From the Desk of Mikaela Boley

Anyone else sick of pulling weeds? While therapeutic in some respects, there is a finite amount of weeds you can take before it becomes overwhelming. This has been a particularly wonderful year for weeds so far—with abundant moisture and sunshine, plants have been going crazy.

With the heat of summer, don’t forget to take care of the garden as well as yourself. A soaker system, instead of overhead sprinkler, will allow water to reach the roots more efficiently. Sprinklers can encourage fungal growth, not to mention the loss of water to evaporation. Early morning watering is also preferable—too much evaporation occurs in the middle of the day, and nighttime watering results in wet plants all night long. With extremely hot afternoons, you might want to consider providing afternoon shade with shade cloth or other temporary structure.

More importantly, think about taking care of your body. Plenty of water, brimmed hats, light-colored long-sleeves, and avoiding afternoon sun will benefit you greatly. It takes the human body nearly 2 weeks to acclimate to the heat, so allow yourself to slowly increase the time outdoors during this period.

Cheers!

Mikaela Boley
Demonstration Herb Garden:

Gloria Lindemann

Like many gardens in Talbot County, the Master Gardener Demonstration Herb Garden at the Talbot Agricultural and Education Center suffered greatly during the past winter from the exceedingly cold weather. Everything died. It has been completely replanted by Lynn Kyper, with the assistance of RaeAnn Holder. They have put in, and continue to care for, more than seventy plants. These include: Spurge, Black-Eyed Susan, Shasta Daisy, Stokia, Goldenrod, Sedum ‘Autumn Joy’, Marjoram, Chrysanthum, Yarrow, a Knock-out Rose, Artemesia, Tarragon, Hyssop, Lemon Grass, Rosemary, Curry, Santolina, 3 kinds of Sage, Fennel, Bee Balm, Tansy, Stokesia, Beauty Berry, 4 kinds of Thyme, Oregano, 2 kinds of Basil, both Flat Leaf and Curley Parsley (already hosting a couple of Black Swallowtail Caterpillars), Garlic Chives, Lemon Balm, Camomile, Dianthus, Lavender and Sweet William.

Do stop by and admire their horticultural handiwork. To assist with the care of the Herb Garden, there is a loose standing meeting time on Tuesdays at 8:30AM.

St. Michael’s Museum Goes Native:

Lynn Freeburger and Danna Murden

Thanks to the efforts of Master Gardener Danna Murden, the grounds around the St Michael’s Museum at St Mary’s Square have gone native. A somewhat raggedy landscape consisting of the odd rose bush, two crepe myrtles that weren’t flourishing, and a southern Magnolia that was ruining the roof, has been transformed.

Danna and museum board members Kate Fones, Lynn Freeburger and Jo Storey worked together to create a landscape plan that included an array of native plants that would enhance the site, provide for seeds and berries for wildlife, and begin to make the property Bay-Wise.

The team sought a soil test. Danna worked with Bridges Landscaping who provided the plants and amended the dusty, sandy soil that swirled around the property. Some of the plants that have been installed include: *Aronia arutifolia, Aquilegia chrysantha, Chelone glabra, Echinacea purpurea, Hydrangea quercifolia, Ilex verticillata,* and *Magnolia virginiana*.

The museum was the recipient of a piece of a grant that the Town of St Michaels received to promote the 200th anniversaries of the War of 1812 and the Battle of St Michaels in 1813. Most recently Danna and Master Gardener Sharon Murray spent weeks installing a drip irrigation system to promote the health of the new plants and to conserve water.

Danna and Bay-Wise Coordinator Lynn Freeburger hope to make the museum site a Demonstration Garden. A Bay-Wise Consultation is pending. Danna is also asking for assistance from any other Master Gardeners in weeding the site a couple of times a month.
SUMMER SEASON:
“A Twist on Summer Classics”

Grilled Corn and Basil Butter:

8 ears of corn, shucked
Olive Oil
1 1/2 sticks unsalted butter (room temp)
1 cup basil, loosely packed
1 Tbsp sea salt + extra

Preheat grill to medium hot. Roll corn in a little olive oil and sprinkle with small amount of salt. When grill is hot, add corn and close lid. Rotate corn several times until some kernels are blistered and the corn a shiny yellow (about 8 minutes). Overcooked corn will be dry!

