University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, or national origin.
Marcia… You Will Be Sorely Missed

Dear Marcia,

How sad it is to say “au revoir” after seven years of your tender loving care to the Charles County Master Gardeners. We won’t say “good-bye” because we hope you’ll remain part of the life of our organization. Where would we be without your guidance through the rabbit holes of rules and regulations required to keep us in compliance? Your ability to teach each and every one of us to do for ourselves will serve us well and reflect on your unique skills as you leave us. Not having you greet us every day with needed information and our endless questions will leave a void not easily filled. You have offered friendship and kindness to each of us and watched as we come and go and grow. The growth has been in large part to your skilled contributions and invaluable assistance to the training program, the record keeping, and membership. Your grace under fire has been demonstrated daily and appreciated by all. Still, knowing you are doing something that will make you happy will make our adjustment easier.

WE LOVE YOU MARCIA!

Charles County Master Gardeners
Marcia, Marcia, Marcia
September 20, 2012

Master Gardeners at the Charles County Fair
By Bob Peregoy, Intern

At the Charles County Fair, September 13 through 16, 2012, the Master Gardeners hosted two information booths. Our main booth, located in the Flower building, won a second place red ribbon for education. It displayed photos of Master Gardener volunteer landscaping projects, along with many brochures from the University of Maryland Extension on topics as diverse as Lyme disease, Bay-Wise yardstick, poison ivy, nutrient management and its effects on the Chesapeake Bay, and the Grow-it Eat-it program. We also had a second, smaller display in the Drury (canning) building, displaying many of the same brochures.

Our membership provided over 100 hours of volunteer community service staffing these booths, welcoming the fair-going public, and answering questions on a wide variety of gardening topics. Special thanks to Mary Beth Chandl-
er, Mary Cocke, Bob Eppley, Mary Grant, Millie Head, Neal Johnson, Sheila Kristiensen, Jan Lakey-Waters, Dave Lewis, Laura Meffley, Lin Murray, Doris Santi-
mays, Pauline Spurlock, Terry Thir, and Karen Westhead, for their great volunteer efforts. Oth-

We will miss you!
Memorial Garden in La Plata

By Mary Beth Chandler, Class of 2003

The Star Memorial Garden, 3 Firehouse Street in La Plata, is a great opportunity for community service hours for Master Gardeners. It is a small “pocket” garden that is forever changing with each season. The garden is owned by the Town of La Plata and maintained by the La Plata Garden Club, many of whom are Master Gardeners, along with a wonderful Melwood crew for grass cutting and mulching. Like all gardens, it takes a good deal of TLC, weeding and feeding to keep it in pristine condition for visitors.

Finding the garden is a lesson in taking time to look up. You can see the town Star from Charles Street looking south; just follow the Star and you are there. The Star is not as high in the air as it was prior to the tornado of 2002, when it rested on the top of the original water tower that was destroyed. This site was selected for the garden because the property is the home of the first fire station and rescue squad in the town and is now the Charles County Firehouse Museum.

Master Gardeners Sherie Zimmer and Dianne Shisler maintain the work schedule for the garden from April through September, rotating from week to week throughout the season. If you are interested in working in the garden for your service hours, contact Sherie or Dianne and they will give you more details. All willing gardeners are welcome!

How Does Your Garden Grow?

By Beth Bonifant , Class of 2003

Yes, I know gardens are full of life and soil gives birth to seeds but something else entirely is growing in my garden now. One morning at the end of July when I went out to the garden to “tweak” a few things I discovered a Diamond Back Terrapin in the act of laying eggs. After using her back legs to push a blanket of earth over her future offspring she promptly headed back to the Potomac River and dove right in. I never saw her surface again.

Life began in a garden. I think I’ve heard that somewhere before.

Editor’s note:

According to Wikipedia... The eggs usually hatch in 60-85 days, depending on the temperature and the depth of the nest. Hatchlings usually emerge from the nest in August and September, but may overwinter in the nest after hatching. Beth's turtle eggs were laid late in the season!

We have nearly 20 acres on the Potomac River so it amuses me that the turtle chose my flower garden for her nursery. The garden is approximately 200‘ from the river. That’s a long way for tiny turtles. I’m sure I’ll never get to see if and when they hatch, though I always patrol the area. I hope the abundant osprey and Bald Eagles are equally oblivious when the time comes.

Left: Photo taken by Beth Bonifant of the turtle in her garden laying eggs. Right: Wikipedia illustration of top (carapace) and bottom shell.
Woody Plants Certification Awarded

By Carol Teets, class of 2003

In June 2012 I completed the final class in the course of study required to receive the Woody Plants Certification through the University of Maryland Extension. This is a Master Gardener Level II course of study, comprised of 5 classes of 9 hours each. The required classes are Evergreen Trees and Shrubs, Plant Taxonomy, Flowering Shrubs, Shade Trees, and Ornamental Trees and Vines.

