Hello Master Gardeners! I am so excited - it's supposed to be in the 60's this week. Perhaps the rest of the snow will finally disappear. Here's hoping! My poor bees have had a rough winter - I'm sure they will look forward to being able to get out and fly (and cleanse themselves) in the warmer weather. And I hope to be able to do some pruning and clean-up of the garden - we really fell behind this winter! I have 35 milk jugs of seeds out on the back deck - my winter sowing project. They've been covered with snow until recently, so I am really looking forward to seeing how they germinate and grow as the weather warms up. I started peppers and eggplant under grow lights in my basement and tomatoes aren't far behind.

Recently many of us attended Garden Wise in York, PA - the PA version of the Master Gardener Training Day. Jessica Walliser spoke on Pest Control and I was reminded again that you can always learn something new, no matter how often you hear a lecture on a particular topic. She gave some tips for disease resistant potatoes ('King George'-plant stems covered with lots of hairs making them less attractive to the potato beetle which spreads diseases). And she recommended NOT using straw for mulching squash – it may be very attractive to the miserable squash vine borer. Better to use fine screened compost or finely shredded leaves. I could go on, but suffice it to say, it was an informative talk.

Probably the most enjoyable session was Jack Hubley’s session on snakes. He brought and displayed several living species - including the copperhead and timber rattlesnake which are the only poisonous snakes found in PA and Maryland. He showed us how to tell the difference between snakes based on their markings. The shape of the markings is much more important than color, as color can vary greatly with age and type of snake. He then led the closing session in which he displayed (and passed around) live mice and voles and gave us a close-up look at a Red-tailed Hawk and a Great Horned Owl. Fascinating and fun - don't you wish you had been there! Try and attend next year. It is only about 45 minutes north of us and is a great training day with lots of informative and fun lectures.

Joan Parris 2009
The Harford County Volunteer Recognition Night will be at the Liriodendron Mansion on April 3rd. The event will NOT be a pot-luck dinner as in the past, but rather Dessert and Coffee. And - you don't have to bring anything except yourself and your "sweetie"/spouse/significant other. Hourly Service Pins will be awarded to all Master Gardeners who have served at least 50 hours since their last award. In addition the Volunteer of the Year will be awarded. Please plan to attend as we celebrate our many, many hours of Master Gardener volunteer service.

**CYBER STUFF**

Have you checked out our updated website extension.umd.edu/Harford-county? The format may take some getting used to, but it is working well. Carol Nau has done a great job keeping up to date our class offerings as well as providing an administrative section with important documents. Included are log sheets, requests for funds, and Bay-Wise Yardstick and application - just to name a few. To locate our portion of the Harford County site, you must click on the Home Gardening tab at the top. Don’t miss the May monthly meeting where we will do a live demonstration on how to navigate the county site and the HGIC website.

The other new change coming is the capability to log your own MG hours directly into the database and check them at any time! This will save Grace Wyatt countless hours and will make each of us responsible for accuracy. A pilot group of volunteers will test out the system and work out the bugs. Then everyone will be encouraged to use their home computer to log their hours. At the May meeting we will demonstrate the new system. Don't worry; no one will be forced to use this system. But in an effort to make it easier for everyone, a laptop will be set up at each monthly meeting for your use. Assistance will be provided. We are making it as easy and painless as possible for everyone.
UPCOMING ADVANCED MG TRAINING CLASSES

New! NATIVE LANDSCAPING FOR MARYLAND SHADE GARDENS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Registration Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont (Howard Co.)</td>
<td>Tuesdays: Apr. 22, Apr. 29, May 6 9:30 am - 3:30 pm</td>
<td>04/14/14</td>
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<td>UME Howard Co., Ellicott City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coastal Plain (Kent Co.)</td>
<td>Thursdays: Jun 5, Jun 12, Jun 19 10:00 am - 4:00 pm</td>
<td>5/23/14</td>
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<td>Adkins Arboretum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coastal Plain (Southern MD)</td>
<td>Tuesdays: Sept. 30, Oct. 7, Oct 14</td>
<td>9/23/14</td>
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<td>UME Calvert Co., Prince Frederick</td>
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In 2014 we will offer "Native Landscaping for Maryland Shade Gardens" (for both wet and dry areas) in three locations: piedmont, coastal plain (Eastern shore & Southern Maryland). In 2015 we will offer a similar class but for sunny areas.

