Allegany County
from Becky Yost

Master Gardener Basic Training in the spring had 16 trainees. As a new program we began to hold bi-monthly meetings, rented garden plots in our demo garden to the community, redesigned our garden compost bin, and are now sending out MG news in the AGNR newsletter.

Baltimore City
from Patricia Foster

Baltimore City Master Gardeners created a model urban farm at the State Fair this year as a demonstration of minimum space, maximum production. The garden was viewed by thousands who visited the fair and many Master Gardeners were onsite to answer any questions and give advice. We got involved in the project through the efforts of Katie Dott and Baltimore County Extension.

The Demonstration Vegetable Garden at Cylburn is finally ready for spring planting, once soil amendments are applied. The site when complete will offer a great teaching opportunity for us in vegetable growing and storm water management. The site given to MGs by the City when our Demonstration garden became a parking lot for the Vollmer Center, was less than ideal, minimal sunlight, nothing organic about the soil (mostly fill and rocks used to create a rather steep slope), a water management problem from the get go. In collaboration with the Cylburn Association and its new CBT grant to build a storm water management system which will include a rain garden, a bioswale as well as composting and handicap accessible features, the MGs will provide maintenance for the site.

This year the MGs of Baltimore City provided the organization and maintenance of the City’s Traditional Supper celebrating the gardens of Baltimore. The City, because of budgetary restrictions, cancelled the supper. Joining forces with CGRN and Baltimore Greenspace, the MGs combined the bus and bike garden tour with the supper and hosted more than 200 hungry gardeners at the Vollmer Center. It was the first time that the event was open to the City supported farms, the gardens supported by MGs, CGRN members, and the new Urban Farmers. It was very successful.

We are gearing up for our next group of interns. The classes will be split between the extension office and Cylburn Arboretum. It will be a first in attempting a bi-located course. We will reassess how successful this will be in increasing the presence of the Extension in the new interns experience and will report final numbers in time for the next meeting.
Reference Library
Master Gardeners received a $500 education grant from the NRCS Impact team to create a library at the Baltimore County Agriculture Center. With other book donations, two MGs (also former librarians) organized the titles and a reference system for the library.

Plant Sale
Plant grown by MGs and donations from area nurseries added $5500 to our coffers.

New Committees/Sites
BCMGs added the following committees in 2012 – Pollinators, Herbs, Public Relations. Penn State MG, Suse Greenstone, a registered Horticultural Therapist transferred to Baltimore County and started a volunteer program for BCMG’s at the Gallagher Center. MGs receive orientation and training to work with the developmentally disabled adults with the expectation that they will volunteer in the HT program for 6 weeks.

State Fair
BCMG teamed with 4-H to install a pollinator garden at the west entrance if the State Fairgrounds in Timonium. 4-H painted a mural that welcomed visitors to the fair. BCMG installed a sample pollinator garden with 20 different types of plants, complete with plant labels and a mailbox to hold educational literature about pollinators.

Ask A Master Gardener
Our Ask A MG teams held 65 plant clinics at four Farmer’s Markets and other community events. They reached 1525 adults.

Gunpowder Valley Conservancy/Baltimore County Master Gardeners Bay-Wise Outreach Project
A collaboration between the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC), The University of Maryland Extension Baltimore County Master Gardeners (UME BCMG) and the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability (Baltimore County DEPS), the project is designed to support the implementation of the Small Watershed Action Plan (SWAP) and was developed by Baltimore County for the Middle River and Tidal Gunpowder watersheds. The GVC and the Baltimore County DEPS, with the support of the Baltimore County Master Gardeners, will be working together to implement this plan over the next five to ten years.

Baltimore County DEPS has identified specific neighborhoods in the Middle River and Tidal Gunpowder watersheds where changes in residents’ landscaping practices could have a significant impact on the quality of area waterways. An upland assessment of the area recommended reduction of fertilizer, Bay-scaping (replacing lawns with native plants, also known as conservation landscaping) and downspout disconnection (including the use of rain barrels and rain gardens) in many areas within the neighborhoods surveyed. A social marketing plan was developed which describes a two-year effort to research, communicate and motivate area homeowners to change their behavior by engaging in more environmentally friendly landscaping practices, with a focus on restoration actions that are identified in the SWAP Action Strategies. Baltimore County Master Gardeners served on the Steering Committee for this market research project.