Meanwhile, add butter, basil, and 1 Tbsp sea salt to food processor and blend. Once basil is finely chopped and butter is slightly green, you are finished.

Take corn off grill and slather with basil butter. Sprinkle with additional sea salt if desired. Corn is best eaten immediately, but be careful not to burn your mouth!

*Photo and recipe courtesy of Food52

Watermelonade:

1/2 cup sugar
4 cups cubed watermelon
3 1/2 cups water (or sparkling water)
1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

Bring sugar and 1/2 cup water to boil in saucepan, stirring sugar to dissolve. Set aside.

Put cubed watermelon in blender and puree. Strain through fine mesh sieve, which should yield 2 cups strained watermelon juice.

Mix sugar syrup with 3 cups cold water and lemon juice. Stir well. Fill glasses with ice and about1/4 cup watermelon juice. Top off glass with lemonade mixture and stir before serving. Sliced lemons for garnish.

*Photo and recipe courtesy of Food52
As a child, I remember our family road trips very distinctly. Traveling hours through the Dakotas, across Minnesota, and through Wisconsin, you can’t help but study the acres of fields between. While I have a great love and respect for agricultural crops, I was more fascinated by the wild prairies. They were as diverse and full of movement like they were a living being, waving a gentle “hello” as we sped through the countryside.

But what about a meadow in the urban landscape? My grandmother, a life-long gardener, tells me they look trashy and unkempt. While I doubt I will ever change her mind, I think it’s about time we change the minds of the public. When I think about the prairies of the Midwest, or the meadows of the east, I wonder why we eschew lively, colorful fields in favor of the featureless lawn.

Although there are countless reasons horticulturists/ecologists/environmentalists love meadows, I think there are some very compelling reasons everyone else should love them too. Our economy is geared for the lawn business, but there are an increasing amount of resources available to those interested in attempting the alternative.

Some good reasons to consider meadowscaping:
1. No more fertilizers, herbicides, or constant lawn maintenance.
2. Low maintenance. Once established, meadows and prairies only need mowing (or a prescribed burn) every 3 years.
3. Support ecology. They provide a diverse habitat full of life, for both vertebrates and invertebrates.
4. More interest. Turf is a glorified outdoor carpet. Not very compelling. Meadows have height, color, movement, and some winter cover for birds. And it looks different from season to season!
5. Steep slopes and erosion. What about slopes where your mower just can’t go? Turf has little root structure, and has a difficult time keeping soil in place. Grasses can support the incline and keep soil in place.
6. Sustainable. This is a hot-button issue, and while trendy, it’s also important. Grasslands cycle material and return them to the soil, creating a thick organic layer that is missing in our developed environment.

While there are many wonderful resources, these two books have really introduced me to the meadowscaping mentality, and I would highly recommend looking at them.

Urban & Suburban Meadows: Bringing Meadowscaping to Big and Small Spaces — Catherine Zimmerman (Book and Film)
The Meadow Project — http://www.meadowproject.com
The American Meadow: Creating a Natural Alternative to the Traditional Lawn — John Greenlee and Saxon Holt
Gardening Tidbits:

With Joan Dickson

This is the time of year when insect damage and plant diseases conspire to make our gardening lives miserable. Actually, about half of our problems are caused by abiotic (cultural/environmental) problems, some of which can be solved or at least improved. Some of the insect, disease and abiotic problems are fairly common and the signs are obvious. Others require more investigation to resolve, and Master Gardeners will be happy to help you.

