Publicity Overview

- To coordinate a press release or if you have questions or need help please send an email to cfindlay@verizon.net. You should get a reply from me within 2 days. If not, call me at 443-223-5788.

- Please be aware that the press releases are intended to inform the public about the services available through the MG program. We seem to get better responses (higher likelihood of being published) on press releases focusing on how the public can use MG services in the future or at some specific date than we do talking about a past success. For example, sending out an announcement in June to “Come to the Farmer’s Market any Saturday and Ask A Master Gardener about….” would be more likely to be published than sending out an announcement in November that said, “During 2005, 5000 came to the Ask a Master Gardener booth at the Farmer’s Market….”

- In general, newspapers require a minimum of a 2 week lead-time before publication. That means that I need the information at least a week before then so I have time to coordinate the process with you.

- Magazines require at least 2 months and sometimes 6 months lead-time before the issue containing the information.

- Local radio stations will sometimes provide air-time for events. If you want to try for the radio, a member of your team will need to be available for an on-air interview if it can be arranged. If you do end-up being interviewed for a radio show I recommend that you prepare a list of questions that you would like the host to ask you. I recommend this because it may be that the host knows nothing about gardening or the MG program and may not ask the questions that you think would be the logical questions to ask. If you give the host a list of suggested topics/questions it makes their job easier and your job because you will certainly be more prepared to answer the questions that you develop than the questions that might pop-up out of an interview. Also, you can direct the questioning to cover the points of your project or announcement that you consider the most important.

- If you want to send out your own press releases and not go through me, Anne Arundel County requires that all press releases be approved by Mike Ensor before being sent out so that Mike can ensure that the announcements meet policy requirements. So, be sure to send your announcement to Mike for approval. If you coordinate through me I will send Mike a copy as part of the process.

- MG project leaders (you) develop the initial announcement. I can send you examples of past press releases that you can use as a guideline. These are Word documents, but if you don’t have Word I can send them to you as an email text message. Each press release includes a POC for the press to contact if they want more information and I will use the project leader’s name and contact information as the POC. The body of the press release will have the phone number of the county office for the public to contact for additional information.
• After you have a first draft of your announcement, email it to me and I’ll look it over and format it to fit with required guidelines. If I don’t have any suggested changes, I’ll send it to Mike Ensor for approval with a cc to you so that you know the status. If I have a suggested change, I’ll coordinate it with the project leader before sending it to Mike.

• Once I get Mike’s approval, I send the press release to local newspapers (including but not limited to the Post, Sun, Capital [including the Capital’s on-line edition], Gazette, Bay Weekly), local magazines (including Chesapeake Life, What’s Up Annapolis, Inside Annapolis) and local radio stations (including wnav, wrnr) and other venues such as the Annapolis Horticultural Society.

• Once the recipients receive the email they may or may not choose to use it. Sometimes they contact me and ask if they can take pictures of the event. The Capital especially likes to take pictures of events including children.

• I don’t send out photos or attachments with the press releases because some of the recipients will not accept email with any attachments. I can make a note in the press release that photos or illustrations are available upon request. The recipients will want them to be a digital format, with each person’s name and where they live, and the age of any children in the photo.

• AN EXAMPLE OF A PRESS RELEASE IS ATTACHED

If you have any questions about publicity, please don’t hesitate to send me an email. If I am in town, I will reply back within a day or 2. If you don’t hear from me by day 2, you can call me and see if I received your email (if I don’t answer your phone message it probably means that I am out-of-town).
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (Project Leader Name – for press office only), project leader phone or email
DATE: April 22, 2008

Quiet Waters Park Composting Demonstrations and Native Plant Gardens

The Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners invite you to visit the Quiet Waters Park Composting Demonstration and Native Plant Gardens at the Wildwood Trail. Learn how to make compost in your backyard and receive a free compost bin and goody bag. Visit the adjacent native plant gardens and learn about plants you can grow in your own garden. Demonstrations are scheduled for Wednesday mornings at noon on April 30, May 28, June 25, July 23, August 20, and September 24, October 22. Demonstrations are scheduled on Saturday mornings at 10 am on May 17, June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11 and November 8. Entrance fee or county park pass. Call 410-757-7780 for more information. Canceled in the event of rain.

The Anne Arundel County Master Gardeners are a group of volunteers trained by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension to educate citizens about effective and sustainable horticultural practices and landscaping problem-solving through demonstration projects, partnerships with other organizations, and public outreach activities. Master Gardeners are volunteer representatives of the University of Maryland. For more information call 410-222-6755.

It is the policy of the University of Maryland and Maryland Cooperative Extension, that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, marital or parental status, or disability. Equal opportunity employers and equal access programs.