Once funding is secured, the next phase of the project will commence with pilot projects in two neighborhoods in the target area. Master Gardeners will again serve on the Steering Committee, will make community presentations on sustainable landscape practices and will certify individual landscapes as Bay-Wise.

Fall Training
The Class of 2012 arrived, 36 persons strong to undergo 10 weeks of training. A Mentor Program was initiated. Trainees complete an interest inventory so that they could be matched with a like-minded Active MG. Trainees and MGs received detailed instructions on their duties and responsibilities in the hopes that trainees would receive support throughout the training period and through the next year.
The Cecil County Program kept busy this year offering monthly workshops to the county residents. Some of the workshops offered were as follows: Pruning, Plan your garden, Winter sowing, Rain Barrels, Composting/vermicomposting, How to plant a potato bin, Soil sampling, Floral Arranging, House plant care and Wreath making. The participation in most of our monthly workshops were great, so we have decided to do the same in 2013.

We also kept busy participating in local activities and fairs. At our Cecil County Fair we had a Repurposing Display, where we made garden furniture and fence sections out of old wooden pallets. We also made hanging flower pots from recycled bottles, and for our youth day at the fair, the children made glow bugs from recycled bottles, some paper, a few pipe cleaners and a glow stick.

We had our annual fundraiser at the St. Mary Anne’s Garden Market in North East Maryland in May, where we sold carnivorous plant terrariums and salad bowl kits.

Dorchester County
from Judy Slaughter

Dorchester County joined with QA and Talbot for an ‘Eastern Shore’ Joint Intern Training. Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie so we are planning an ‘Eastern Shore’ MG picnic this summer. A special thank you to QAMG Linda Doub for coordinating the entire program for us. Our mentors are coupled with our new interns and we are ready to roll with a new newsletter from the internship project!

We participated in the annual Dorchester Center for the Arts Showcase by having an informational booth, activities for children on ‘the parts of a flower’ and demonstrating how to construct a rain barrel and the importance and benefits of using one in your landscape.

Our weekly column in The Banner newspaper is back in print from its brief ‘end-of-Summer hiatus’. Kudos to Laetitia Sands – DCMG, our journalist!

Charles County
from Gale Kladitis

- CCMG partnered with Christmas in April to landscape properties chosen
- CCMG partnered with Thomas Stone HS to become the 1st totally green school in MD
- CCMG had plant clinics at, Artsfest, La Plata Day, PD Brown Library, Monarch Butterfly Festival, Celebrate La Plata and Charles County Fair.
- 2 Successful annual plant sales with Plant Clinics at both locations – Waldorf and La Plata
- Continuing projects for speakers bureau, Grow it Eat it, Dr Mudd House, Memorial Garden, Camp Merrick, Children’s Aid and Site Visits
- Continuing classes at the Detention Center with a vegetable garden and a new request for a garden at Jude House
- Partnership with St. Mary’s County Extension Nutritionist Liat Mackey at Waldorf Farmers Market in September – Potato baskets and Lettuce boxes

During 2012, the Garrett County Master Gardeners have been busy with several new endeavors.

- Holding two basic training classes, where 17 new interns were trained required a large amount of the coordinators time.
- More than 1,080 people were contacted through programs, fair booth, and plant clinics, with 278 volunteer/community service hours donated to date (with more people needing to turn in their hours).
Howard County
from Georgia Eacker

1. Howard County MGs were highlighted in two magazines: the May issue of “Howard Magazine” in which three MG gardens including a green roof were shown, and the MGs interviewed.

2. The second magazine was the summer issue of “Her Mind” which described the Bay-Wise program and showed photos of three MGs at work, including the Coordinator.

3. In April the MGs received a Green Footprint Award from the James and Anne Robinson Foundation in recognition of “outstanding service to environmental education throughout Howard County”.

4. A new program, Environmental Report Card was initiated through a partnership with the Howard County Public School system. The program, involving on-site surveys of seven elementary schools required MGs to guide 5th graders in evaluating issues as run off/erosion, vegetation, biodiversity and map reading. One fourth grader HCPSS stated: “Thank you for coming to our school so that we can learn about gardening. I think it is really cool that you can grow plants in a container. There is a broken/cracked trash can that I can plant lettuce in!”

