When I was a kid, I had a terrific book called The Make-It Book, which detailed a bunch of creative projects, both rainy day and non-, for kids of all ages that kept me and my brother happily engaged for years. The Square Foot Gardening Answer Book reminded me a bit of that book. Simply (but not simplistically) written, encouraging, with clear drawings and straightforward instructions, it is a soup-to-nuts guide for anyone interested in creating a small, productive and easy-to-maintain garden in a host of spaces. Square foot gardening (SFG) is great for the new gardener who wants to start smart and keep going happily, but is also good for the time and space-crunched, who want to savor the pleasures and satisfactions of gardening without making the kind of commitment row upon row of veggies can require.

A square foot garden as the name suggests, is constructed in a grid so it’s a space-miser. The planting takes a page out of Nature by mixing plants – for example, cabbage with nasturtiums (which help deter cabbage moths and add peppery spice and color to salads), lettuce with root crops like beets, carrots and turnips, tomatoes and peppers with basil, cilantro and parsley – an approach that is not only beautiful to look at and productive, but helps to cut down on problems with pests and disease.

Square foot gardening first came to prominence in the ‘70’s when many back-to-the-landers, most of whom grew up in the burbs and knew nothing about growing something to eat, decided to become self-sustaining. Tilling, planting and cultivating rows of vegetables turned out to require more space and labor than these new mini-farmers had anticipated, which is one thing that made square foot gardening so appealing. It shares the interplanting principle with the French intensive method, which at the time was also gaining adherents for its big production in a relatively small space. But SFG was simpler and far less backbreaking than the double-digging usually suggested in French intensive gardening.

The SFG Answer Book is straightforwardly laid out and combines answers to the questions author Mel Bartholomew has been fielding since publishing his first book on SFG in 1981. It offers practical advice for planning, constructing and maintaining your own square foot garden, regardless of where you live. Chapters include Planning and Locating Your Square Foot Garden, Building Your SFG Boxes, Planting and Harvesting, Working with Mel’s Mix (the growing medium aka soil), Dealing with Pests and Problems, and Making a Difference with SFG. (Bartholomew created the Square Foot Gardening Foundation, a nonprofit that spreads the message of SFG through humanitarian projects throughout the world in an effort to end world hunger.).

This book is for anyone who wants to start gardening, whether it’s food, annuals, perennials or a combination or all of the above. It’s also a perfect way to start gardening with kids, or to start kids gardening on their own if they prefer to do it completely themselves since the project is manageable in small bites, but is completely scalable if they want to ramp up, or maybe have their own square foot space beside that of a parent, friend or gardening mentor. SFG Answer Book addresses the problems of limited space, offers potential solutions for less than optimal sun exposure and is very much focused on health for both plants and people.

Square Foot Gardening Answer Book by Mel Bartholomew (Cool Springs Press, $16.99)
Coordinator’s Corner

Now that the holidays are over, most of us cannot wait for spring to get here. I personally detest being cold! With the small tease of warm weather Mother Nature gave us the last week in January, I know I for one was ready for warm weather to stay... and then it snowed! Gardening catalogs are probably adding to this cabin fever feeling for most of you. Fortunately on Delmarva we have lots of springtime activities to look forward to (including our Garden Affair!)

I want to say “thank you” to those of you who have been helpful in getting me started in this new position. I am still learning but without some special volunteers (and co-workers) I would have been totally lost.

Hilary Ennis

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**Organic Soil Conditioners**

Bruce Blessing and Billie Gibson, Blessing Blends

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

A native of Milford, Delaware, Bruce Blessing was raised on his family’s poultry farm and worked for many years in the industry. “I saw that the chicken industry was under extreme pressure with what to do with their chicken waste”, says Blessing. “I’m providing an environmentally-friendly solution to the growing challenges of waste disposal in this area. I figured that if I could take some of that problematic waste and turn it into a saleable product, I could help the environment as well as start a sustainable business. Many of the products we call ‘waste’ are really valuable resources that can be reduced, reused and recycled.” Blessing Blends produces an OMRI listed compost (.5-.5-.4) which would be used to add organic matter to a garden, a controlled release fertilizer (10-0-10), and a potting mix. Blessing Blends not only caters to homeowners and farmers but golf courses, sports fields and any other location where organic matter is needed to maintain a green, healthy space.

