how to increase production per square foot using sustainable and cost-effective practices. This will be mostly hands-on and will take place in different gardens. We will share, discuss and evaluate specific approaches to gardening, such as bio-intensive (John Jeavons) and square foot (Mel Bartholomew). Specific practices, such as inter-planting, succession planting, vertical gardening, drip irrigation, and season extension will also be discussed. Pre-class online assignments need to be completed to maximize hands-on time in class.

VEGETABLE PLANT AND PEST DIAGNOSIS  
(This class will be repeated in 2 locations and counts for 1 day)

Dates: July 16, 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Location: Howard County Conservancy

Dates: July 18, 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Location: Charles County locations - More details to come.

Sharpen your plant diagnostic, pest identification and control strategy skills in the vegetable garden. There will be a close look at non-chemical controls and the effectiveness of available organic pesticides. A collaborative, hands-on learning experience with troubleshooting in a vegetable garden, examination and diagnosis of samples, and discussion and effective prevention, monitoring, and control strategies is planned. Pre-class online assignments need to be completed to maximize hands-on time in class.

The public looks to us for answers to the thousands of food garden questions each year. Now we will be better able to answer the public’s questions about: Why am I not getting any squash this year? What’s killing my tomato vines? Are there any good organic controls for stink bugs?

For full details of classes (and breakout sessions) currently open; and registration form/information go to the MG's Advanced Training website
MAKING A FAIRY OR GNOME GARDEN WITH CHILDREN

Linda Baker

Need an activity for a child? How about a Fairy or Gnome Garden in a container? The title depends on which kind of little garden resident you find. Maybe even a Frog Garden!

The best place to start is at the Dollar Tree store. In spring and summer they often have little characters made of pottery, ceramic, plastic, composition, etc. The craft stores are good sources too, because of their 40% off coupons. Collect them early because sometimes they go fast and are hard to find.

The next item to look for is a container. It needs to have drainage, so that's often a problem. You can search for a wide, flat ceramic saucer, but they usually don't have drainage holes. I go back to the Dollar Tree and look at their plastic tableware. Last summer my granddaughter, Penelope, and I made Gnome Gardens with oval plastic serving dishes. I used a nail, held with pliers in a candle flame, to melt four holes in the bottom.

Fill the container with potting soil and a few collected rocks. We glued flat river rocks to cut sticks to create our own "mushrooms". Tiny sedums and moss from the yard became the greens. We tried tiny Johnny Jump-ups, but they grew too quickly. We collected Japanese maple seedlings which made wonderful trees. Those clear glass pebbles sold in a bag for the bottom of vases made great stepping stones, lakes or even a stream. The picture shows clear ones on top of Penny's mushroom to look like dewdrops.

You can add creative items such as a wood scrap decorated with a Sharpie to look like a house with pinecone petals for wood shingles. Of course, Valley View Farm has a Fairy department out in the greenhouse with miniature plants and gorgeous accessories. You can spend a great amount of money or create your own. Buy a resident for your garden to make it authentic!

Remember to sprinkle with water often so it doesn't dry out. If you have rascally, inquisitive squirrels like I do, sprinkle on a little Milorganite to discourage them. Put your container in a protected corner of the garden for the winter and bring in your gnome, fairy or frog.

I already have my new set of residents to make a Fairy Garden with both grandkids, Penelope and Cordelia, this summer! (The picture is Penny's Gnome Garden with a fat Frog)
Put a Butterfly Feeder in Your Future
by Joan Myrom. Photos by Sam Jurkovic and Joan Myrom
Article copied from North American Butterfly Association
http://www.nababutterfly.com/butterfly_feeders_mn.html

This may be the year to finally set up that butterfly feeder that you’ve been thinking about. If you do, you can expect to be rewarded with a season of interesting butterfly watching. The butterflies that visit your feeder will typically stay awhile, and make frequent return visits.

Although not all butterfly species visit feeders, many do. Your feeder will attract species that feed on food sources such as tree sap, dung, carrion, rotting matter, and of course overripe fruit—the primary “bait” you will place in your feeder.

Typically butterflies approaching a feeder make a number of false landings nearby before stopping to feed. This gives you time to gather up your camera and/or close-focusing binoculars as the butterflies maneuver around the feeder to just the right feeding spots, walking or fluttering from one location to another. Once they begin taking in nourishment, your winged guests may remain at the feeder for several minutes or more.