Lower Eastern Shore
from Ginny Rosencranz

Maintaining Active Citizens - MAC Therapy Garden. Master Gardeners designed the garden for touch, smell, taste and sight. Birds and butterflies are encouraged to visit by the varieties of plantings, and all plants are non-poisonous. A grant was obtained to build a fence to keep the visiting guests (of the dementia unit) safe, another grant was obtained to construct a brick figure 8 path to allow visitors with disabilities to walk without getting lost or running into anything. The Master Gardeners wrote and received a grant from the Community Foundation to purchase the plants that had not been donated to complete the landscape design. A water feature was added when another Master Gardener was able to collect donation funds to pay for a large Jardinière. Another donation of 2 raised beds allows wheel chair visitors to plant or enjoy the garden at their view. An Eagle Scout used plans donated by a Master Gardener to coordinate...
The first highlight of 2012 was the lettuce cup terrarium project. Youth in both schools, at community events, Earth Day, and Bowie State University embrace this project of growing food from seed, in this case, lettuce, in a cup-style terrarium. We taught the water cycle first so that the youth understood why they did not need to water the seeds until the lettuce reached the top of the cap. The program was so successful that adults also wanted to try this method at Community events such as Earth Day and Community festivals and fairs. Students in one Botany class at Bowie State University ask their instructor and got approval to show/teach this project in their lab class. This project was submitted for the Search for Excellence Award at the 2013 International Master Gardener’s Conference.

The second highlight was providing a half day programming for the 4-H center at Patuxent for 16 Montessori school children. This was a last minute request and we had 2 weeks to prepare. MGs took the kids for a hike in the woods to identify trees and to collect leaves. We then had them to identify the leaves and make an accordion leaf herbarium scrapbook. After that, we discussed the water cycle and they made lettuce cup terrariums. Those who finished ahead of time did leaf rubbings. We went over the 4 hours allotted time and did not get to the soil and butterfly cycle projects. In all, the youth gave the Master Gardeners a rating of “awesome!” for the 4 ½ hours. The teachers, parents and 4-H staff were quite impressed also.

HALO Garden of HOPE. The Master Gardeners had started a small community garden in 2011 utilizing old abandoned church pews to create planting beds for Halo Ministries who assist and feed 3 meals for hundreds of homeless. (http://www.haloministry.org/harvest-of-hope-garden). The purpose of creating the garden was to:

- Provide a place where we can gather nutritional and fresh food for our guests
- Provide an opportunity for our guests to learn to grow and consume healthy food
- Provide an environment of success that will improve the sense of self-esteem and well-being of our guests

Master Gardeners and other community organizations gave their time and expertise to create the 16 raised beds. A well was dug and the cost was donated to the garden. Electricity was obtained from the Halo building, but the trenching of the lines to the well and pump was donated. Plumbing was laid from the well to the raised beds and a drip system was installed, all by donations. Plants we donated, seeds were donated and the gardens were planted. Perdue Farms donated Perdue Fertilizer Pellets for the raised beds. The vegetables that were harvested supplied the Halo Café to help feed the hungry homeless. The homeless were encouraged to visit the garden to help or observe and learn. By August 3, 2012 the garden had harvested over 80 pounds of fresh vegetables to the Halo Café.
Queen Anne’s County from Hilary Ennis

- In April, Rachel Melvin left her position as Queen Anne’s county Master Gardener Coordinator to take on a new opportunity with MD Dept. of Ag. She was replaced by Hilary Ennis in November. A steering committee of dedicated Master Gardeners worked hard to keep the programs running smoothly in the absence of a coordinator.

- The fifth annual Garden Affair was held at the Queen Anne’s County Library and Wrights Chance property. This large event included educational booths, door prizes, demos, children’s activities, and the annual plant sale!

- The Bay-Wise program saw record numbers of participation. And numerous Grow It Eat It classes were held at local libraries.

- Ask a Master Gardener plant clinics took place at Chestertown and Centreville Farmers Markets. Master Gardeners staffed informative booths at the county fair and at other local events such as Corsica River Awareness Day. When a new farmers market opened on Kent Island in Queen Anne’s County we greeted patrons at their Opening Day in April and have had a table/booth each month with a special focus or display. We plan to continue throughout the winter to promote our Spring classes, the Garden Affair and maintain QAC MG visibility on Kent Island.

