Howdy, everyone!

ANNA MCGUCKEN
HORTICULTURE FEA

I am the new Horticulture Faculty Extension Assistant and Master Gardener Coordinator for Baltimore County.

Throughout my life, I have been connected to University of Maryland Extension in some way or another. I grew up on a small farm in Cockeysville, Maryland, raising dairy goats, rabbits, and poultry, and growing a variety of fruits and vegetables. My father was a Master Gardener and my sisters and I were all active in our local 4-H club. I was raised in an environment where I was constantly surrounded by agriculture, encouraged to become a leader within my community, and educated and nurtured by University of Maryland volunteers and staff. It was no surprise then, that I decided to attend the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources for my undergraduate degrees. I graduated from UMD with Bachelor’s degrees in Animal and Avian Sciences and Agricultural Sciences and Technology. While at the University of Maryland, I was a leader in Sigma Alpha Professional Agricultural Society, Block and Bridle Livestock Club, and the College of AGNR Student Council. Throughout my four years there, I held many jobs and internships in the agricultural field that helped to advance my knowledge of horticulture, animal science, entomology, weed science, cereal crop management, soils, and community development projects.

After graduating from UMD, I attended Texas A&M University to complete my Master’s degree in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications with a focus on International Agricultural Development. My thesis research focused on Junior Master Gardener programs in Guatemala and the impact that these experiences can have on youth participants. Ultimately, my research indicated that these programs can have a significant impact on science skills and achievement and leadership development. Enabling community members, of any age, to feel confident about themselves and their ability to make a difference in their community is valuable no matter where you are in the world. For this reason, I believe strongly in the power of gardening programs and their ability to educate and unite people towards a common goal.

As the Horticulture FEA and the Master Gardener Coordinator, I am excited to be a part of creating a stronger, healthier, and more environmentally-minded community here in Baltimore County.

Thank you and I look forward to working with you soon!
Solanum melongena

As most Master Gardeners know, I have a real disdain for eating kale and Swiss chard; however, I have a fondness for eggplant, which started at an early age. A real treat was when my family went to Little Italy for Sunday dinner at the Roma. My mother would order melanzane alla parmigiana, eggplant parmesan. Of course, I wanted what my mother was eating and asked to have a taste. My mother said, “Do not worry, Norman, it’s not your taste.” As usual my mother’s reverse psychology worked, the eggplant was tasted, and today eggplant dishes are some of my favorite ethnic dishes.

From all indications, eggplant has its origins in southern India. The first written account of eggplant is in an ancient Chinese agricultural treatise completed in 544 B.C. The etymology of the eggplant is quite complicated. In fact, in archaic English, the eggplant was called mad apple from the Italian melanzana; melanzana was interpreted by the English as mela insane or mad apple.

In the western Mediterranean, (al)-bāḏinjān became the Spanish berenjena, the Catalan as albergínia, and the Portuguese beringela. The Catalan form was borrowed by French as aubergine, which was then grafted onto British English. The term eggplant obtained its name from early English cultivars which resembled white hen’s eggs.

The eggplant is a member of the Solanaceae family or nightshades, which contains the potato, tomato, pepper and the weed, horse nettle. The eggplant is a delicate, tropical perennial often cultivated as a tender or half-hardy annual in temperate climates. Cultivars grow from 16 to 57 inches tall, with large, coarsely-lobed leaves that are four to eight inches long and two to four inches wide. Semi-wild types can grow much larger, to seven feet tall with large leaves over 12 inches long and six inches wide. The stem can often be spiny. The flower is white to purple, with a five-lobed corolla and yellow stamens.

The egg-shaped glossy black fruit has white flesh with a meaty texture. On wild plants, the fruit is less than one-and-a-half inches in diameter, but very much larger in cultivated forms, reaching a foot or more in length. The fruit is botanically necessary, classified as a berry and contains numerous small, soft seeds that are edible, but have a bitter taste because they contain nicotinoid alkaloids (being a relative of tobacco). The cultivated eggplant has four standard shapes: bell, long (my favorite is Ichiban, meaning number one in Japanese), cylindrical, and round.

Verticillium wilt can be an issue in cultivation; a survey of seed catalogs show no disease resistant varieties. Disease management entails crop rotation. Geneticists are attempting to hybridize S. melongena with its wild cousin S. torvum to develop a disease resistant plant. At the Grow It Eat It Demo Garden, the biggest pest is the ubiquitous flea beetle whose host plant in early spring is horse nettle. Weeding is a necessity and can be therapeutic.

