International Master Gardener Conference
Alaska: Flowers, Fjords and Friends
By: Macy Hovland and Karine Ingersoll

The University of Arkansas sponsored the 2013 International MG Conference to the Alaskan inside passage on the cruise ship Westerdam. While at sea, each of the 1000 attendees could choose 8 of the 106 classes offered and walk in on more if space allowed. Keynote presentations were titled Entomology and Science Fiction, The Effect of Salmon on the River Edge Trees, Seed Savers and Using Plant Material for Home Decoration. Some of the classes were on container gardening, gardens of the world, diseases of ornamentals, flowers from garden to vase, preserving your harvest, floral design, landscaping, garden rooms, and garden art. All handouts and Power points were distributed on a single thumb drive; Jennifer Horton has a copy.

While in ports, there were ship and special MG tours available. In Juneau, a MG tour was to the Jensen-Olson Arboretum, home of the national collection of Primula (primroses). While there, we were asked to keep an eye out for black bears due to their attraction to the Ash trees ... and we saw fresh evidence of their visits. The MG tour to Glacier Gardens in the Tongass Rain Forest featured fallen trees turned upside down and planted with blooming flowers and moss in their roots. The walls of the gift shop were 12 feet long hanging baskets of Creeping Charlie!! Yes, the weed!

Our port tours included otters, whales, bears, salmon runs, glaciers, totems, Tlingit culture, snorkeling at Ketchikan and high tea at the Empress Hotel.

From the port city of Seattle, a clipper took us to beautiful Butchart Gardens in Victoria. In Seattle we visited Pike Place Public Market, the new Seattle Great Ferris Wheel and Chihuly Glass Garden at the base of the Space Needle.

It was a wonderful experience! The next International meeting will be in 2015 in Iowa.
Seasonal Tips—Fall Cleanup for a Better Spring

By Debra Mayfield

- Flowers and vegetables whose foliage has begun to brown and shrivel should generally be removed before winter. Removing the spent foliage is an excellent way to reduce the chance for fungi and insect pest to overwinter.

- Root systems of many hardy perennials, shrubs and trees need to be protected from harsh winter winds. Apply a 2-3 inch layer of mulch across the entire root zone. Large containers may be mulched also.

- Store empty ceramic and plastic containers in a dry storage building or garage to prevent breakage.

- **New Fertilizer law in MD prohibits the application of fertilizer from November 15-March 1st**

- Autumn leaves can easily be turned into valuable, soil-enhancing organic matter. Use your mower or shredder/vacuum to break leaves up into smaller pieces. A mulching blade on the mower will speed this process, while using a standard blade will only do an adequate job. It may take several passes to get a finely shredded product. Once shredded they will break down quickly.

- Dry, Shredded leaves can be tilled under in the vegetable or flower beds to provide a source of organic matter.

- Shredded leaves can be recycled directly on your lawn.

- Shredded leaves are great mulch for beds and containers.

- Clean and protect your gardening tools. Leaving dirt on tools will lead to rusty next spring. A rusty tool is harder to work with than one that is free of rust. You can use a wire brush or coarse rag to remove the remaining soil and then use a light oil to cover and protect the garden tools. Clean your pruners and saws to remove sap residue.

**Sources**

Purdue: [http://www.hort.purdue.edu/extgardentobed.html](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/extgardentobed.html)

Illinois: [http://web.extension.illinois.edu/dkk/eb266/20121126_6211.html](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/dkk/eb266/20121126_6211.html)

Tennessee: [https://utextension.tennessee.edu/washington/Documents/Winterizing%20Your%20Garden.pdf](https://utextension.tennessee.edu/washington/Documents/Winterizing%20Your%20Garden.pdf)

It’s getting to be that Holiday time of year. If you purchase a live cut tree don’t forget to check the water level daily! For more tips checkout the factsheet! Also in December our UME-St. Mary’s MG website will feature information about “Caring for Holiday Plants” by Susan England. You will be emailed when this gets posted!

Thanks to Jill Spencer for sending in this fantastic picture taken in her garden of *Argiope auranti*. This is a common orb web spider that I saw numerous times this past summer/fall. I am sure many of you did as well. For more information here is a link to an archived “Bug of the Week” from Dr. Raupp. Enjoy!

Cabbage Woe

This fall MG Waymond Detwiler was fortunate enough to get his hands on some cabbage plants at a bargain price. This is what he said about them, “Now these were some sad looking plants. They had scrawny stems common to some cabbage plants I’ve purchased in the past, with numerous holes in the leaves. Based on the fact that they were free, and I felt sorry for them, I dropped a couple of dollars in the donation box, and took some home. I let them sit in the sun for about a week, keeping them well watered with miracle-gro.”

