It’s the time of year that we begin to see those familiar weeds that plague us in our borders, beds and turf. Fortunately doing a little homework about the life cycles of our particular weed nemesis can help us determine the course of action in controlling it. A great resource is in your hands already about identifying and controlling many weeds, its Chapter 11 of the MG Manual! There are also a few links you may want to check out! [http://extension.umd.edu/hgic/weeds](http://extension.umd.edu/hgic/weeds) and the NC State Turfgrass Center website [http://turfid.ncsu.edu/ItemID.aspx?orderID=BL&orderDesc=Broadleaf](http://turfid.ncsu.edu/ItemID.aspx?orderID=BL&orderDesc=Broadleaf)

**Henbit**

**Life cycle:** winter annual, less than 12-in. tall; noticeable in spring for pink to purple flowers

**Reproduction:** seed germinating in early fall or early spring.

**Purple Deadnettle**

**Life cycle:** Winter annual noticable in spring when light purple flowers are in bloom

**Reproduction:** Produces seed in the spring; seed germinates in the early fall or early spring.

**Speedwell-Veronica/Persian**

**Life cycle:** Annual and perennial species; dense patches noticeable in lawns, especially in early spring

**Reproduction:** seed

**Common Chickweed** (often confused with Mouseear Chickweed)

**Life cycle:** Common chickweed is a winter annual that has smooth stems and leaves; can have several generations a year during cool wet seasons and forms prostrate dense patches in turf, landscape and vegetable gardens.

**Reproduction:** seed dispersed in spring; germinates in fall; remain viable up to 10 years

**Hairy Bittercress**

**Life cycle:** Annual and perennial species; dense patches noticeable in lawns, especially in early spring

**Reproduction:** seed
• If soil test results recommend more than 50 lbs. of limestone per 1,000 sq. feet to raise the pH the amount of lime should be applied in two applications about 6 months apart. For example, if 85 lbs. is needed, apply 50 lbs. immediately and the remaining 35 lbs. at a later date.

• There is still time to apply a crabgrass pre-emergent if your lawn has had a crabgrass problem in the past. Read the product label for application rates, recommendations for a possible repeat application, which provides season-long crabgrass control and for information on watering the product in.

• When selecting a crabgrass pre-emergent look for one that does not contain fertilizer. Although convenient weed and feed products lead to over-fertilization and applying fertilizer at the wrong time of the year.

• Small patches of crabgrass can be controlled during the growing season by hand pulling or applying a labeled post-emergent herbicide as a spot treatment on young crabgrass. Maintaining proper mowing height reduces the severity of a crabgrass infestation.

• Avoid the temptation to set out warm season crops until after all danger of late frosts.

• “Harden-off” transplants one week prior to transplanting to toughen the plants and ready them for outdoor conditions.

• Now is an ideal time to plant new or transplant existing trees and shrubs. Always hold plants by the root ball or container and not by the trunk. Buying containerized trees and shrubs is very popular. However, sometimes they are pot-bound. Be sure to spread the roots open when planting. This will help assure that the roots will spread out properly and not grow into a tight self-constricting clump of roots. Plants grown as ball and burlap do not require spreading the roots but do need to have the ropes removed and the burlap loosened from around the trunk.

• Choose quality trees from the nursery. Shade trees should have a single, straight trunk. It is unnecessary to prune or top a newly planted tree. Obviously damaged or rubbing branches, however, should be removed.

• Common planting mistakes include planting in compacted or poorly drained soil, planting too deep and buying damaged trees with poor root systems. It is also important to keep newly planted trees properly watered. Typically, the staking of newly planted trees is not needed. New trees that are allowed to move a little by the wind actually develop better roots and a stronger trunk than those that are securely staked. (HG 24)

• Remove and destroy bagworm bags from affected trees—principally on evergreens. The bags contain hundreds of eggs that will hatch out and feed later this spring. Make sure to dispose of these bags; don’t just throw them on the ground because they will still hatch. (HG 32)
SNAPSHOT: Rose Rosette Disease (RRD)
By Diana Klassy

The disease is carried by a microscopic, wind-borne mite (Phyllocoptes fuctiphi-lus).
Controlling the mite with a miticide is difficult as the mite is not visible to the eye.
At this time, there is no known cure for the disease.
All roses are susceptible to RRD, including the “Knock-Out” varieties.

