Hello Master Gardeners,

I'm writing this on a wild and wooly day - the first rain we've had in 2 weeks and it is SO nice to be inside, watching the rain, hearing the wind, and hoping that my garden transplants survive.

My husband and I engaged on a few major landscaping projects this summer. First, we dug, sifted, and amended all the soil in the beds beside our back patio. It was a huge undertaking. We worked every day for 2 hours or so. It's finally finished and the fun job of planting begins. And then, just in case we didn't have enough to do since the season for vegetable gardening is winding down, we have embarked on replacing and re-designing the front walk of our home. That means moving all of the plants from the garden beds in preparation for new landscaping. In addition we had two new beds prepared by the landscapers and are now in the process of replacing old plants with new. I think we'll be finished someday - but actually, a flower/shrub garden is always a work in progress. It's mostly fun and certainly keeps us in shape! My friends, the stink bugs, have finally almost left the vegetable garden and are trying to get in the house. It's very satisfying to capture them in soapy water, knowing there will be a few less to devour my tomatoes next year!

We had another great MG meeting in October with lots of enthusiasm and many old and new faces. Our intern class is jumping right in - many are already attending meetings and volunteering for projects. Make sure you meet them and make them feel welcome whenever you see them!

Our MG's have lots of projects on-going for volunteers - our main winter project, in January and February, will be STEM night at Harford County middle schools. Contact Grace Wyatt if you want to help out with these events. The Garden Series continues through November and December and in January we will begin a new set of classes. Mary Driver needs teachers and helpers with the 2014 classes. Many of the class topics are new in 2014, so check it out and volunteer.

Our December meeting will be our annual holiday dinner at Liriodendron Mansion on December 5 at 6:30 pm. Bring a pot luck dish and spouses are invited. There's no business conducted at this event - just a fun time to mingle and enjoy one another, so plan to attend!

Joan Parris 2009
HARFORD COUNTY GARDEN SERIES

The Garden Series at the Bel Air library is winding down. There are just two more classes! Why not attend and gain a few education hours? All of the Master Gardener speakers are very knowledgeable on their topics and you are sure to learn something new.

Please pre-register with the library 410-638-3151.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 16</td>
<td>10:15 am-noon</td>
<td>How to Plant and Install a Rain Garden</td>
<td>Cindy Porter, Meg Algren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 7</td>
<td>10:15 am-noon</td>
<td>Shade Gardening</td>
<td>Anne Lee, Becky Cody, Jerry Hudgens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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WHEN GARDENERS AND THE LAW CLASH

This is a story about a retired Chicago teacher and environmentalist, Kathy Cummings, who moved into her home in 1999, and began transforming the postage-stamp front yard into the kind of natural landscape she knew was better for the environment.

She tore out the privet hedge and the not so nice grass and replaced them with wild ginger, sea oats, ferns, violets, sunflowers, and pawpaw trees. She made labels for many of the plants and built subtle borders with intertwined twigs that she picked up in the neighborhood. When some milkweed - which isn't a weed, but a wildflower - migrated into the garden, she was very happy.

Kathy called her garden "Cummings' Haven," and in 2004 it won first place in the native landscapes category of the Mayor's Landscape Awards Program, sponsored by the Chicago Department of Environment.

Imagine her surprise when she received a ticket in October, 2012, along with others, for violation of the Chicago weed ordinance. Ms. Comings went to court, but once the Judge looked at photographs of the garden and saw the milkweed, she was found guilty of violating the ordinance. She could appeal, but would have to pay $317 for filing costs.

Ken Dun, an urban recycling pioneer, was also ticketed for violating the weed ordinance. He has had natural plants in the front yard at his Hyde Park home since 1972 because there is no watering, no chemicals or mowing involved. In his case, says Dunn, the judge fingered a picture of milkweed and declared that it was over “18 inches” tall. When Dunn replied that it was a native milkweed the judge declared, "There you go! Weed, over 18 inches tall. Guilty."

Dunn paid the $600 fine, plus court costs. Another defendant in the courtroom that day was found guilty for having a rosebush.