The floating row cover is an excellent physical strategy; however, aesthetically, with everybody using row covers, the vegetable garden loses eye appeal. One labor intensive intervention is coating the eggplant leaves with kaolin clay, an organic product. Trade name Surround. It is slurried then sprayed on the eggplant leaves forming a particulate barrier between the flea beetle and the leaf. Unfortunately, when it rains the product must be re-applied.

Some of my favorite dishes are the Greek appetizer dip "melitzanosalat" with crusty bread; Szechwan Chinese eggplant with spicy garlic sauce, and the traditional North Indian (Punjabi) Bhurtha made with eggplant and tomato, and seasoned with cumin, turmeric, garlic, and ginger. And you thought that I only eat sweets!

July General Meeting

July 10th, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon

Tropical plants with Carrie Engel

While there’s lots going on outside now, indoor plants still need consideration. Carrie Engel, television personality and greenhouse Manager for Valley View Farms, will bring an assortment of distinctive and irresistible tropical plants.

Carrie will begin at 10:00 am; our General Meeting will follow.
Help needed in the Junior garden

PAT THOMAS

The junior garden is looking good, but needs help to keep it that way. We have spruced it up a lot this year and are now recruiting garden workers. Can you help?

The table/bench area will be sprayed and spread with woodchips, so no need to weed there. We installed a sail shade, so you can rest out of the sun…in between bouts of weeding. We don’t have scheduled work days since we are currently only in maintenance mode, so just show up and weed/water at your convenience, unless you want some company.

If you can help, please feel free to come out. If you want to be removed from this list, let me know that, too.

Plant ID labs

JUDY FULTON

Master Gardener Judy Fulton and Charlie Davis, a well known Maryland botanist, are running plant identification labs at the Natural History Society of Maryland. The labs are scheduled for 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. These labs are part of a plant survey that Judy is conducting at the Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture and Farm Park. The specimens used in the labs are being collected throughout the year from various environments (e.g., fields, woods, stream banks and strips bordering paths) on the Ag Center property. At the moment, participants are having fun identifying flowering plants collected this spring and early summer. You can find the full description of the labs and sign up for them on Meetup by clicking on the events listed on the calendar at www.meetup.com/marylandnature/events/. In addition, Judy and Charlie will be running periodic workshops to collect and press specimen plants from the Ag Center for use in the labs. Both the plant labs and collection workshops include plant identification and botany instruction; so, you can record these activities as either training or volunteer hours.

Why we need bees

UMD Researcher Dennis vanEngelsdorp, Ph.D., gave an inspiring, awesome and truly fascinating keynote address at MG Annual Training Day on 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 several borrowed photos in the presentation, so he can’t give it out or post it everywhere. 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.
We need you (and/or your heirloom tomatoes!)

ANGIE GOODMAN

Are you growing heirloom tomatoes? Could you possibly spare a few for others to experience the delightfully different taste of an heirloom tomato at the Master Garden Fest on August 9?

Lisa Airey set the bar high last year; I will do my best to make her proud. Someone else, though, will have to take my spot in the tomato costume that day.

We are looking for commitments of donations of three to five tomatoes per type, per person if you can spare them (three large or five smaller). I understand that we never know how our tomato crop is going to go, but if you think you can provide a few tomatoes, please let me know now. And even if you only end up with one or two big ones, I won’t turn you away!

I plan to prepare informational cards for the tomatoes we will have. I would rather have cards ready even if they don’t come in than not have cards ready at all. So please let me know what type(s) of tomatoes you might be able to donate.

Here are the on-site duties:

Staff the booth and talk about tomatoes. General veggie growing knowledge is preferred, but heirloom tomato knowledge is not necessary.

Cut up tomatoes as the plates empty. Set up (arriving probably 8:00 a.m.) and clean up (hopefully by 3:00 p.m.)

Hereford Jr. Farm Fair in August

The Hereford Junior Farm Fair (run entirely by volunteers) will celebrate its 69th event on Saturday, August 9 from 9-3 at the Ag Center. Baltimore County youth will be showcasing animals and indoor exhibits. Many animals such as swine, poultry, sheep, cows, and goats will be shown. Indoor exhibits include art work, crafts, photography, agriculture, woodworking and many other entries. Visitors are welcome to this free event. Food and ice cream will be available. For information, go to www.herefordjrfarmfair.com.

We’ve lost a great nurseryman

Kurt Bluemel, nursery owner in Baldwin, who became nationally known as the king of grasses for the hundreds of ornamental varieties he cultivated and who recreated an entire African savannah for the Walt Disney Co.’s Animal Kingdom resort near Orlando, died in early June. He was 81.

In 1964, he opened a nursery with another German planter who had washed up in Maryland, Wolfgang Oehme. Together they saw tall grasses and wildflowers as a way to breathe new life into dull, passive gardens—even if America wasn’t quite ready for their revolution.