Shade Garden Course Description:
In each of these workshops we will have 3 days to explore the beautiful and diverse plants native of that region, and implement our skills into designing a sustainable native shade garden.

Come and learn how the ecology and history of Maryland’s flora can inform today’s native landscape design decisions.

1. Learn the most useful shade garden plants for your area, including identification, cultural requirements, wildlife use and more. Basic research skills will enable you to expand your plant palette in the future. Enjoy field trip(s) to observe native gardens and natural areas.

2. Practice shade garden design by selecting plants which are:
   - appropriate to site conditions (moisture, pH)
   - provide year-round interest
   - benefit wildlife and wild plant populations

3. Enjoy field trip(s) to observe native gardens and natural areas

NATIVE PLANT ESSENTIALS
Presenter: Sara Tangren, Ph.D. Registration Fee: $35
This course will serve two purposes. The class is the basic introductory course to all MG Advanced native plant classes. Secondly as a survey course for folks who want to know what natives are all about. Our presenter, Sara Tangren, will consider what’s native, the why’s of soils, ecology, climate and the concept of native plant communities. We will look at the value of native plants and the significance of preservation and success. Each course ends with a hands-on component involving identification exercises or field walk to observe geology, soil and natural plant communities.

Currently the Native Plant Essentials class is full but watch for future announcements.
ENTOMOLOGY: ECOLOGICAL IPM

LOCATION: UME Baltimore County, 114 Shawan Road, Cockeysville, MD 210320
DATES: Mondays, June 2, and 9 – 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
REGISTRATION FEE: $49
Instructor: Michael J. Raupp, Ph.D., Professor and Extension Specialist, Entomology, UMD

Course Description: Bugs are fascinating. Learn how to recognize them, how they work, and how to safely deal with them as you begin to better understand how they fit into the ecology of the garden. Join the University of Maryland’s pre-eminent bug man, Mike Raupp, as he teaches you the wonders of the bug world and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as only he can do. We are planning some hands-on experiences, outdoor explorations and new learning tools.

In addition to some fascinating insect CSI, this year’s expanded 2 day course will include the fundamental concepts of population biology, community ecology, ecosystem functions and services as they relate to urban ecosystems and IPM. Some topics to be highlighted:

- Roles of native plants
- Planting to conserve diversity and attract pollinators and other beneficial insects
- Managing water and soil resources for maximum benefit of insect populations and ecosystem function.
- Changing public perception of what constitutes a healthy, attractive landscape.

This class will satisfy the Entomology requirement for MG’s certification in Plant Diagnostics.

VEGETABLE INTENSIVE TECHNIQUES AND SMALL SPACE GARDENING

LOCATION: UME Kent County – 709 Morgnec Road, Suite 202, Chestertown, MD 21620. Plus 3 field trips to nearby locations.
DATES: Saturday, June 21, 2014
REGISTRATION FEE: $49 REGISTRATION DEADLINE: June 13
Instructors: ~ John Traunfeld-Director Home and Garden Information Center and Specialist in Fruits and Vegetables UME
            ~ Ken Phillips, UME Master Gardener, Howard County
            ~ Sabine Harver, UME Kent County and MG
Course Description: Get more out of your vegetable garden with less work and expense. Find out how to increase production per square foot using sustainable and cost-effective practices. Class will be mostly hands-on learning and will take place in different gardens.

We’ll share, discuss and evaluate specific practices, such as inter-planting, succession planting, vertical gardening, square foot gardening, drip irrigation, and season extension. You will be asked to complete some pre-class online assignments so we can maximize our hands-on time in class.

Other upcoming MG Classes in summer and fall 2014

Check the MG website http://extension.umd.edu/mg/advanced-training for all of the details on these upcoming classes. Since they were announced in February’s state MG newsletter, MGs have already begun to register.

- Vegetable Plant and Pest Diagnosis – July in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties
- Plant Diseases – September in Frederick Co.
- Youth Vegetable Gardening- September in Montgomery and Anne Arundel Counties
- Native Grasses – October in Harford Co.

State MG Newsletter - If you missed the State MG newsletter, be sure to check it out. It has lots of current pertinent information about important resources, what’s happening around the state, MG classes, MG license plates, new MG on-line tracking system for your volunteer hours, MG recognition, articles on attracting diverse MGs and honoring long term MGs, more details on MG Annual Training Day and requests for help and more.

Link for registration form for all Advanced Training Classes:
https://extension.umd.edu/sites/default/files/_docs/programs/master-gardeners/StateMG/RegFormCurrent.pdf

GIEI News

We have declared 2014 the year of the Cucurbit!

MGs working in the GIEI program are busy educating the public about this important vegetable group (includes the squash, pumpkin, cucumber, gourd, watermelon, and cantaloupe). Please find a vegetable presentation that suits your schedule. Jon Traunfeld and other veggie presentations will be offered at MG Annual Training Day.

100 Square Foot Garden Challenge

The Maryland Grow It Eat It committee would like to challenge MGs and the gardening public to take the 100 square foot garden challenge. Enter the 2014 Grow It Eat It Contest and show “What Can YOU Grow in 100 Square Feet?” OPEN to all gardeners- city, suburban, country; experienced and first-time gardeners; backyard, community, or school garden. Lots of examples and resources are available to help you. Use your imagination- the sky’s the limit. For rules, registration and great resources go to the Grow It Eat It website.
MG ANNUAL TRAINING DAY

By the time you read this you should have received the Training Day information by mail. If you need a brochure you may contact the state office of Robin Hessey at rmhessey@umd.edu or ask Joyce to make you a copy.

Save the date! MG Annual Training Day
Thursday May 29, 2014 ~ University of MD College Park Campus

Why We Need Bees!
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Dennis VanEnglesdorp, Research Scientist from the University of MD
Leading apiarist and University of MD Research Scientist, Dennis VanEngelsdorp, will look at these gentle, misunderstood creatures viewing their agricultural importance and natural ecosystem value. He will discuss alarming evidence of their "mysterious" decline and the latest theories behind honey bee loss, evidence supporting these theories, and present ways in which all of us can help ensure a robust and healthy pollinator supply in our own communities. This talk will have important ramifications for all aspects of what MGs do.

The Forest Unseen
Featured speaker: David Haskell, Professor of Biology, University of the South.
“Invite a great rush of wonder into your life” as you learn from David Haskell’s personal and scientific insights. We will walk with him through his research study on one square meter of forest for one year. Amazing revelations will be seen of our past, present and future. His research examines the evolution and conservation of animals, especially forest-dwelling birds and invertebrates.

Training Day Workshops
This year you will find more workshops than ever! Thirty-nine different sessions in 3 different time periods! No matter your interest, we have classes you’ll enjoy and find useful to educate Maryland citizens. Annual Training Day classes to watch for:
GIEI: Classes on the Greens, Community Gardens, Herbs, Unusual Vegetables, Seed Saving, Cucurbits, Backyard chickens
Native Plants: Turf to Natives, Native Meadows, Native Ground Covers, Showy Ferns, Plant Picks for Pollinators, Propagating Native Shrubs
Entomology: Pollinator Yards, Climate Change on Insects, Pesticides on Insects, Scale Insects
Plants and Design: New Plants from the Nat’l Arboretum, Pruning, Accenting your Landscape with Color, Foundation Plants, American Gardens, Small Space Gardening, Rain gardens, Climate Change and the Gardener
Naturalist: Bird Migration, Geology, Nature’s Puzzle, Snakes, Ecology of Oak Forests, as well as some of the topics listed above.
Nuts and Bolts: Grant Writing; Top Gardening Apps
We also have diagnostic disease labs, plant walks as well as a great talk on both Youth Gardening/Nutrition and on Garden Soils.

Registration fee will remain at $69 – no price increases have occurred for the past 4 years. Watch your mail in early March for the printed schedule and registration form. Decide what merchandise you want to purchase and your favorite classes, then register using the hard copy or register on line. Registration will open early-mid March.

State Office Training Schedule:
• 3/14 - Brochures are mailed to active MGs. You can use this to register and to order MG merchandise.
• 3/17 - Website completed. (You can pick out your classes at this point, but not actually register or order merchandise until 3/21). The website may be ready earlier. Go to http://extension.umd.edu/mg/advanced-training and click on Annual Training Day on the left.
• 3/21 - Tentative Online registration and merchandise ordering opens up
• 5/01 - Last day to order MG merchandise; Last day to register at early-bird $69 price
• 5/02 - Registration fee goes up to $79
• 5/13 - Confirmation letters with your list of classes are mailed out
• 5/15 - Last day to cancel and get a refund
• 5/29 - Master Gardener Annual Training day!!

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**GARDEN SERIES**

Melody Karbley 2003

**PERENNIALS II FOR NON-STOP COLOR**- April 19; Bel Air Library; 10:15- NOON

As part of the Garden Series, Lisa and I assembled an educational and entertaining journey filled with wonderful perennials, from spring through fall. Just in time for planting season! The program is filled with photographs, information and ideas. Our aim is to inspire the audience to get outside and grow an easier, livelier, and more colorful garden. Everyone is welcome to come and hear all about these wonderful perennials.

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**SPRING CHORES FOR THE EAGER GARDENER**

Mary Trotta 2008

I have been suffering from “cabin fever” and eager to get outside. But what is there to do when the shaded part of the garden is iced over and snow-covered, and the sunny part of the garden is a wet and soggy bog?

I was desperately looking for some excuse or some little chore that I could invent to get outside so I could begin to reclaim my ravaged garden from this winter's punishing treatment.

http://awaytogarden.com/here-finally-come-the-hellebores/
As eager as I was, I ended up letting nature be my guide. I waited until I saw a pale mauve bloom on one of my Hellebores peeking out from beneath the brown, crinkled leaves left behind after this brutal winter. These plants were on a well-drained hill with a southern exposure and so I could prune away the dead leaves without worrying about compressing wet soil. I was also counting on the southern exposure to prevent the cold and light snowfall that followed a few days later, from damaging the tender new growth that I was exposing.

Working only where the soil had dried out, I pruned back a lot of the perennials I had left standing to provide seeds and shelter for the winter birds. This included mums, black-eyed Susans, Echinacea, and Autumn Joy Sedum. Then I cut back many of my liriopes which had begun to turn brown. I also pulled up some winter weeds that I found along the way.

The last big job was to prune and shape some of my trees and shrubs, although I had done this late in the fall. But after looking out the window all winter, watching the bird feeder hanging in my Natchez crape myrtle, I could see every maverick branch that needed to be pruned. I was looking for branches that were growing in toward the trunk, branches that were crossed and touching, a low branch partially torn from the trunk, and branches that were blocking out the light from the lower part of the tree. I sawed, cut, tweaked, and trimmed to refine the shape, keeping in mind that pruning just prior to growing season would result in a more robust rebound of new growth! And that is just the reason to prune my Annabelle Hydrangea down to 12-18 inches. This shrub blooms on new growth and now is the time to tame her and get more blooms.

I was on a roll and wanted to continue by pruning my Limelight hydrangea, but the area around it was too saturated. There was nothing else I could accomplish until nature was ready to cooperate. But as soon as the snow and ice melts and the soil dries out enough, I will be out doing my usual March chores, probably well into April this year!

**March Gardening Checklist:**

- Cut away dead leaves to reveal new growth and blooms of spring flowering plants
- Cut back any perennials left standing
- Cut back ornamental grasses before new growth gets too high
- Pull up early weeds
- Finish pruning/shaping trees and shrubs

And, when weather allows:

- Prune evergreens (from now until late summer)
- Put down pre-emergent weed killer (when Forsythia blooms, and before blooms die)
- Rake up and dispose of leaves
- Remove protective winter mulch
- Start seeds for annuals indoors
- Dig and divide crowded perennials
- Fertilize trees, shrubs, and perennials
- Sow grass seed in bare spots

REMINDERS

1. The April meeting is our Recognition Banquet. April 3 at 7 PM at the Liriodendron.
2. Daytime Study Group – Special speaker on Terrariums - April 16, 1:00 PM HCEO
3. Evening Study Group will be at the Extension Office, April 16, 7:00 PM

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.

http://www.examiner.com

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.