After a week or so though Waymond noticed that the leaves looked worse. He tried a couple of products he had on hand for use on vegetables but nothing really seemed to make an impact. And then “one morning when I was laying in bed about half asleep, I remembered my wife reading that putting diatomaceous earth around the cabbage plants will keep the slugs out of the cabbage.” Waymond suspected it was caterpillars or worms or slugs doing the damage. So he, “…decided to try the diatomaceous earth. However, instead of putting the diatomaceous earth around the plants, I put it on the stems and leaves at the base of the cabbage head (I probably even got some on the cabbage head). Following each rain, I lightly sprinkled diatomaceous earth on the plants.”

Waymond had a good harvest, “…eight of the plants grew to be solid cabbage heads about eight to nine inches in diameter, and another four were hard, but not solid, and looked like narrow E.T. shaped heads. The first one we ate, which was an E.T. shaped head, was a little bitter, but the remaining heads have been delicious. The best part is, after applying the diatomaceous earth, I never had to spray the plants with pesticides again.”

According to the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) website, Diatomaceous Earth (D.E.) is “is made from the fossilized remains of tiny, aquatic organisms called diatoms. Their skeletons are made of a natural substance called silica. Over a long period of time, diatoms accumulated in the sediment of rivers, streams, lakes, and oceans. Today, silica deposits are mined from these areas.” D.E. is very effective on soft-bodied pests; and as you have read Waymond has had good results from its use. If you decide to use DE remember to purchase the “food safe or natural” type. You do not want the kind that is used for swimming pools. And, of course, always read the label and follow the directions! Our HGIC factsheet Slugs and Snail #92 is a great reference as well as the Grow it, Eat it website for more information on specific pests in the veggie garden.

The Hula Hoe
By Diana Klassy

My new favorite tool is the hula hoe, also known as a stirrup or scuffle hoe. Several times this summer, while using this tool in the rose garden at Greenwell State Park, I’ve had people stop and ask about it. In fact, one of my co-volunteers was so impressed that she bought one for herself and another for a family member.

The working part of this tool (the blade) is shaped like a stirrup or the letter D with the flat part on the bottom. The blade is moderately sharp on both sides and is part of a flexible assembly which is attached to a long handle. The flexible assembly allows the blade to wiggle. To operate this tool, you place the slightly curved flat edge just under the surface of the soil then push/pull the edge back and forth (the wiggle action). No chopping is required as with other hoes. This action pulls small weeds and cuts medium sized weeds off just below the soil surface. The goal is to eliminate the weeds and move as little dirt as possible. The weeds can then be raked up or left to compost.

Although this hoe is ineffective on well established weeds such as Bermuda grass (wiregrass) and crab grass, it works great on large patches of small weeds. As a side benefit, this push/pull action will give your abdomen (stomach) muscles a good work out as you weed! The price range for the hula hoe is $20-$35, but I have observed different levels of quality as well. I have been very satisfied with the mid-range hoe that I purchased.

Take the drudgery out of those light-to-medium weeding chores: get off your knees, stop chopping, and give the hula hoe a try!
Orchids on my Windowsill
By Ann Richards

I became enamored of orchids in the late 50's when I worked my way through the U of Md by arranging flowers and making corsages at a florist shop up in a ritzy Baltimore suburb. We all thought they were beautiful, fragile, fussy and difficult to grow. They were, of course, very expensive.

Here we are in the next century and they are being hybridized and multiplied by tissue culture and available everywhere. Many of us have found they are not fussy but almost cast iron and easy to grow on the right window sill. I did rot a few in the beginning but reading a couple of good books and attending a lecture by a Smithsonian Orchid Expert several years ago at the MG Day of Training was a big help. John and I particularly enjoy them in the winter when a flower spike shoots up quickly and show numerous buds that open and display till spring. We have had the Phalaenopsis, Cattleya and Cymbidium repeat bloom and live for years. They will become your winter garden friends and are well worth the time to make their acquaintance.

Two books I frequently use as a reference are: Ortho's All About Orchids and Gardener's Guide to Orchids by Wilma & Brian Rittershausen. They both have lots of pictures and instructions on care and culture.

The Cymbidium plants are larger than the average window sill shelf but Phalaenopsis and Cattleya easily fit and if you don't water them excessively will perform beautifully. I have found most of the plants are shipped to the retail store with roots packed very tight in sphagnum moss. Most of us tend to water our plants once a week or every ten days. The sphagnum moss holds water too well and watering that often will rot the roots which need air and drainage. I have had success with repotting new plants in a commercial bark mixture with just a pinch of sphagnum to hold some moisture.

Hope you enjoy the photos. Will be happy to show my windowsill gardens to interested MG's.
The MG's who helped plant and maintain Fairgrounds Gardens this summer will be happy to know we received many compliments on the flowers during the summer. Starting with the Annual Friends of the Library Book Sale in March and running through many events such as the Shop –With-a-Cop Breakfast for underprivileged children in December, the Fairgrounds stay busy!

The County Fair alone welcomed nearly 65,000 visitors this year. We were all proud of the Flower Building exhibits and the Garden Club members who came out to put on the Ritz...indoors and out! A HUGE Thank You to all who helped!