The family-owned company released a statement, “We shall continue with the plans envisioned for delivering the plant materials and horticultural concepts most suitable for the environmental demands of today and in the future. We are most proud to carry on, guided by the extensive vision and teachings of Mr. Bluemel.”

National Arboretum programs

The U.S. National Arboretum offers programs and tours throughout the year. Most have a fee and require registration: www.usda.gov or (202) 245-4521.

On July 26 at 10:00 a.m., a talk and tour, All about Crapemyrtles, will focus on this summer-blooming gem, from the science of breeding new varieties to growing them at home. After a classroom talk, the tour will continue on an open-air tram, with short stops for exploration. Fee: $22.

On August 16 at 9:00 a.m., tour the Asian Collections to see cold-hardy tropical plants from China, Japan, and Korea, including gingers, bamboos, and bananas in the landscape. This terrain is hilly with a mix of paved and mulched trails. Fee: $12.

BAY-WISE TRAINING

Sign up now!

Saturdays, September 6 and 13 at the Ag Center and Cylburn Arboretum. Brought to you by Baltimore City and Baltimore County Bay-Wise Committees. Send $50 to Baltimore County Extension marked Bay-Wise Advanced Training, made payable to BCEAC. This class is open to all Master Gardeners who want to continue their education on issues around sustainable gardening. It enables you to lead Bay-Wise certifications and spread the word to all that gardening that is good for the Bay is easy and fun. A syllabus with topics to be covered will follow, but go ahead and sign up now to save your space. Questions? Leslie Erickson and Carolyn Vane may have some of the answers. Contact them!

MGs who have already taken the training may attend as refresher. While the registration fee is waived, they will not receive a new homework binder so they should bring theirs along.
Robin Hessey is retiring

ROBIN HESSEY
STATE ADVANCED TRAINING COORDINATOR

I have been most privileged to work for the Master Gardener program for the last 17 years. My last official day with HGIC and the state MG program will be August 31, 2014. After that I’ll be officially retired 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, and 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 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 University of Maryland 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 and to surround myself with plant and bug issues on a daily basis—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 see it.

Please change my email address in your records or add rmhessey@verizon.net. The rmhessey@umd.edu address will cease to exist after September 1.

Wishing everyone lots of success in their MG endeavors and in eliminating urban use of pesticides and herbicides.

See you in the garden!

---

MASTER GARDEN Fest

August 9th
10 am to 2 pm
114 Shawan Road
in Cockeysville

Garden Celebration!

Activities include:
- Scavenger hunts
- Fun with herbs
- Garden ideas and answers
- Children’s crafts and activities
- Worm composting
- Heirloom tomato tasting

Learn from and enjoy our Demonstration Gardens.
Grow It Eat It • Bay-Wise • Kid’s Corner • Pollen Nation • Herb • Composting

Anna McGucken at amcguck@umd.edu or call 410-771-1761.
Worm workshop @ Maryland Science Ctr

Compost team members Lisa Smith, Pam Moss, Carolyn Gonzalez and Vickie Miller presented the Urban Gardening Workshop: Worm Composting, as part of the Speakers Bureau, at the Maryland Science Center on June 28. Seven participants, including two children, learned how to reduce their kitchen footprint and use kitchen scraps to enrich garden soil. Participants took home a completed project and knowledge to care for their worms.

Continuing education planning

It’s that time of year again! Every year at this time, we solicit our membership for potential continuing education topics for the next calendar year. We are beginning the planning phase for the 2015 calendar. If you’ve got a great idea and know of an awesome speaker(s), please e-mail Rita Donoho.

Remember, this is your organization and if you’d like to continue with quality education, take the time to think about what you’d like to learn and share with your fellow Master Gardeners. Our continuing education segments (typically one hour), follow our general meetings.

BCMGs new tractor

The new equipment is a John Deere X710 Garden tractor with hydraulic controls, power steering, and a 52-inch deck. It is faster, more powerful, and more durable than our last one and can accommodate garden attachments.

If you’re interested hauling tools and supplies, please contact Kolman Kodeck. He will show you how to use it, clean it, and log the time used. Our goal is to care well for the tractor so it will last us a long time.

BCMGS AUGUST GENERAL MEETING
August 21st, 5:30-8:30 pm
Harvest Picnic

MGs should bring a dish to share (along with the recipe!) The organization will provide drinks, but not hot dogs and hamburgers this year as the garden dishes have been more popular in the past. We always have lots to eat! There will be a basket at the sign-in table for the recipes; we will share them online.

Come and enjoy a good time with lots of food, friendship, and fun.