Bruce Blessing and Billie Gibson will speak at our February 20th meeting.
Garden Affair
Saturday, May 4th, 10 am to 2 pm
Centreville

Planning for A Garden Affair continues, and we are looking forward to a very successful event this year! The Committee will meet on the following dates at 9:30 a.m. in the meeting room at the extension office:

Monday, Feb. 11
Monday, Mar. 11
Monday Apr. 8
Monday, May 13 (post-event recap)

MG interns are especially encouraged to participate as a means of logging required hours and getting to understand the MG organization. We have many volunteers already signed up for various activities, but additional volunteers are needed to serve as Greeters, and to help with soliciting door prizes ahead of the event, face painting, photography, set up and take down, and display development for the various tables. We will also need everyone’s support for bake sale, plant sale, and Green Elephant sale.

If you have questions or want to volunteer, contact one of the co-chairs, Jim Persels or Carol Jelich, or simply come to the next Garden Affair Committee meeting. We look forward to working with you to make this year’s Garden Affair the best yet.

--Submitted by Jim Persels and Carol Jelich

See “Green Elephant” info on page 4

As the days get longer and the sun begins to warm the soil, the daffodils and the early perennials are beginning to show in our gardens. As you make your plans for this year’s garden, keep the Garden Affair plant sale in mind. We need your donations of healthy non-invasive plants from seeds and from your garden. Last year, the donated plants were widely varied and well presented which resulted in the most successful plant sale to date. Let’s try to achieve that again this year.

The Garden Affair will take place on Saturday, May 4, 2013 at the Centreville Library and Wright’s Chance. With the earlier date, many patrons will still be looking for vegetable, annual, and herb plants that you can start growing at home this winter. As you spring clean your garage and shed, be sure to save those gently used items for the Green Elephant sale. Your donations for the plant and Green Elephant sales are critical to our success.

Thank you for your support
Jane Smith
**WANTED**...items for the Green Elephant table at the Garden Affair in May... gently used garden tools, decorative pots, vases, gadgets, gloves, books, magazines, etc. PLEASE no plastic pots (the ones that plants come in from the nursery or local market) they don’t sell, give them to MGs who are growing plants for the sale or use hanging pots to make a nice grouping to sell at the plant table. Please price your items. Thanks, Karen
Events/Volunteering

Master Gardener Annual Training Day
May 22, 2013
University of Maryland- College Park
Day full of professional speakers, workshops and learning. More details to come!

The Chester River Association is launching a new monthly workshop series in their office, loosely themed on river and landscape issues. These are held the 4th Friday of each month beginning in February. They would like to schedule a Master Gardener as a speaker on the topic “Landscape Design and Maintenance for the Environment” on March 22nd. Would anyone be available to lead this? The format is casual and informal, somewhere between 10 and 20 participants. They are hoping to encourage people to think about Bay-Wise programs for their gardens (which we could talk about specifically) or other ways to incorporate environmentally-sensitive design into their lawn and garden care. This would be a great opportunity to promote the Bay-Wise program! Let Hilary know ASAP if you would like to volunteer for to speak to this group.

Queen Anne’s Co. Master Gardeners have been invited to participate in the Chestertown Farmers Market as part of Washington College’s “Earth Week” celebration. This will take place on Friday, April 19, 2013. Tentative times are currently noon to 4:30. On this day the farmers market will strive to feature local foods, educational booths and home goods/crafts with environmental themes. The market will be set up on campus behind the dining hall. Visitors are welcome and the event is free.

Master Gardener Advanced Training
Landscape Design for Water Management $49
To increase the knowledge and capacity of Master Gardeners so that they can effectively conduct water management outreach in their communities and provide assistance to other organizations and individuals who may wish to undertake a water management project, but do not have the horticultural knowledge or critical understanding required for a successful project.

These classes have been revised for each county’s particular circumstances and have been developed by the state MG office, Sea Grant Extension, and our pain presenter, Jack Leonard, RLA, Principal, JGL Design Associates and is being supported by grant funding from the University of Maryland Extension.

Montgomery Co.—UME office in Derwood and DEP office in Rockville:
Wed. 4/17, 4/24, and 5/1 9:30-3:30 plus optional field trips and exercises

*Queen Anne’s Co.—Wye Rec in Queenstown*:
Wed. 5/8, 5/15, 5/29 9:30-3:30 plus optional field trips and exercises

St. Mary’s Co.— Soil Conservation office in Leonardtown:
Wed. 6/5, 6/12, and 6/19 9:30-3:30 plus optional field trips and exercises

Growing Healthy Shade Trees
with IPM Webinar

Wednesday, February 20 from 10:30 to 1:00 in the Extension office conference room

Free 90 minute internet presentation from a plant pathologist from University of Minnesota extension.