Symptoms observed:

- Elongated leaflets, often a burgundy-red colored; on some varieties it may be light green colored (Don’t confuse with normal new growth on the rose; that can also be reddish colored)
- Larger number of thorns, closer together than normal on the cane
- Misshaped buds and flowers
- Caution: herbicide damage can display similar symptoms

Required action:

- If discovered early, on only one cane, remove infected cane to the ground (limited success with this solution). Continue to observe plant, watching for re-occurrence of RRD.
- If symptoms observed on several canes (disease is down to roots), remove entire rose plant. Do this carefully, not shaking the bush to scatter mites. I cover infected bush with plastic, cut off canes at ground level, double bag the plant (and removed roots) and take to dump.
- RRD is not believed to live in soil, but be careful to thoroughly remove infected rose roots before planting another rose in same location.

As a precaution, disinfect tools used to remove diseased rose bush.

If no action is taken, rose bush will die in a couple of years and the mites will spread to other roses nearby.
For more information, go to the American Rose Society website, rose.org, and search for rose ro-sette disease. Look for the article titled ‘Watch out for Rose Rosette’.
CPCS Students participating in the Friday elective, ‘Garden Project’, did not want to stay inside and talk gardening; they were ready TO DO! Thanks to the help of fellow Master Gardeners Jackie Paskow and Veronica Spicuzza we have taken our classroom outside and started the initial process of sprucing up the existing CPCS Garden and designing raised beds for planting.

We have covered a number of topics thus far, including formal vs. informal garden design, spring vegetables, and sweet potato propagation. The children are each designing a 3’ by 8’ bed which will be planted after Easter. The creativity of each child during this designs process has surprised the volunteers. The students have included features such as shepherd’s hooks, hanging baskets, and timed irrigations systems. The results will be chronicled in the summer publication of The Vine!

Armed with a journal, a pencil, and a creative mind our seven students have taken daily notes on topics covered in the classroom, added garden magazine clippings, and developed their very own (and very first) garden layouts. Watching the students chronicle their gardening experiences has been an enjoyable experience and CPCS is never in short supply of volunteer projects in its Community Garden. Please contact Howie Grube at wgrube2011@my.fit.edu for more details, or call at (240) 538-3942.
Advanced Training Outline--Establishing a Native Plant Foundation Bed  
By Penny Shissler

We all know the benefits of growing native plants. The University of Maryland Extension’s Home and Garden Information Center lists the top five reasons for including native plants in your garden as:

- Enjoy a Beautiful Landscape—plant your garden with native plants either by design or use a more natural looking style.
- Preserve Maryland’s Biodiversity—using locally native plants will benefit the wild plant populations near your home.
- Support Pollinators—create an environment for pollinators such as native bees, butterflies, and beneficial insects.
- Support Song Birds—native plants provide food and habitat for our native bird species.
- Low Input Landscapes—planting native plants in conditions where they naturally compete well, reduces the need for high levels of fossil fuel use.

The UME sponsored advanced training, “Native Plant Foundation Bed Workshop,” is presented by Dr. Sara Tangren, HGIC specialist in sustainable landscaping and native plants. I recently attended the workshop which is divided into four sections offered over the course of a year, “getting the information you need when you need it”.

Workshop 1, in October, we learned how to do a “plant rescue” of mature native plants and collect native seed, which included a field trip to a nearby property that was in the process of being sold to a developer. In November, workshop 2 topics included seed dormancy and storage; foundation bed planning and preparation; and seed sowing.

Workshop 3, in March covered planting the bed, maintenance concerns, and inspections. Time was spent in the greenhouse transferring seedlings into individual plant cells. Next fall topics to be covered will include seed cleaning, testing, the AOSCA (Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies) certification process, and uses for the seeds.

This class counts as 15 hours of MG State continuing education credits. Pre-requisite: Native Plant Essentials (in person or online).

The Work of a Working Meadow  submitted by Paula Pippin

Larry Weaner, of Larry Weaner Landscape Associates, spoke on March 28th at the Lahr Symposium, explaining the procedures and factors influencing the establishment of robust meadows of lasting longevity. He currently is in charge of the renovation of meadows at Dunbarton Oaks. He began with the overriding concern, “Know where you are going and where you want to end up because the process’ many ongoing decisions demand conscious biases toward those ends”.

A project cannot begin without addressing erosion. The next three major factors mold every site: 1.) soil, he advises against any amendment: it would favor fauna, that, over the years, would be uncompetitive when the support waned and the plants would be on their own. 2.) existing seed bank, which if not suppressed would compete strongly in the early stages of meadow formation. 3.) natural competition amongst species.