- Plants that flower before the end of June, prune immediately after flowering.
- Container gardening has become very popular, and for many good reasons. With the hot summer months, be sure to water regularly since containers dry out quickly.
- Summer weeds are running rampant— for help identifying lawn and garden weeds, contact the local Extension office.
- Garden insects are also becoming more of a problem— be vigilant in scouting your vegetable garden for pests to keep them under control. Looking for squash vine borer, Japanese beetle, cabbageworm, squash bug, squash beetle, potato beetle, and harlequin bugs may keep you ahead of the damage.
- Be mindful— there are beneficial insects in the garden as well! While they look scary or menacing, they actually help control pest populations. Soldier and lady beetles, as well as wolf-spiders, are welcome guests.
- It’s tick and flea season— if you have pets, be vigilant about providing treatments to both cats and dogs. Even indoor cats can get fleas from our clothing or shoes. If you’re going to be working outdoors, treat your clothes with permethrin to repel ticks. Inspect yourself carefully after spending time outdoors. More information about Lyme’s Disease and tick prevention can be found at http://www.lymediseaseassociation.org.
- With a wet spring and high humidity, it is common to find on perennial plants and woody ornamentals. Look for irregular lesions and spots on the interior of the leaf. While fungicides are expensive and not recommended for homeowners, cleaning up leaf and plant debris will prevent the fungus from appearing next year.
- It is also common to see herbicide damage on plants— use care when spraying weeds, for you may damage the neighboring desirable plants. Avoid excessively hot and humid days, and only spray when winds are calm.
- “Mow ‘em high and let ‘em lie.” Mow your lawn high now that it is getting hot and dry (3-4 inches). Anything shorter will stress out the grass and encourage weeds/diseases.

You can also come visit the Talbot County Extension Office at 28577 Mary’s Court— Suite 1 with plant samples or insects that need identifying. Office hours are 8AM-4:30PM, Monday–Friday (note: horticulturist is only available Monday-Thursday). Questions can also be taken by phone at 410-822-1244 or email to mboley@umd.edu. The Maryland Home and Garden Information Center also has an available hotline at 800-342-2507. Visit them on the web at http://www.extension.umd.edu/hgic for publications and current information.

Come find Master Gardeners at events like Pickering Creek’s Harvest Hoe-Down, or the Talbot Agriculture Center’s Harvest Festival this fall. We will also be present at the Waterfowl Festival in early November right in downtown Easton.
During our annual escape (from the 20-somethings) to Naples Florida, my husband and I had the incredible experience of going to the Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. To be honest, in selling this concept to my husband, I left the word ‘Swamp’ out of the description. ‘Audubon Corkscrew Sanctuary’ was already pushing it. He has started to realize that I have secretly turned all vacations into the pursuit of gardens… and swamps.

As we headed east from Naples …several miles…and the surroundings started to noticeably change, he cleverly asked if I was taking him into the Everglades. As I confessed that we were entering the western Everglades, and promised we would leave if he didn’t like it (not!), he was a good sport and continued without too much disdain. In the end, he and I were both happy he went along with this adventure.

The Audubon Corkscrew Swamp encompasses over 11,000 acres of very distinct habitats. The Sanctuary is a subset of the Swamp, with a 2.25 mile boardwalk weaving its way in between trees and around the habitats including: pine flatwood, wet prairie, pond cypress, marsh, lettuce lakes and a bald cypress forest. Most of these habitats were completely new to me, and seeing one right after the other was an amazing collage of an ecosystem.

The Swamp is home to a 700-acre old growth bald cypress forest, the largest in the world. Some of the trees are over 500 years old, stand 130 feet tall and are some of the oldest trees in the U.S. The Swamp is also home to the largest nesting colony of Wood Storks in the U.S. Along with the Wood Storks, Corkscrew is also home to over 200 species of birds, the Florida Black Bear, the Florida Panther, numerous herons, egrets and storks, snakes, spiders, the American Alligator and many rare plants including the Ghost Orchid.

