Hello Master Gardeners!

It has certainly been a busy spring around here. Between GIEI classes, tree-plantings, plant clinics at the library and farmer’s market, the Garden Series classes, Community Garden excitement, and work starting again at Liriodendron, Eden Mill, Rockfield Manor, and the Bel Air United Methodist church, there has been no shortage of activities. You Master Gardeners have been out and about! Thanks for all the great work. Remember, if you want to work on a project, check your Committee Chair list for the activity you are interested in and call him or her—they will be happy to have you volunteer. Then remember to turn in your volunteer hours!

As for my vegetable garden—it’s coming along but slowly. On the up side, I haven’t had many bugs (yet) so pests aren’t chewing on my seedlings. On the down side, it’s been so cool it’s difficult to convince the seedlings to put on a lot of growth. But they have all survived and I’ll be harvesting lettuce and spinach as well as bok choy and baby kale and asparagus. I love it! And then there is my grow-light station indoors. I have lots of (too many) tomato seedlings that I recently potted up into larger pots. I carefully watered them with a light fertilizer and was turning to walk away when one of the flats slid between the support rails and overturned. What a mess—a dozen seedlings (and my carefully applied labels on sticks) were in a pile on the floor; along with the mucky dark soil, newly drenched with fish emulsion. I think I got most of the labels back with the correct plants—but there may be a few surprises in the garden this summer when I get a Black Krim when I thought it was an Amish Paste. I think we need to do some tweaking to the support system for my flats.

We are still in need of helpers to transport the tent, tables, and files to the Bel Air Farmer’s Market. We have coverage through May and June but a couple of weeks in July we will need assistance. If you have a van or SUV and can help with taking the gear to the market on a Saturday morning, please get in touch with me. It’s a critical need for a really important MG outreach. Thanks!

Joan Parris ’09
"In June, as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day. No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them."  Aldo Leopold

GARDENING TIP

Have you had difficulty keeping your nails from staining when you are weeding, planting or potting plants?  I have for years.  Gloves did not work as dirt always got under my nails staining them.  However, that is in the past.  While traveling, I met a couple who were both gardeners and they told me how they had just spent 4 intensive days in the garden weeding, planting and getting it ready for their daughter’s garden party before leaving for the trip.  I noticed that their nails were not stained and asked how they accomplished that feat.  They told me that they scraped their nails over a bar of soap until the soap was packed under the nail and then put on their gloves.  This was not the first time I had heard this trick, but it did not work for me.  Then they told me the real secret – the soap bar cannot be hard, like most commercial soap, but soft soap like homemade/artisan soap.  The nails are scraped over the soap bar until the soap is packed under the nail, and then the gloves are put on.  When it is time to clean up, warm water and a soft nail brush is all that is needed.  After a minute or so the nails are free of the dirt and stain.  So, try it and see how your nails look!

Elaine Dodd, ’04

STATE NEWS

LANDSCAPE DESIGN FOR WATER MANAGEMENT

St. Mary’s County  – Leonardtown:
June 5, 12, 19; 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM.
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 MD MG Program and UME Sea Grant are partnering to bring you this course in 3 locations.
Fee: $49.00:  Deadline: one week before class

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.
You will learn:

1. design techniques that help manage
2. water in the best possible way
3. specific information about plants used for conservation landscaping so that you can advise clients on plant selection and placement
4. how to install rain barrels
5. 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
6. 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 rain gardens and riparian buffers.

**INTENSIVE TECHNIQUES AND SMALL SPACE GARDENING**

(Counts 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, such as bio-intensive (John Jeavons) and square foot (Mel Bartholomew), and specific practices, such as inter-planting, succession planting, vertical gardening, drip irrigation, and season extension. 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. (Counts for 1 day)

**Location:** Howard Co. Conservancy – July 16, 9:00AM – 3:30 PM  
Charles Co. locations – July 18, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM

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?

[Registration Form](https://extension.umd.edu/hgic) for all classes; [https://extension.umd.edu/hgic](https://extension.umd.edu/hgic)
"I know well that the June rains just fall."  Onitsura

LIRIODENRON JUNE BLOOM

SCHEDULE

*Crested Iris  Iris cristata
*Lady's Mantle  Alchemilla mollis
Spiderwort  Tradescantia ohiensis
Evening primrose  Oenothera speciosa
Tickseed  Coreopsis verticillata
Yellow Foxglove  Digitalis grandiflora

Also many ferns:
*Lady Fern  Athyrium filix-femina
Dixie Wood Fern  Dryopteris x austalis
Log Fern  Dryopteris celsa
Autumn Fern  Dryopteris erythrosora
Goldie's Fern  Dropteris goldiana
Christmas Fern  Polystichum acrostichoides

