Hello Master Gardeners,

Gardening season is winding down – at least the active part of it. There are still a few fall crops, lovely lettuces and greens, the last of the tomatoes, and hopefully some broccoli and cauliflower. But basically my vegetable garden is in decline. It’s been a pretty good year - no stink bugs or any other bugs, really, except for the Japanese beetles and they did enough damage for all the insects combined! My flower beds have done spectacularly, if I do say so myself. Most gratifying of all is that I planted milkweed and had monarchs come visit. My granddaughter and I counted 30 monarch caterpillars on the milkweed - yea! The bees seem to be enjoying all the flowers as well and produced lots of honey. I've put on the mouse guards (to keep mice out of the hive) and am putting up straw bales around the hives to protect them from winter winds - so I guess the bees are ready for winter as well. It's a nice time of year.

I went to Longwood Gardens a week ago and it was - as always - just gorgeous. One thing I noticed was that they were using a pepper plant that I have grown as an ornamental. If you've never planted Black Pearl peppers, you should try them. The foliage is purple/black and the (very hot) peppers grow in clusters of red cherry-size fruits. They make a striking plant in an ornamental garden! I planted one a couple of years ago and saved the seeds. Obviously it was a hybrid because the plants from the saved seeds don't look at all like the original. I got elongated purple peppers on green foliage. The peppers are tasty (not as hot as the true black pearl) and are kind of pretty - but nothing like the "true" black pearl plant. Anyway - Longwood always has something interesting and gorgeous to see - we are so lucky to have it so nearby.

I hope to see many of you at the Holiday Dinner on December 4. It's always a fun night with a great spirit. Many of our interns should be in attendance so this will be a great time to show them our warm Master Gardener atmosphere. Spouses/significant others are welcome. Bring a dish to share (along with an ingredient card, please). Carrole Kesselring will be organizing the event this year, so give her a call if you'd like to help with set up or other logistics. See you there!

By the time you read this, it really will be fall and hopefully we'll be savoring the crisp autumn air.

Joan Parris ’09
In last year’s issue of *Special Research & Program Edition of Vegetable & Fruit Headline News*, there was an article “Using Flowering Plants to Help Parasitic Wasps Attack Stink Bug Eggs”, written to introduce our 2014 project investigating partridge pea plants as an insectary plant and trap crop.

Here’s a RECAP: Agricultural fields with only one type of plant (monoculture) generate favorable conditions for pest outbreaks. Once an insect pest locates its host plant within a field and colonizes the crop, it settles in to enjoy the feast and raise a family. However, this field may not be a favorable habitat for the pest’s natural enemies. Under such conditions, applying synthetic pesticides may only further exacerbate the problem. By eliminating natural enemies, secondary pest outbreaks or stronger pest resurgences may follow. Growers can use crop rotation and other ecologically based practices to help prevent pest outbreaks, but the more tools available, the better equipped growers are to manage unwanted pests. **Here’s where partridge peas come in!**

Last season, we proposed that the presence of alternative vegetation in the form of insectary plants might increase the number of natural enemies in nearby cropping systems. In our study system, stink bugs and European corn borers (ECB) are key economic pests. We want to make sure that their natural enemies (parasitic wasps) live long, produce many offspring and are in prime striking distance of stink bug and ECB eggs. First, we need to make sure they are properly fed. Parasitic wasps’ favorite food is... you guessed it! Nectar! Partridge pea plants produce a plethora of nectar from extrafloral nectaries at the base of their petioles. See picture. If partridge pea is planted alongside cornfields, as shown, we can provide these parasitic wasps their favorite food in close proximity to their insect hosts.

To summarize, we hypothesize that planting a nectar source (partridge pea) next to corn will attract parasitic wasps that will subsequently suppress stink bug and ECB populations. How far will these wasps travel from the nectar source? Our data from this season and our future trials will hopefully provide answers to this question. We plan to continue evaluating collected data and further investigate our hypothesis and questions over the next season.
Although we targeted these two notorious pests, if you have other insect pests, planting a stand of partridge pea around your cash crop could still be a good idea. A multitude of beneficial insects use plant nectar as a food source. Thus, maintaining insectary plants nearby your fields can enrich the community of beneficial arthropods within. In addition to aiding parasitoids, insectary plants can provide a habitat for generalist predators, as well as shelter and sustain alternative prey for predators such as spiders, ladybugs and mantids. Additionally, partridge pea is known to attract pollinators. From casual observations during the study, we were able to verify that various species of bees, flies, and wasps also visit partridge pea.