Designed to cover many common questions about selecting, managing and caring for trees, especially maple, ash and oak on home landscapes.

Note: You will have to leave our monthly meeting early to attend this webinar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic, Speaker</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, February 20, 2013</td>
<td>Organic Soil Conditioners</td>
<td>9:30 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Tilghman Terrace</td>
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<td>Bruce Blessing</td>
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<td>Blessings Blends</td>
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<td>Wednesday, March 20, 2013</td>
<td>Herbs</td>
<td>9:30 to 11:30 am</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 17, 2013</td>
<td>Garden Safety</td>
<td>9:30 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Wye Research &amp; Education Center</td>
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<td>2012 MG Interns</td>
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<td>Wednesday, May 15, 2013</td>
<td>Considerations When Choosing</td>
<td>9:30 to 11:30 am</td>
<td>Tilghman Terrace</td>
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<td>Wednesday, June 19, 2013</td>
<td>Picnic</td>
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<td>Wednesday, July 17, 2013</td>
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<td>Wednesday, September 18, 2013</td>
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<td>Wednesday, October 16, 2013</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 20, 2013</td>
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<td>Wednesday, December 18, 2013</td>
<td>Holiday Luncheon</td>
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Please contact Hilary if you have any suggestions for speakers or have a topic you are interested in hearing about. hennis@umd.edu or 410-758-0166 ext. 19
Volunteer Opportunities 2013

Bay-Wise
Help with certifications and publicity. Contact Jane Chambers, Earljane@atlanticbb.net, Kate Greer, Kway2bay@aol.com or Vida Morley, vidamorley@verizon.net

Demonstration Gardens
Help maintain some beautiful gardens in Centreville. Contact Debby Pusey, debbiepusey@verizon.net

Garden Affair
Saturday, May 4th 2013. Lots and lots of help is needed. Contact Jim Persels, jpersels@yahoo.com

Grow It Eat It
So many opportunities! Give talks, go to schools, make presentations at plant clinics etc. Contact Linda & Jack Doub lindadoub@gmail.com or jkdoub@gmail.com or Sabine Harvey greenbien@hotmail.com

Plant Clinics
Chester: Contact Sabine Harvey, greenbien@hotmail.com
Kent Island Farmers Market: Karen Wimsatt, jimandkaren.wimsatt@gmail.com

School Gardens
Help maintain the gardens or work with students. Contact Sabine Harvey, greenbien@hotmail.com

Reminder: Hours volunteered at Adkins Arboretum do count towards Master Gardener program hours!
QAC MG News:

Members of the Steering Committee will continue to assist new MG Coordinator Hilary Ennis as she becomes acquainted with our programs and activities.

**MG Meetings:** Monthly meetings will continue to be in Centreville at Tilghman Terrace in 2013.

**Publicity:** Each committee’s chair(s) will be responsible for their own publicity.
- Bay-Wise: Kate Greer, Jane Chambers, and Vida Morley
- Grow It Eat It: Linda Doub
- MG Interns: Karen Wimsatt and Linda Doub
- A Garden Affair: Carol Jelich and Jim Persels

**Volunteer Hours Entry:** Pat Bowell. Volunteer hour forms can be sent to the Extension Office or directly to Pat at bowell74@verizon.net

**Extension Advisory Council** (lets Extension office know what MG program needs are): Linda & Jack Doub, Jim Persels, and Sue D’Camera

3rd Thursday Centreville Demonstration Garden Cleanups will resume in the spring. Debbie Pusey will advise as to time and location debbiepusey@verizon.net 410 758-8623

**Plant Clinics**
Alternate Saturdays at Chestertown Farmers Market: Sabine Harvey greenbien@hotmail.com, 410-810-3890
Kent Island Farmers Market: Karen Wimsatt, jimandkaren.wimsatt@gmail.com

ANYONE MAY SEND MESSAGES TO THE WHOLE GROUP BY SENDING TO QACMG@googlegroups.com. Please direct questions or email address changes to Marty Appel, list serve manager. kittraveler@yahoo.com, 410-643-4351 or Hilary Ennis, hennis@umd.edu

Kent Island Farmers Market: QAC Ask A MG is on the second Thursday of each month. The focus in April will be “rain gardens” and May will be “native plants”. Contact Karen to sign up to help!