- A new demonstration garden was added at the Queen Anne’s County Fairgrounds 4-H Park. This new garden of native plants was then Bay-Wise certified.

St. Mary’s County from Jennifer Horton

- In April of 2012, 22 interns completed the classroom portion of the MG basic training.

- In addition to providing an informational display at our usual county-wide events (Earth Day, Heritage Days, SMC Fair and Riverfest) the UME-St. Mary’s MG program was invited to have our Bay-Wise display at the Crab Fest, the SMC Green Technologies Event and the PNC Bank Green Event. All of these were venues in which we reached new and different audiences.

- A continuing program is the “Ask a Master Gardener” plant clinics. This program runs from April-October, weekly at various county libraries. This year we were introducing our 2012 Interns to the plant clinics.

- Our Grow It Eat it programs for 2012 consisted of a series of 30 minute veggie talks given on Pax River, NAS throughout the growing season.

- Under a newly revitalized Bay-Wise committee, 2012 has been a record breaking! To date, 21 properties have been certified. And another dozen are currently “in process”.

- A new program that was initiated this year was in conjunction with our 4-H office. A day camp run by the Youth Center on Pax River, Naval Air Station allowed us to provide two programs during the summer to their 7 year old age group. Using the JMG curriculum, we read and discussed the book “The Gardener” and then helped to lead a planting activity using a monochromatic theme for the planters.

- Our second program at the camp was adapted from some 4-H materials and it was about insects.

- Both of these programs went well and we hope to continue this partnership between the Pax River, NAS and UME- St. Mary’s in 2013.

- Another new venue for the UME-St. Mary’s Master Gardeners this fall was the new Homegrown Farmer’s Market. MG Interns presented talks on planting bulbs and dividing perennials. These were well received and again, we hope to continue with more talks here in 2013.
Talbot County Master Gardeners have been busy down on Tilghman Island this fall. Lead by George Yurek, a buffer garden was installed in collaboration with the Phillips Wharf Education Center (PWEC). The buffer garden is adjacent to the wharf and was designed and implemented by Master Gardener volunteers. They were also present at PWEC on October 21st for Critter Release Day as part of the festival for Tilghman Island Days. Master Gardeners acted as representatives of the University of Maryland to explain the benefits of buffer gardens, as well as explain other Bay-Wise techniques. Before and after pictures are shown below.

Talbot County Master Gardeners have also been present at many fall festivals, representing the program to community members. Our presence has been acknowledged at the Pickering Creek Harvest Hoe-Down, the Harvest Festival at the Talbot Agricultural Center, and the 3-day Waterfowl Festival in downtown Easton. Master Gardeners answered public questions, used a display on fall plant identification, involved children in planting salad boxes, and provided an interactive watershed model for all ages. They emphasized Bay-Wise techniques and provided literature to interested community members on water run-off information.

Talbot County was also able to print and publish our own booklet From My Backyard to Our Bay which provided community homeowners with a guide to improving water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. This booklet was put together and printed only by the grace of Master Gardener volunteers who dedicated their time and effort to making it happen. A link to the PDF file can be accessed via the Talbot County Master Gardener website, or through this link: http://www.mastergardener.umd.edu/local/Talbot/TredAvonWatershed/Files/BackyardtotheBay.pdf

Talbot County MGs are hoping to join forces with Habitat for Humanity to provide local projects and housing units with stormwater run-off and water retention techniques. This includes a rain garden constructed in the community space of several Habitat housing units to battle the intense drainage issues.

From My Backyard to Our Bay
A Talbot County Homeowner’s Guide:
Actions to Improve the Water Quality of the Chesapeake Bay

In 2012:
- We launched a new internal website for Master Gardeners to share educational resources, project updates, gardening blogs and a calendar.
- Our plant clinics expanded to reach over 2,000 people at 32 themed clinics at farmer’s markets, all county libraries and a 2-day event.
- We started a medicinal garden in an historic village and taught visitors about Victory Gardens at a new WWII event which drew thousands of visitors.
- A seminar series and informal talks in our demonstration garden were all well attended.
- And the Western MD Hospital Center therapeutic gardens grew to include a rain garden and fitness trail.