For six weeks during the growing season, data on insect pests, predators, and other arthropods found within the corn and partridge pea were collected by visual counts, sticky card traps, and vacuum samples at University of Maryland research plots in Keedysville, Maryland. We also searched each corn plant to locate, identify, and tag egg masses of stink bugs and European corn borers. By doing so, we could monitor and quantify rates of egg parasitism. At the end of the season, we harvested, weighed and rated corn ears to identify and quantify pest damage and estimate yield. Partridge pea plants established and grew well over the summer months indicating their suitability to western MD growing conditions. Initial results suggest that corn plots bordered by partridge pea had higher rates of stink bug egg parasitism compared with monoculture corn plots. However, further data analysis is needed to substantiate these findings. Stink bugs have been shown to colonize partridge pea; for this reason, we will investigate the potential of partridge pea to serve as an insectary plant and function as a stink bug trap concurrently. Next summer, studies will be conducted at University of Maryland field sites in central and western MD.

PHOTO CREDITS:

http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/creatures/bfly/bfly2/phoebis_sennae28.jpg
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**The Earth that's Nature's mother is her tomb,**
**What is her burying grave, this is her womb,**
**And from her womb children of divers kind**
**We suckling on her natural bosom find,**
**Many for many virtues excellent,**
**None but for some and yet all different.**
**O mickle is the powerful grace that lies**
**In plants, herbs, stones and their true qualities,**
**For nought so vile that on the earth doth live**
**But to the earth some special good doth give.**

William Shakespear (Romeo & Julet (Act II, sc.2)
One of my favorite winter activities, besides reading and planning for the next season's garden is watching good TV programs. You may think, "There is nothing worth watching on TV.", but there are a few gems and most are on Maryland Public Television. The other nice feature of watching TV gardening programs is the frequent mention of Master Gardeners and their garden tours. Watching these winter programs helps me get through the winter blues. I hope they do the same for you.

The following shows are on MPT2 cable:

**Evening Programs**

**New Maryland Farm & Harvest** – 7 PM Tuesday evenings; If you love real life stories about farms and farming families you can travel around Maryland and experience what it’s like to run a 21st century farm. For repeats refer to the schedule.

**Outdoors Maryland** – This is an oldie, but a goodie. You might see local nursery owner Stan Kollar or one of the University of Maryland professors exploring the vast diversity of Maryland. The topics range from environmental issues like Chesapeake Bay pollution, endangered species and invasives to segments on bike trails and interesting places around Maryland. 7:30 PM. For repeats refer to the schedule on line at http://www.mpt.org/schedule/.

**Nature**- Wed. 8 PM and at other times, see your TV schedule.

**Weekday Programs – Monday-Friday**. Remember to DVR the shows if you are working or away.

**Garden Smart** – 1 PM. Joe Lamp'l got his start here, and I think he is one of the best garden show hosts; some episodes are better than others and this educational series features gardens from everywhere.

**Growing a Greener World** – 1:30 PM. Joe Lamp'l hosts this excellent educational and entertaining program covering four seasons of subjects near and dear to a gardener’s heart. Joe wrote an excellent book with the same name as the series. Most episode's close with Chef Nathan Lyons cooking a recipe in keeping with the theme of the show (ex: chickens - eggs, herbs, veggies). Note: In 2011 Joe Lamp'l was a speaker at the National Master Gardener Convention in Charleston, West Virginia.

**P. Allen Smith - Garden Home** – 2 PM. This is always entertaining and educational. He has been on TV for a long time and does several versions. The show is filmed either at his home, in town or at the new farm in Arkansas. (Linda Masland has been there!). The show topics vary from all types of gardening to "green" building, decorating, farming,
entertaining, farmyard animals, chickens, pollinators, beekeeping, and landscape design. Plus he visits gardens all over the country and England. About every six weeks the show changes to primarily cooking and entertaining show.

If you do not have cable, you often can find entire season episodes on DVD at your local library. So, the next time, "the weather outside is frightful, never fear for a program about gardening is near..."

THE BUTTERFLY JAR

We had a jar with a butterfly.
We opened the lid and it flew to the sky.
And there are things inside my head
Waiting to be thought or said.
Dreams and jokes and wonderings are
Locked inside, like a butterfly jar.
But then, when you are here with me,
I can open the lid and set them free.