Initially Larry Weaner’s team eradicated the standing species by attacking them as they emerged in spring, by close mowing and glyphosate (organic means can be an alternative, but require more time and labor), attacking the survivors by mowing then again and spot treatment with more glyphosate. From the beginning he never weeded by pulling up by the roots as this disturbed and potentiated the existing seed bank. Native seed was drill applied (use of plugs were expensive and their planting disturbs the soil seed bank) in June in rows so that weeds could be identified easily. Spot eradication was necessary year 1, year 2 less so and year 3 weeds were shaded out. Initially speed in maturation or fortuitous placement favored some species (beautiful swaths of yellow coreopsis), later competitive advantages conveyed by height favored the taller plants and shaded lower ones, tiny variations in topography, and the depressions between slopes offered variable wet spots, all producing over time a continually changing palette of colors. His latest manuscript has final review in late April for a hoped for publishing in November. Another source of information on Meadows: http://dnr2.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wawildflowers.aspx
ROSEMARY BUTTER COOKIES  Submitted by Suzanne Patterson

2 sticks unsalted butter  
3/4 c. granulated sugar  
1 large egg  
1 tsp. vanilla extract

2 1/2 c. sifted flour  
1 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh Rosemary  
3/4 tsp. salt

Mix butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg plus the vanilla. Add flour, Rosemary, and salt. Halve the dough. Shape each half into a log about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Roll in wax paper. Chill until firm. When ready to bake: Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Cut into 1/4 inch rounds. Bake 1 inch apart on parchment lined cookie sheets for about 18 minutes (until edges are golden.) Cool and store.

Spring Pasta Salad  Submitted by Pam Herold

Ingredients

Dressing:
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper

Pasta:
- 12 ounces cavatappi pasta, cooked to package instructions and shocked under cold water
- 4 ounces asparagus, blanched and thinly sliced
- 1 box frozen peas, defrosted
- One 12-ounce jar roasted yellow peppers, chopped
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1/2 cup fresh dill, chopped
- Ricotta salata, for garnish

Directions

For the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, Dijon mustard, honey, garlic, lemon zest and juice, and season with salt and pepper. For the pasta: Toss the pasta with the asparagus, peas, roasted peppers, tomatoes, shallots and dill. Pour the dressing over the salad, tossing to coat. Allow time for the salad to soak up all of the flavor. When ready to serve, bowl it up and shave some ricotta salata over the top to enhance the texture & taste.
The United States Botanic Garden in Washington, DC (across from the Capital) is having an exhibit called “Exposed, The Secret Life of Roots”. Plant roots are vital components of the earth’s ecosystem. They are necessary for all plant growth, including the production of food and nutrients for humans and many other organisms. However, as root systems are out of sight, their beauty and importance often go unnoticed. Exposed: The Secret Life of Roots showcases the presence and importance of roots through visually stunning root representations using the work of Agricultural Ecologist Dr. Jerry Glover, Sculptor, Steve Tobin and Photographer, Jim Richardson. The exhibit is a very interesting and informative. The Garden is open 7 days a week from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The Compost Crank Compost Aerator Tool

Review submitted by Lea Weaver

For winter composting I use a compost bin that can be rotated on its base for aeration. However, given the weeks of frigid weather we had this year (and the lack of regular rotation on my part) the compost materials had become an almost solid lump making it very difficult to aerate. The bin opening is too small to effectively use a pitchfork, shovel or other large garden tool to get to the bottom of bin to aerate. As such I began looking for an aerator tool to resolve this lumpy issue. I found the Compost Crank Compost Aerator on Amazon.com. It had great reviews, was made in America, looked easy to maintain and easy to use.

What is different about this product is that it penetrates the compost material like an auger. The product literature states that you simply grasp the free-spinning handles, and crank clockwise into your pile. Lift without turning and the corkscrew pulls compost up from the bottom to thoroughly mix and aerate. Depending on how heavy your compost is, you may need to repeat this step layer by layer because it could be too heavy to lift. Once you’ve loosened the material you can go deeper. The tool is long enough to reach every corner of the bin, and light so you are lifting the compost and not the tool. It’s also easy to crank counterclockwise if the material is too heavy.

After a few uses I totally agree with the product literature and the reviews. The Compost Crank does what it claims. Due to the compost material depth I had to aerate in layers but I was able to break through the hard lump in a few minutes. And underneath the lump I found some beautiful brown compost!

Cleanup was very easy and while a bit pricier than some of the other aerators I reviewed, the Compost Crank is worth the cost for a well-made tool that fits my needs perfectly.
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.

Check out the new look of the MD Master Gardener website! Have you registered for the MG Annual Conference yet?

Also great spring events at the Natl’ Arboretum!
http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/events.html

Thanks to Ann Buckler, Sue Gibbs and Lea Weaver for staffing our MG Display at the Easter Egg Festival!

UPCOMING LOCAL PLANT SALES
Summerseat Farm MAY 9th 8am-2pm