Cummings found some striking results in her research of the law. Not only is the ordinance vague, but the penalties for violations went from $100 to $600 and the maximum from $300 to $1,200 in 2010. After changes to the ordinance, inspectors issued more tickets, many in poor neighborhoods. As a result the number of tickets issued increased and so did the penalties. In the first three months of 2013 there were 3,946 tickets issued. In addition, since 2009 the revenues went from $1 million to almost 3.7 million.
Although Kathy Cummings wanted to appeal, she could not find a lawyer who would take the case, until she mentioned it to the owner of the property next door, James L. Bowers, a civil rights attorney. So, on May 9, 2013 a suit was filed on her behalf against the city, the Department of Streets, Sanitation, and Administrative Hearing and the inspector who issued the tickets.

She, and a group of concerned citizens are also working together to review the weed legislation from other cities so that a better law might be proposed for Chicago.


**DRYING HYDRANGEA FLOWERS**

Hydrangeas are one of those flowers that almost dry themselves. Once dry, they can look beautiful for years. There are several ways to dry hydrangeas, but water-drying hydrangea flowers help them retain their color and last longer.

The biggest challenge in drying hydrangeas is timing when to cut the blossoms. If you cut them in peak bloom, they have too much moisture and don’t dry quickly enough to retain their beauty. Too late, and they will just turn brown. It’s even harder to tell with hydrangeas like ‘Annabelle’ that only go from bright white to pale green, but take your best guess.

Ideally, cut hydrangea blossoms for drying toward the end of the season, August through October, when the larger petals are starting to fade or change color and the tiny flowers on top of the colorful petals are just beginning to open. If you can’t really see the tiny flowers on your hydrangea variety, going by the changing shades of color is just fine. I cut a few every week, just to make sure I capture some in their perfect peak.

While it’s not optimal, you can push the timing a bit and wait until your hydrangea blossoms have begun to pick up their autumn tones of burgundy, pink, green or blue. It’s not the ideal way to dry hydrangea flowers, but you’ll get interesting tones and they will keep for quite a while.

In all honesty, in some years it’s impossible to find flowers that are ready to be cut and don’t have any brown spots on them. If that’s the case, you can always remove the individual brown flowers, either before or after drying.

Don’t worry too much about being exact. Hydrangeas are very forgiving flowers. First, cut each flower with a 12 - 18” stem attached. The length is for ease of handling, it’s not a science. Then, remove all the leaves from the stems. Place the freshly cut flowers in a vase with fresh water. Make sure the stems are at least half covered with water. Move the vase to a cool spot, out of direct sunlight. The flowers will still look attractive, so go ahead and display them. Allowing the hydrangea flowers to desiccate slowly helps them hold their color and their shape. Even the stem seems sturdier when dried this way.
Don't add more water as the water in the vase evaporates. It’s just there to allow your hydrangeas to dry naturally, rather than simply dry out. Once the water is totally evaporated, your hydrangeas should feel dry to the touch and ready to use.

Another option is to simply hang your hydrangea blossoms upside down, by their stems. Because of their large size, this is best done with individual blossoms, rather than bunching them together. Air dried hydrangeas tend to be a bit more brittle than water dried blossoms, but still beautiful.

However you dry your hydrangeas, expect the color to last for about 1 year. After that, it will start to fade out, although those kept in rooms with less sunlight may last for several years.

Jeanine Smetana submitted the article copied from http://gardening.about.com/od/craftsanddecor/ss/Dried_Hydrangea_5.htm

NEW INVASIVE INSECT FOUND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN UNITED STATES

Boise, ID - A new invasive insect, the Elm Seed Bug (Arocatus melanocephalus), recently was confirmed in Idaho in both Ada and Canyon counties. Elm Seed Bugs, which have never been found before in the United States, are commonly distributed in central-southern Europe and feed on the seeds of elm trees. The insect does not damage trees or buildings, nor does it present any threat to human health. However, due to its habit of entering houses and other buildings in large numbers to escape the summer heat and later to overwinter, it can be a significant nuisance to homeowners.