If possible, locate your feeder where you can view it from your windows or patio. Select a location that is not easily accessible to ants and otherwise unwelcome critters. Initially we selected locations with lots of sun, but our most successful feeders were hung from a tree, shaded most of the day.

In the past we have set up butterfly feeders in our upper Midwest yard but observed no butterflies visiting them. We tried to follow brief butterfly feeder how-to instructions from several books. Most resources suggested setting out a concoction made from different amounts of overripe bananas, watermelon, or other fruits; molasses, honey sugar water, or orange juice; and yeast and/or beer. We tried many of these ingredients in feeders over several years; still no butterflies were attracted to our feeding stations.

Our challenge was to set up a successful feeder in our upper Midwest temperate climate. Here, as in many other northern places, our environment is quite different from that of butterfly houses, where tropical butterflies feast on honey-coated ripened fruit. Determined to succeed, two years ago we fine-tuned our approach to butterfly feeding. Instead of using bananas that had naturally spoiled in our kitchen, we followed the suggestion in How to Spot Butterflies by Patricia Taylor Sutton and Clay Sutton, and put a peeled banana in our freezer overnight. When we took the banana from the freezer the next day, it had a gray, mealy consistency, but it worked in our feeder.

We constructed our feeder from a plastic one-inch plant coaster that we had used under a flowerpot. We poured about two tablespoons of blackstrap molasses and about a three-quarter cup of stale beer over
the fruit, instead of the honey and yeast we had previously used. We replenished the bananas and molasses every week or so. This may not be the answer to how to feed butterflies but it is one that has certainly worked for us.

We decided to hang our feeder in the birch tree in our back yard, using a plant hanger (also recommended by the Suttons). We punched one hole on each of four locations on the sides of the plastic coaster for attaching the plant hanger.

Our feeder attracted a variety of butterflies all summer long. A highlight was being able to view more than one species or individual at the feeder at one time. An explosion of Red Admirals that summer was no doubt was a factor in our enjoyment. It was thrilling to see butterflies buzzing the feeder from our house or spotting them while working in the garden.

We repeated our “victory” a second year and were quite enthused at the sight of butterflies hovering and landing at our feeder like birds landing at our bird feeders in the winter. Next year we plan to use a heavier container for our feeder to provide greater stability in wind.

Our first successful feeder was hung outdoors in early July. Now we set feeders out in May. The day we set out the feeder, we immediately had butterfly visitors.

One of the photos we took near the feeder won a calendar photo contest and graced the month of July in 2008. We look forward to watching butterflies stop at our feeders next year!

Addendum to ‘Put a Butterfly Feeder in Your Future’:  Feeder Maintenance:

* 1. Rain can fill your feeder with water. After a rain, drain the water and, if needed, replenish the bananas and molasses. Butterflies don’t mind if some water is left in the feeder.

* 2. Wind may blow your feeder from the tree. To avoid this, take your feeder down when a storm is expected. If the feeder is blown down, simply put it back up and refill as needed. One of our feeders was blown down in a storm and broken. We simply replace the coaster.

* 3. Do not feel that you need to leave your feeder up throughout the season as you might a bird feeder. We use the feeder for a month or so each year, during the height of our butterfly season. Sometimes we put it for a few weeks in late spring and early fall.

A Caution: We recommended the use stale beer in your feeder. Although it is generally accepted that stale beer be used in a butterfly feeder, some concern about this practice has been expressed. We are not aware of research regarding the impact of stale beer on particular species. We are aware that the alcohol in the beer evaporates over time and that flat beer is preferable. We recommend that you use stale beer sparingly or not at all if you are concerned. If we have no beer on hand, we use yeast instead.

Happy Butterflying, Joan Myrom & Sam Jurkovic
A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than the metaphysics of books.
Walt Whitman

NEWSLETTER DUE DATES

June 8, July 6, August 3, September 14

REMINDERS

1. The Meeting is May 2, 2013 at 10:00 AM.
2. Daytime Study Group **changed to May 29** trip to Patapsco Pottery Sales; contact Eleanor Cone for more information.
3. Evening Study Group, May 8, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM, topic Roses by Melody Karbley.
5. Master Gardener Annual Training Day, May 22, 2013, UMD, College Park, MD

Joyce Browning
Horticulturist/ Master Gardener Coordinator
University of Maryland Extension

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