BLUEBELL WALK

Did you get a chance to go to Susquehanna State Park to see the Virginia Bluebells in bloom?  I was unaware that there was such a beautiful wildflower walk right in "our own backyard".  My husband is a mathematician and always warns me how large a million actually is, but I do think I saw a million Virginia bluebells in bloom!  As we walked, the expanse of blue became wider and wider.  We started out along the Susquehanna River bank, but soon turned inland just a little so there was an "ocean of blue" on each side of the trail.  We also saw nodding trilliums, Dutchman's breeches, Trout Lilies, Spring beauties, Lesser celandine, and, of course, blue and yellow violets.
As a side trip we also enjoyed the Susquehanna River. Evidently, at least one extra gate was open on the Conowingo Dam. The water was high and really rushing along the bank. Only a few large rocks were above water out in the middle. These rocks were lined, shoulder to shoulder, with ornaments (birds). The Cormorant birds stand tall and from a distance looked like the pictures we see on TV of penguins crowded on a chunk of ice!

We also saw lots of fishermen lining the banks near the metal bridge. We watched a few minutes and then realized that a mature Bald Eagle was also watching! He was sitting high in a tree right above the fishermen! The fishermen were catching lots of fish, but throwing them back. I think the eagle was watching and hoping to catch a "throw back". Or, maybe one would swim away injured and he could swoop down for an easy meal.

The Master Gardener’s should schedule a walking trip for next April to see the bluebells in bloom! I am ready to go again!

*Linda Baker ‘05*
2013 Perennial Plant of the Year™

*Polygonatum odoratum* ‘Variegatum’ – VARIEGATED SOLOMON’S SEAL

Each year the Perennial Plant Association (composed of growers, retailers, landscape designers, educators and professionals in the herbaceous perennial trade), select the best perennial of the year. For 2013 they have selected Variegated Solomon’s seal *Polygonatum odoratum* ‘Variegatum’, a member of the Liliaceae family, as the Perennial Plant of the Year.

To become the Perennial Plant of the Year a plant has to have a wide climate hardiness range, easy care, availability, multi-season interest and propagated easily. In addition the plants have impressive aesthetic beauty and features that ordinary gardeners appreciate.

Variegated Solomon Seal possesses arching, olive-green branches, 3- to 4-inch leaves narrowly edged in crisp white on reddish stems. This plant grows 18-to 24 inches tall and spreads to colonize a favored spot. It likes full to partial shade and prefers moist soil. If grown in drier spots, watering well for the first year will establish a strong root system.

The spring bell-like flowers dangle from each leaf axil. Solomon seal gives off a scent suggestive of its kissing cousin, lily-of-the-valley. In the autumn garden it provides additional interest as its leaves turn golden yellow, before the winter rest. It is a faithful perennial appearing again each spring. In late winter remove the old foliage before the new emerges.

This North American native is hardy from zones 4 through 8 and requires relatively simple care. To obtain the best growth/blooms Solomon seal should be divided every 2 to 3 years. The plant can be easily propagated, in early spring, by removing the thumb-sized horizontal rhizomes located just below the ground. Annually scratching in some plant food is needed for best performance. It also has few disease and pest problems although if slugs become a problem this can be easily taken care of by organic slug bait. Overall it is an easy care perennial.

Variegated Solomon's Seal displays well with other shade-loving perennials such as, toad lily, wild ginger, astilbe, *Brunnera, Carex, Acorus*, hosta, small ferns and shade loving shrubs like azalea.

This plant is a well-mannered, fragrant, native that is great in the shade and attractive to hummingbirds! What else do you need or want in the shade garden?

**HYPERLINKS - NEW TO THE NEWSLETTER** Check out the hyperlinks for references. I have inserted a hyperlink whenever a quote or picture from a source other than Master Gardener pictures, articles and my computer has been inserted. To access it, simply take the curser over the quote, picture, etc. and the reference hyperlink will appear. I hope you enjoy this new addition to the newsletter. To send me an email, just follow the instructions in the hyperlink on the email address below.

*Elaine Dodd ’04*
NEWSLETTER DUE DATES
Submit articles to: Elaine Dodd, edodd3@yahoo.com

Articles can be submitted at any time. Time sensitive articles must be submitted by the following dates: June 8, July 6, August 3, and September 14

REMINDERS
1. The next meeting is June 6, at 7:00 PM.
2. Daytime Study Group, to be announced.
3. Evening Study Group, to be announced.

Odd as I am sure it will appear to some, I can think of no better form of personal involvement in the cure of the environment than that of gardening. A person who is growing a garden, if he is growing it organically, is improving a piece of the world. He is producing something to eat, which makes him somewhat independent of the grocery business, but he is also enlarging, for himself, the meaning of food and the pleasure of eating.

-Wendell Berry

MARYLAND MASTER GARDENER MISSION STATEMENT

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

The University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources programs are open to all and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry or national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, or gender identity and expression.