---

**Collecting Native Seeds**  
*By Penny Shissler*

I recently attended the University of Maryland Extension sponsored advanced training on “Wild Collecting Native Seeds” presented by Sara Tangren, Ph. D., UME Associate Agent. Two important wild seed collection protocols were introduced during the training. We also learned about regional and national seed collection and conservation programs.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Seed Bank, (MARS-B) begun by the New York City Recreation and Parks Department, stores seeds as a safeguard against extinction as well as provide seed for local restoration efforts. The MARS-B partnered with a national program called Seeds of Success (SOS), established by the Bureau of Land Management, and its goal is to “collect, conserve, and develop native plant materials for stabilizing, rehabilitating and restoring lands in the United States”. Through this partnership with the SOS program, the MARS-B, stores duplicate seed collections at two US Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service facilities. These USDA facilities are also responsible for the curation of these collections. We have one near us in Beltsville, MD!

The class also learned the proper method to collect, clean, and store wild native seeds. A short field trip to a local power line right-of-way enabled the class to have a hands-on experience of collecting wild native seeds. Teams of two selected a specific species, collected the seeds, and after returning to the classroom, cleaned the seeds and shared with the other participants.

Collecting native seeds is a way to incorporate more native plants into our gardens and landscapes. True “native” plant seeds should be collected from wild population growing areas, not spaces that were planted. Choose species that you will be able to propagate successfully in your garden. Do not collect species that are rare, threatened, or endangered. Only collect mature seeds. Ripeness prevents mold during storage. Collect seeds for genetic diversity which gives the plant population the ability to adapt to change. Clean seeds for proper storage. If you prefer, start a native foundation bed to share seeds with others.

**More Information Can be Found:** Growing and Propagating Wildflowers, by Harry Phillips


Native Plant Information Network (NPIN)- [http://www.wildflower.org/plants/](http://www.wildflower.org/plants/)  Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas, Austin, TX.

---

**A Note from the John and Ann Richards...**

The MG's who helped plant and maintain Fairgrounds Gardens this summer will be happy to know we received many compliments on the flowers during the summer. Starting with the Annual Friends of the Library Book Sale in March and running through many events such as the Shop –With-a-Cop Breakfast for underprivileged children in December, the Fairgrounds stay busy!

The County Fair alone welcomed nearly 65,000 visitors this year. We were all proud of the Flower Building exhibits and the Garden Club members who came out to put on the Ritz...indoors and out! A HUGE Thank You to all who helped!
Recipe Box

Pumpkin Pie Cake (crock pot)  From the kitchen of Cherie Heely

1/2 c unsalted butter
2 c brown sugar, packed
3 eggs, room temp
15 oz. pure pumpkin (not pie filling)
1 1/2 c flour
1 1/2 t. baking powder, 1 1/2 t. baking soda
1/2 t. cinnamon, 1/2 t. pumpkin pie spice, 1/2 t. salt, 1/8 t. ground cloves

1. Line crock pot with foil. I used two sheets crossing over each other. Spray with PAM.
2. Cream sugar and butter.
3. Beat in eggs, one at a time.
5. Combine flour and other dry ingredients; gradually add to mixture.
6. Pour into crock.
7. Cover and cook on high for three hrs. Or until toothpick comes out clean.
8. Let the cake rest in crock with lid on before removing. I put a plate on top of crock and invert onto plate. Serve with whipped cream.

African Peanut–Chicken Soup  From the kitchen of Cherie Heely

1 tb. vegetable oil
1 1/4 lb. chicken breasts, cut into 1” pieces
1 small onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
2 med. sweet potatoes, peeled & coarsely chopped
1 med. green pepper, chopped (1 cup)
2 cans (14 oz. ea.) chicken broth
1 can (11 1/2 oz.) tomato juice
1/2 t. ground ginger, 1/4 t. cayenne pepper
1/2 c crunchy peanut butter

1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over med. heat. Cook and stir chicken, onion, garlic in oil 4-5 min or until chicken is no longer pink in center.
2. Stir in rest of ingredients except peanut butter. Heat to boiling, reduce to low. Cover and simmer 10-12 min., stirring occasionally until veggies are tender.
3. Stir in peanut butter. Cook on low heat, stirring constantly, until peanut butter is blended and soup is hot. (I add more peanut butter, almost double the amt.!) Options for serving: over rice, garnish with peanuts, coconut, and/or green onions.

UPCOMING ADVANCED TRAINING AND MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

* Trainings are being planned by the State Office for February and March. Please check out the MG website http://extension.umd.edu/mg to see what will be offered. You will receive email notifications about these classes as well.

* The next Quarterly Meeting is December 12, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Susan England.

* Master Gardener Training 2014 class is now being formed. Interested friends may contact the UME-St. Mary’s Office at 301-475-4484.
Our Vision: The Maryland Master Gardener vision is a healthier world through environmental stewardship.

Our Mission: to support the University of Maryland Extension mission by educating residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.

Correction Corner...

My apologies to Jasper and Vicki. These lovely photos were mislabeled in the summer issue of The Vine. They are now correct. Thanks again for sending them in!