If I wasn’t already a member of the National Audubon Society, I would have joined on the spot. The history of The Audubon Corkscrew Swamp is amazing. Apparently plume hunting was very popular in this area in the early 1900s. I had no idea that the frilly feather hats that I used to play with in my grandmother’s attic were the result of hunters decimating the heron and egret population in a remote but priceless swamp in southwest Florida. The Audubon Society got involved and deputized conservationists to protect and guard the birds in the Corkscrew Swamp. Then came the loggers…Again, if the Audubon Society did not stand in the way, buying up the land, the most amazing stand of bald cypress would have been lost to the logging industry. Not to mention the endangered Wood Stork population.
We realized along the way what an incredible ecosystem we were witnessing. We walked slowly, and took advantage of anyone on the path who would point out incredible sights. Guides are walking along the boardwalk to assist in identification of everything from trees and vegetation, to habitats, to birds to reptiles. The size and command of the bald cypress trees was probably the highlight for me. The fact that these trees are over 500 years old and shoot up out of this swamp is just an amazing sight. As we worked our way through the amazing sights, it started to dawn on me the way nature is mimicked by us in ‘suburbia’.

The incredible Saw Palmettos struck me as the model for outdoor fans. A series of palms and ferns growing up a tree limb looked like our attempt at hanging plants. The Strangler Figs woven around the Bald Cypress looked like store-bought lattice used to hide clutter under decks. Pond plants beautifully growing in a fallen branch reminded me of flower planters or window boxes. The field of never-ending pond cypress trees was nature’s version of a neatly constructed fence. And the Little Blue Heron walking through the Lettuce Lakes was definitely the suburban version of a lawn ornament.

We could have stayed a week, but four hours later we were back to the beginning of the boardwalk. As we were leaving, we noticed several people gathering at a white board. Each day, visitors and guides write the names of the various wildlife, reptiles and insects they saw along their walk. There is a reason that we did not notice the white board as we started our walk. Water Scorpion, Black Widow Spider, Crab Spider, Garden Spider, Okefenokee Spider, Black Racer and Water Moccasins were among the reasons I am glad that we did not notice the board. However, having survived the walk, I was very interested to read the long list including the above.

If you are in southwest Florida, or if you want to design your vacation around gardens and swamps, I highly recommend a trip to The Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary. To learn more, please visit: [http://corkscrew.audubon.org/](http://corkscrew.audubon.org/)
Mikaela-

I’m worried about some of my shade trees. I think there is a fungus or blight that is affecting several different specimens in my yard. What can I do to stop the damage?

-Tree Concerns

Dear Tree Concerns,

There are several things I would like to address with your question. When you are submitting a question about a tree, shrub, or plant in your landscape, the more details you can provide, the better (like species of tree, what kind of damage, and other environmental factors, etc.). This will help determine the problem at hand. Providing pictures or a sample is even better! You can always send pictures via email to mboley@umd.edu.

Disclaimer: we cannot confirm fungal or bacterial diseases through the internet and pictures. We can make an educated guess, but only a laboratory can test for the actual pathogen.

-Mikaela

FOLLOW-UP:

Mikaela-

Thank you for giving me some direction! I’ve attached a photo of one of my maples, which shows similar damage that is on neighboring trees. The tree is not very old, but I am worried. Please let me know if I should submit a sample to the laboratory.

-Tree Concerns Part II

Dear Tree Concerns Part II,

(Photo example above). Here are my thoughts: because we are hitting hot, windy weather, I’m thinking your trees are suffering from sun scald. This is an abiotic problem, meaning it is not caused by any pathogen. Sun scald typically affects the margins of the leaf, and since you have several different species showing the same signs, I am convinced it is not a bacterial or fungal issue. The plant is stressed from the heat of summer and may need a little extra moisture if rain is scarce. I will prescribe a little TLC and there’s no need for a laboratory.

-Mikaela
Mikaela-

Something is destroying my vegetable garden! There are huge holes chewed through my broccoli plants, and the leaves of my zucchini are looking the worse for wear. There are insects all over the garden, so it's difficult to know who the culprit is. Can you point me in the right direction?

-Sad Veggies

Dear Veggies-

Judging from the plants you mentioned and the damage you described, we can make a good guess.

Harlequin bugs are orange and black insects that will attack both broccoli and members of the squash family. Their eggs are black and white clusters on the undersides of leaves.