Jeff Moss

HGIC ANNOUNCEMENT from Jon Traunfeld

Extension folks working in home and community horticulture are continually challenged to meet the needs of clientele in both the subjects they are interested in and the ways they want to get information. HGIC has tried to be a leader and innovator in teaching residents and a support for county/city Extension staff, faculty, and Master Gardeners.

We’ve seen continuous growth in the MG program, website traffic and web-based questions (Ask an Expert). Unfortunately, our 800 phone calls have been dropping 10-15% each year. From the peak year (1992) we have experienced an 80% total reduction. 800 phone services are in decline across the board; social media and websites are replacing them as information and teaching tools.

HGIC Horticulture Consultants have given patient, expert help to our callers. The downward trend is no reflection on the high quality of our service. It is a result of rapid changes in technology and the new ways people choose to get information.

For these reasons I have decided to end the 800 service this year to allow our Horticulture Consultants to focus on Ask an Expert and new tasks that will improve our website. My expectations for HGIC in 2015:

- Continue to integrate HGIC, MG, and GIEI websites. Attract new clientele.
- Expand and improve HGIC website with an emphasis on sustainable gardening and IPM.
• New videos; continue to fine-tune social media efforts and increase e-newsletter subscribers.
• Discontinue 800 phone service as of December 22. Ask an Expert (AaE) will be our focus for direct client consultation.

After Dec. 19 callers to the 800# will hear a message directing them to use the website to send their question through Ask an Expert or locate a MG plant clinic. We'll keep this message on through most of 2015 if possible. We will also post a message about this change on HGIC and remove references to the 800# online and in print materials.

Ask an Expert -http://www.extension.umd.edu/learn/ask-gardening

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

Beyond the Lawn: Landscaping with Nature – January 17, 2015, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM, Carroll County Extension Office, Westminster MD
Join us for the workshop “Beyond the Lawn: Landscaping with Nature.” Do you wish to create a healthy, low-maintenance landscape but you don’t know where to start? In this one-day workshop, participants will learn how to create a landscape that is both beautiful and functional, as well as low maintenance, water-wise, and friendly to the birds, bees, and butterflies. You will also learn how to manage pests such as deer, how to take care of your trees, and available resources. Breakfast snacks, lunch, and all materials are included in the $50 fee ($75 for couples; $15 for students). This workshop is jointly offered by the Carroll County Forest Conservancy District Board and the University of Maryland Extension Office in Carroll County. Contact Steve Allgeier or Carolyn Puckett at 410-386-2760 or email cccforestryboard@gmail.com. Visit the Events calendar at http://extension.umd.edu/news/events/sat-2015-01-17-0800-beyond-lawn-landscaping-nature for a registration form.
It sounds like a great training and I have been to a Carroll County Forestry Board workshop before and they are very well organized and they feed you well!
Harford County MG Carol Lancaster 2013

Master Gardener Trainings HCEO See the attached calendar for the educators teaching each Thursday night at the Master Gardener Trainings HCEO.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I am sorry to say that this is my last newsletter for the Harford County Master Gardeners, but it is time for me to day “goodbye to the Garden Fence.” I was extremely honored that you, the Harford County Master Gardeners, asked me all those years ago, to be the editor for the Garden Fence and I hope that my efforts met your expectations. There were times that it was easy to put together and times it was extremely frustrating – a computer that did not work, an article that did not come together, waiting for information, etc., but now it is time to say “good bye” to the Garden Fence and time for me to concentrate on other things. I thank you for putting your faith in me as editor for the newsletter and I trust that you enjoyed the effort I and others (the provers, the contributors, etc.) put into the newsletter each month, and that we provided a newsletter that was informative and met your expectations. While I am sad to say goodbye to being editor, I thank you for your support and praise over the years and I wish the next editor best wishes with his/her endeavors in the coming year(s) as editor of the Garden Fence.

Elaine Dodd, Editor of the Garden Fence 2004
DATES TO REMEMBER

**November 5th** Wednesday – 10 a.m. General MG Meeting  
*Please note this is a change to Wednesday this month!*

**November 11** – Veteran’s Day - Extension Office Closed  
**November 19** – 1:00 pm – Daytime Study Meeting  
**November 19** – 7 pm – Evening Study Group  
**December 4** – Holiday Party 6:30 pm – Liriodendron Mansion

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**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.**

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**THE 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.