The plant clinic in Chestertown is held in Fountain Park during the Farmer's Market from 8 till noon, every other Saturday, starting at the end of April. Our first plant clinic will be during the Earth Day/Mutt Strutt event on Saturday, April 20 (mentioned on page 3). Contact Sabine to help!

- **Grow It Eat It Blog:** www.groweat.blogspot.com
- **UME Digital Farmer Blog:** http://digitalfarmer.blogspot.com/
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<td>Garden Affair and Steering Committee Meeting 9:30</td>
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<td>Check Farmers markets for Maryland Grown Cut Flowers!</td>
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<td>Extension Office Closed</td>
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<td>Monthly Meeting Tilghman Terrace 9:30</td>
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<td>State GIEI Meeting College Park 10-1</td>
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**Tilghman Terrace**

104 Tilghman Ave
Centreville, Md. 21617

**From South of Centreville**
Follow 213 N. into town. Turn right at first light onto Water street and **
pass the PNC bank on your right. Tilghman Ave will be the next street on your right. Turn right onto Tilghman Ave. **

**From North of Centreville**
Follow 213 S. into town. Turn Left on E. Water St. Follow **directions above.

Parking on street and in the rear of building.

**Directions to the monthly meeting!**

All MG Monthly Meetings start at 9:30am and run through 11:30am
March 2013
A note from the Area Extension Director:

First, let me express my appreciation to each of you for all of your efforts in Queen Anne’s county. I recognize and appreciate that many of you increased your volunteer commitment to the Master Gardener Program in the absence of a Master Gardener Coordinator. Thank you!

By now, you have all met our new Master Gardener Coordinator, Hilary Ennis. Hilary is working hard to acclimate herself to all aspects of her job 1) as Master Gardener Coordinator and 2) as the Home Horticulture Educator. Please be patient, offer your expertise and encouragement as she works to learn the many facets of both parts of her job.

I know that many of you have worked directly with Shelia Shorter in the absence of an MG coordinator, and we are all the beneficiaries of her excellent work and commitment to all of our Extension programs. Now that Hilary is on board, please make sure that all work flows through Hilary as she is the point of contact for the MG program. Lastly, I know many of you are in the office on a regular basis in order to work on Master Gardener Projects. When you are in the office and need supplies, please ask the assistance of Hilary or either Shelia or Sue.

Thank you so much for all that you do!  

Aly J. Valentine  
Area Extension Director

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**ROASTED WINTER VEGETABLES**

**Ingredients**

- 1 pound carrots, peeled  
- 1 pound parsnips, peeled  
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled  
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and seeded (about 2 pounds)  
- 3 tablespoons good olive oil  
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt  
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley

**Directions**

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

Cut the carrots, parsnips, sweet potato, and butternut squash in 1 to 1 1/4-inch cubes. All the vegetables will shrink while baking, so don't cut them too small.

Place all the cut vegetables in a single layer on 2 baking sheets. Drizzle them with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Toss well. Bake for 25 to 35 minutes, until all the vegetables are tender, turning once with a metal spatula.

Sprinkle with parsley, season to taste, and serve hot.

2002, Barefoot Contessa Family Style, All Rights Reserved

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Meet author Rick Darke "Balancing Natives and Exotics in the Garden”  
Saturday, March 2. Registration and refreshments at 10 am,  
90 minute presentation begins at 11 am.  
Coffee and pastries served prior to the talk and afterward books by Darke will available for purchase and can be autographed from 12:45-2 p.m.  
The Key School, 534 Hillsmere Drive, Annapolis, Free parking.  
Register online at [www.unitygardens.org](http://www.unitygardens.org)  
or print and send a registration form to Unity Gardens, P.O. Box 6310,  
Annapolis, MD 21401. Cost per ticket: $55 (a portion of the ticket is tax deductible).
University of Maryland Extension
505 Railroad Avenue, Suite 4
Centreville MD, 21617
Phone: (410) 758-0166
Fax: (410) 758-3687
http://queenannes.umd.edu/

QACMG Website:
http://queenannes.umd.edu/QACMG/
index.cfm

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University of Maryland Extension
Queen Anne’s County
505 Railroad Ave.
Suite 4
Centreville, MD 21617

National Cherry Blossom Festival
Washington D.C.
March 20-April 14
www.nps.gov/cherry

Hilary Ennis
Master Gardener Coordinator
University of Maryland Extension
Queen Anne’s County

Happy Valentine’s Day

Vision Statement: A healthier world through environmental stewardship