Since the Elm Seed Bug is new to the United States, the United States Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will take the lead in researching the biology of the pest and its possible impacts, and will develop recommendations about management. Idaho homeowners may contact their county’s University of Idaho Extension office for information on dealing with the insect. To locate your local Extension office, please visit http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/about.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture will continue tracking the movement of the Elm Seed Bug within Idaho. If you suspect you have found the Elm Seed Bug outside of Ada and Canyon counties, please place four or five specimens in a plastic sandwich bag and mail in a regular envelope to: Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Plant Industries Division, P.O. Box 790 Boise, ID 83701. Please include your name, address and phone number or you may call (208) 332-8620 to report the possible find.

Note: this insect is not likely to become a problem in Harford Co. since we have few elms. -Joyce

http://www.gardendigest.com/monnov.htm#Quotes

The third day comes a frost, a killing frost. –William Shakespeare
THE FINGERLING POTATO

In his 1863 book, The Field and Garden Vegetables of America, considered by many to be the definitive work describing the vegetables of nineteenth century America, Fearing Burr described 66 different potatoes. He stated that:

“In its wild or natural state, as found growing on the mountains of Mexico or South America, the tubers rarely exceed an inch in diameter, and are comparatively unpalatable. During the last half century its cultivation within the United States has greatly increased, and it is now considered the most important of all esculent roots, and next to the cereals in value as an article of human subsistence.”

Of the 66 potatoes Burr described, only one was a fingerling, the Black Chenango, which was a purple skinned, purple fleshed potato. This potato, Burr described as “…quality good, usually dry, and of good flavor…moderately productive, and withstands disease better than almost any other potato; but its dark color is objectionable.”

Fingerlings are probably some of the most ancient potato varieties that exist today. They are usually shaped like a fat, 4-6 inch long index finger with a slight, half moon curve, hence the name ‘fingerling’. Some are much smaller, 1-3 inches, and a few are slightly larger in the 6-8 inch range. They can be white, yellow, red, pink or purple.

The Fingerling shape probably pre-dated the “round” tubers with which we are familiar, but there are ancient “round” varieties that are nearly as old as the fingerlings.

As Burr noted, the fingerlings usually have tremendous disease resistance and their flavor is good, sometimes excellent. They are generally quite productive, and what Burr did not mention is that fingerlings are excellent storers. They can easily last 6 months under the right conditions.

Fingerlings, like their rounder relatives, are believed to have originated in the Andean Highlands near Lake Titicaca at elevations as high as 10,000-12,000 feet. Today, some of the most important research related to the biodiversity of the potato is being done in this region. The organization funding and overseeing this research is The International Potato Center (CIP) located in Lima, Peru.

CIP tracks more than 4000 different potato varieties worldwide with most of these varieties indigenous to the Peruvian Andes. The CIP genebank maintains the largest collection of potato germplasm in the world including more than 7000 accessions of native, wild and improved varieties. (An accession is a collection of plant material – seeds, roots, tubers, cuttings, etc. – from a particular location.) One of CIP’s most active partners is China. China is the largest consumer of potatoes in the world, and the potato is one of, if not its most important food crops. China estimates that 50% of the increased food production the country will need to meet demand in the next 20 years will come from potatoes.
FROM YOUR EDITOR

Hi Master Gardeners:

While the newsletter is a place for education, it is also the sharing of your gardening experiences/knowledge, recipes, thoughts, etc. that make it more interesting. Since the gardening year is winding down, now is the time to think about writing article(s) for the newsletter. This is a great way to be at home in the comfort of your PJs while gaining volunteer hours! So with that said, I am looking forward to receiving many incredible items for the 2014 newsletters. Remember that you get hours from the time you start thinking about writing through to sending your article, photos, recipes, quotes, etc.

Elaine Dodd 2004 - edodd3@yahoo.com

REMINDERS

1. The November meeting is changed to Wednesday, November 6, 2013 at 10 AM. The guest speaker will be teaching on Dahlias and includes a demonstration on winter tuber storage.
2. Planning Meeting is cancelled for November. Enjoy your Thanksgiving celebrations.
3. Remember to volunteer and turn in your log sheets.
4. Newsletter due date is November 8.

Joyce Browning
Urban Horticulturist
Master Gardener Coordinator
Harford County Office

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.