Squash bugs are also very common, and favor members of the squash family. They are brown and much less showy than harlequin bugs, and their eggs are rust-orange clusters on the undersides of the leaf.

If you cannot find any clusters of eggs on the leaves of your broccoli, look for tiny green cabbageworms instead. They chew holes in the leaves, giving a “shotgun” appearance.

Happy hunting!

-Mikaela

Imported cabbageworm (top left) and squash bug (top right) are common vegetable garden pests. Photos Courtesy of HGIC.
Upcoming Events and Dates 2014

Native Plant Society Conference- 2014
Take advantage of this unique educational opportunity here on our very own Eastern Shore! This 2-day conference includes a series of field trips and lectures to better understand our native plant world.

Location: Cecil County College, 1 Seahawk Dr., North East, MD
Dates and Time: September 20-21st from 8:30AM-3PM.
Registration: Members- $65; Nonmembers- $75; registration deadline 8/1 (late registration fee after 8/1)

Please go to http://mdflora.org/ for additional information, field trip locations, registration, and to join the Native Plant Society of Maryland (note: you do not have to be a member to attend the conference).

Poplar Island Trip Dates– 2014
Future Poplar Island trip dates for Master Gardeners this Summer/Fall:

• July 22nd
• August 18th
• September 16th
• October 14th

Contact Bonnie James for more information about the Poplar Island garden: bonniebjames@gmail.com. For transportation to Poplar Island on these dates, contact Megan Garrett: MGARR@menv.com

Horticulture Therapy
We are continuing to do horticulture therapy at The Pines in Easton.

Visits are every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month– visits are 30-45 minutes. Gatherings are at 2:30pm. Grab a partner and sign up for the following dates:

• August 14th
• August 28th
• September 11th
• September 25th

Contact Mikaela at mboley@umd.edu to sign up.

Talbot County Fair
Come visit Master Gardeners and Talbot County 4-H at the county fair!

• July 9th– July 12th
• Wednesday– Friday 4-8pm
• Saturday from 12-4pm

Check out http://www.talbotcountyfair.org for exhibits, schedules, and additional information.

Please contact Mikaela Boley, Master Gardener Coordinator with any question or to volunteer to help with a program at mboley@umd.edu or 410-822-1244.
MG Advanced Training Classes for Summer/Fall 2014
For full details, additional classes, and registration, go to:
http://extension.umd.edu/mg/advanced-training

Plant Diseases:
Location: UME Frederick Co., 330 Montevue Ln., Frederick, MD
Date: August 31st Time: 9:30AM– 3:30PM
Reg. Fee: $35
Course Description: 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 with samples.

Youth Vegetable Gardening:
Location: UME Anne Arundel Co., Dairy Farm, 97 Dairy Ln, Gambrills, MD
Dates: September 27th Time: 9:00AM– 4:00PM Fee: $35
Course Description: Getting kids in touch with nature – especially through gardening and growing plants – is more important today than ever. Garden projects teach ecology, awareness of where food comes from, better eating habits, and life-long gardening skills. They also give kids exercise and a chance to experience the wonder and awe of the natural world. Join us for the day, and learn how we can help teach and promote garden education among our young people. It's easier than you think!

Native Grasses:
Location: UME Harford Co., Forest Hill
Dates: October 21st Time: 9:30AM– 3:00PM Fee: $30
Course Description: 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.

Talbot County Master Gardener Monthly Meetings
Join us for the monthly meeting to discuss current events, future opportunities, and answer volunteer questions. Meetings start at 9:30 AM and address orders of business, followed by a guest speaker.

Date: July 16th, 9:30AM
Location: Pickering Creek Audubon Center

Date: September 17th, 9:30AM
Location: TBD

Do you have newsletter item?
We accept news items, poems, gardening advice, recipes, book reviews, and everything gardening! Please send to Mikaela Boley at mboley@umd.edu.

ASK YOUR HORTICULTURIST: mboley@umd.edu
Current Resident Or: