Hello Master Gardeners,

What a great December holiday party! The Liriodendron Mansion was decked out for Christmas and looked fabulous. Ellen Post and Mary Driver, aided by about a dozen Master Gardeners, prepared the rooms and centerpieces for our dinner celebration. Ellen and Mary re-thought the room organization and changed how we had done things in the past so the event flowed better. You would never know there were more than 90 of us in the house! Hats off to Ellen and Mary for all their hard work.

Marlene Lynch and Susan Schluederberg organized the Silent Auction and Raffle Basket to benefit the Scholarship Fund and Bay-Wise. Some terrific items were donated and we netted a tidy sum.

Grace Wyatt prepared a slide show of MG activities which was wonderful. We were entertained again by the Rendezvous - a Sweet Adelines quartet of which Ellen's sister is a member. Thanks to everyone for all their efforts to make for a lovely event to kick off the holiday season.

The seed catalogs are arriving - I'm so excited! I was so successful with my experiment with winter sowing last year that I'm getting ready to try it again, saving my gallon milk containers and ordering LOTS of flower seeds. My husband and I have created several new shrub/flower beds this year and I'll have space for lots of flowers - so winter sowing is the way to go! You plant a packet of seeds in a milk container in February/March and leave it alone outside. Come spring, you have a jug full of plants, ready for planting. They don't need to be hardened off and they separate easily. It's a really neat trick. May I make a plea here for you to start saving your gallon milk containers? Eleanor and I are teaching a class in February for the Garden Series and plan to incorporate winter sowing into the presentation. The students will start their own sowing project, so we will need 20-30 containers. (I can only drink so much milk between now and then!) Bring them to the January meeting and I will take it from there. Thanks in advance!

The 2014 Garden Series classes start January 18th - contact Mary Driver to help with classes. In February we'll begin our spring Grow It Eat It program - we have lots of classes and will need many teachers and assistants. Contact Lisa Rainey to volunteer. Plant Clinics begin in March and Karin Hoffman needs volunteers to run the twice a month clinics. As always, there are lots of opportunities to be an active Master Gardener!
The 2014 daytime study group is planning to meet the third Wednesday of each month, 1 pm at the HCEO. There may be an occasional schedule change due to holidays, speaker availability or room conflicts. Notifications will be given as soon as possible. Feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions for future meetings.

The next Daytime Study Group will meet in the Extension Classroom at 1:00 PM on Wed., Jan 15th.

The article bank is officially empty!! I am hoping that you are busy thinking of ideas and writing articles for the newsletter. While our gardens are sleeping, many Master Gardeners are busy with new classes, but I am hoping you will find time to send something for upcoming newsletters. It is a great way to receive volunteer hours while sitting at home, in the warmth and comfort of your PJs, writing a newsy article for us. You earn hours from the time you start developing your idea!

Hopefully everyone is receiving the Updates that are being emailed through our office. When numerous education opportunities or good horticulture information comes in Joyce’s mailbox they will be summarized and sent out in the Updates. There is no specific schedule for sending them. When I receive and review them they will be sent directly from our office to all MG’s.

The HortTips file is sent to our office for distribution. The HGIC pathologist, Dave Clement, is so busy photographing bugs and diseases that their newsletter is getting larger all the time! As a matter of fact HortTips has become too large for some MG’s computers. If your computer cannot download them you can locate all issues at the HGIC website: http://plantdiagnostics.umd.edu/content/educational-resources.cfm.

Please continue to send both Diane and Joyce any address or email changes.
Diane Payne - kdjpayne@gmail.com   Joyce- jbrowni3@umd.edu

Two transferring Master Gardeners
Cindy Porter -2010 will be transferring over to the Baltimore Co. MG program for 2014.
Karen Boyle -2011 has transferred to us from Cecil Co. and will be serving her 40 hours this year.

The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression.
Last February I went to Johns Hopkins University, with a friend, for a class on Chinese Gardens taught by Victoria Cass, an English instructor. Because she was from the Humanities Department the class was very interesting, but not exactly what we expected. Much of her lecture helped us to understand the philosophy of a Chinese garden.

Ms. Cass began by telling us about the influence of two dynasties—the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and the Ming Dynasty (1300-1600). With a prosperous economy and radiant culture, the Song Dynasty was considered to be a “golden age” of economic revolution. She described the Ming Dynasty (1300-1600) as a period of contrasts. Cities and business grew and expanded while punishments became harsh. Both of these dynasties greatly influenced the gardens that would appear shortly after 1600 BC.

The first recorded gardens were in the Yellow River Valley during the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 B.C.). The gardens were large parks enclosed for the kings and nobles to hunt game, or grow fruit and vegetables. Three symbols for gardens were used at that time. You was the Chinese symbol which represented a royal garden with birds, trees and animals. Pu represented a garden for plants and Yuan became the symbol for all gardens.

Under the rule of the last king of the Shang Dynasty, King Zhou, palace gardens took on some unusual changes. Famous for his excesses he landscaped with large pools, some filled with sand and others with alcoholic beverages. King Zhou, his concubines and friends would party while afloat in the canoes, drifting on the pool of alcohol and scooping the beverage with their hands. This type of garden was described, by the Chinese, as an example of decadence and bad taste.

Garden designs continued to change with each dynasty becoming symbols of refinement and luxury. They became more elaborate to compliment the lavishly decorated palaces. The features included galleries, lakes with dragon boats, terraces and gazebo type structures. Garden designers were starting to use space to a better advantage by screening areas so not all views could be seen at once. As the paths were traversed little by little the garden was revealed! It became hard to know where you were in the garden. The Summer Palace, near Beijing, is an example of this type of garden. These gardens were often described by foreign visitors who marveled at their beauty.

Ms. Cass went into more depth on the philosophy behind the garden designs (the mental, cultural and religious influences), but I must admit I became lost in her lecture. The one thing I found interesting was the incorporation of “crazy” rocks in the garden as representatives of the mighty and revered mountains. Crazy rocks are rocks that are uniquely shaped and contain holes. The holes would allow the evil spirits to escape, allowing the owner peaceful enjoyment of the garden. I have seen these unusual types of rocks in Chinese gardens, so I was very interested to learn what they represented.

As the people prospered under the Song Dynasty there was more time and money to make gardens around their homes. It became a way to have nature nearby. As families prospered they added more and more to their gardens, while bringing nature into the cities.
In Sozhou, China, there are three gardens remaining from the Ming Dynasty. They are **Humble Administrator's Garden**, **Lingering Garden**, and **Garden of Cultivation**. Another Ming garden is in Shanghai called the **Yuyuan Garden**. To view these articles and pictures click on the links and follow the instructions.

## HERB IT UP

**Lovage - *Linguisticum-scotium***

by June Lynne Walter

Lovage is the forgotten herb. Most people are not familiar with this all-purpose herb, however it is used in many dishes and is a wonderful salad substitute. You will not find it in a grocery store, so I suggest you grow it in your garden.

Lovage is said to come from the Italian province of Liguia. This herb grew abundantly everywhere, including in flower pots. The ancient Greeks chewed the seeds to help digest their meals. In medieval Europe, tavern keepers and the Benedictine monks grew it in their gardens to make beer and cordials to settle the stomach. Lovage was considered a love charm and also known as “love parsley; or the “love ache”.

This hardy perennial has a strong celery flavor. The plant grows roughly two feet tall and flowers with white umbels in late summer. Its native habitat is Southern Europe, but it no longer grows there in the wild. You can now find lovage in the Unites States from New Jersey to Mexico.

Lovage requires full sun and rich, deep, moist, well-drained soil. It can be grown by seed or spring/fall root divisions and it reaches full size in 3-5 years. Cold winters promote dormancy and best growth. It is best placed in the back of the garden for a showy sight. Cut the flower stalks to prevent seeding. Cutting also keeps the leaves healthy. Watch out for aphids! They are attracted to this herb, but with the help of a garlic spray, they can be kept under control (Editors note: spraying water forcefully on vulnerable sections of the plant gives good control.)

Dry the plant by cutting stem pieces and laying them flat on a screen. When the leaves are fully dry, store them in an air-tight jar.

Cook, cook, and cook with lovage. This herb can be used in almost anything. It is wonderful in crab cakes, shrimp salad or just at tossed salad. If you like the taste of celery, lovage is your herb. Grind it to use as a salt replacement. It is great! Don’t forget to use it in egg salad, soup, stew or vegetables.

For medicinal uses be sure to check out an herb book in your local library or on the internet. There is a caution for pregnant women and those suffering with kidney disease. My suggestion is check with your doctor when using herbs as medication.

(This article appeared in the January 2002 Garden Fence.)
ROSEMARY SHORTBREAD

Contributed by Nancy Cohen- 2013

Prep: 15 minutes
Bake: 12 minutes
Makes: About 4 dozen cookies

2 cups flour, ¼ cup cornmeal, ½ teaspoon salt
2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
2 egg yolks
1 ½ tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves

Whisk: In a small bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal and salt.
Mix: In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat together butter and sugar. Mix in egg yolks, then rosemary. Add dry ingredients and mix just until dough holds together.
Chill: Roll dough into 2 logs, each about 6 inches long and 2 inches in diameter. Wrap in wax paper and chill until firm, at least 1 hour.
Bake: Slice logs into ¼-inch thick disks. Settle shortbread disks on parchment-lined baking sheets. Slide into a 350-degree oven, and bake until golden at the edges, about 12 minutes. Cool.
Serve: Nice before dinner with cheese, after dinner with fruit, or anytime with a smile.

Recipe adapted from “Ready for Dessert” by David Lebovitz.

REMEMBERS

1. The January meeting - January 9, at 10 am at the Extension Office.
2. Planning Meeting - January 30, 10 am at the Extension Office.
3. Daytime Study Group - January 16, 1 pm at the Extension Office
4. Newsletter due date - January 11th.
5. Log sheet deadline - Jan 7th.

Joyce Browning
Master Gardener Coordinator
Urban Horticulturist, Harford County Extension

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.

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