The classes were held at the Charlotte Hall Library and I started in 2007. The focus of each of these classes was to identify the trees, shrubs, and vines by training the eye to recognize their similarities and differences. We learned to examine the leaves, bark, and their fruiting/flowering characteristics through careful examination. Then in Master Gardener tradition we were tested.

In addition to classroom study each of these classes included a field trip. Three of the classes included a trip to the National Arboretum and another was as simple as taking a walk around the Charlotte Hall Library. It was amazing to experience the landscape through trained eyes.

Although this training takes approximately five years to complete, I encourage all Master Gardeners to pursue this certification. The key is to take advantage of the classes when they are hosted in the tri-county area. If you have any questions concerning this educational opportunity feel free to speak to Carol Teets, Sherie Zimmer or Dianne Shisler. Sherie and Dianne completed their certification in 2009.

Two levels of training are offered:

Level I, or continuing education training, will consist of short courses, ranging from a one hour course to an entire day devoted to a single topic.

Level II training will be much more in-depth, and will consist of approximately 6-24 hours or more of training on a single topic.

The Newsletter is Looking for a New Editor

By Cindi Barnhart, Class of 2003
Editor/Publisher

I have been editing and composing the newsletter since 2008 and now I am stepping away from the job. My last issue will be the Winter 2013 edition, which will go out in January of 2013. I am willing to assist the person taking up the challenge of providing this informative and well-received publication to the Charles County Master Gardeners.

I have enjoyed my chance to hold the reins and steer this marvelous outreach vehicle.

The format need not stay as a booklet and you can put your stamp on the newsletter using your own expertise and ideas.

I thank all the people who have assisted me by editing, furnishing photos, writing articles, assembling the newsletter and simply helping with any task I asked of them. I have asked the current staff to stay on and assist the new editor and all have agreed.

I look forward to hearing from and working with the new Editor/Publisher. Please contact me so we can start working together to make the transition.

MG Steering Chair’s Note:
The “Crown Jewel” of the Charles County Master Gardeners must continue! This is a golden opportunity for those of you with writing skills and editorial knowhow to gain a wealth of experience and have fun at the same time. Perhaps we could have co-editors or a combination of jobs to allow the information to exchange and flow in an enjoyable manner. This tradition must be maintained and I am sure there are MGs or Interns who will volunteer to learn the process before our editor’s final issue in January of 2013.

Think About It! And Then Act!
The Charles County Master Gardeners were asked to partner with the St. Mary’s County Extension office in a nutrition table for the Waldorf Farmers Market on Saturday, August 25. St Mary’s nutritionist, Lait Mackey, would offer literature and recipes, with examples of vegetables, particularly sweet potatoes. The Master Gardeners would introduce proper planting techniques and methods of care required to grow the potatoes. I took a sweet potato basket; Cindi Barnhart designed and printed the instructions for distribution. Even though it rained, the true hearts of Charles County still came out and our table had a pretty good business. There were a lot of questions on container gardening and how productive they really can be. However, with the photo instructions demonstrating the yield, it was self-explanatory. The Master Gardeners were asked to set up a table on September 29 at the same location. This time we had salad boxes to demonstrate.

Jude House
Ongoing
Contact: Carol Teets

Garden Planning is Scheduled for Spring
By Carol Teets, Class of 2003
We were contacted by Jude House in Bel Alton, to help them plan and implement a Serenity Garden.
Jude House is an addiction treatment center and they feel a garden would be beneficial to their clients.

Waldorf Farmers Market
Ongoing
Contact: Gale Kladitis

Sweet Potato Baskets and Salad Boxes
By Gale Kladitis, Class of 2008
The Charles County Master Gardeners were asked to partner with the St. Mary’s County Extension office in a nutrition table for the Waldorf Farmers Market on Saturday, August 25. St Mary’s nutritionist, Lait Mackey, would offer literature and recipes, with examples of vegetables, particularly sweet potatoes. The Master Gardeners would introduce proper planting techniques and methods of care required to grow the potatoes. I took a sweet potato basket; Cindi Barnhart designed and printed the instructions for distribution. Even though it rained, the true hearts of Charles County still came out and our table had a pretty good business. There were a lot of questions on container gardening and how productive they really can be. However, with the photo instructions demonstrating the yield, it was self-explanatory. The Master Gardeners were asked to set up a table on September 29 at the same location. This time we had salad boxes to demonstrate.

AHS FARM (Continued from page 18)
scribes is a massive, gnarled Osage orange tree (*Maclura pomifera*). This tree measured 58 feet tall with an average crown spread of more than 90 feet and has been recognized as the largest Osage orange in the United States by the National Register of Big Trees in 2011, and is estimated to be 200 years old.

Photo from American Horticultural Society website of Osage orange at River Farm

Master Gardener T shirts
Please contact Terry Thir
CC Master Gardener women’s polo-shirts for sale
(Med, Large, XL)-$23
(2XL)-$24
Available at the Extension Office

“No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden.”
Thomas Jefferson, 1811

The native shrub pictured on page 16?
Bottlebrush Buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*)
Ideal for under planting in woodlands or for use in shrub borders and large masses. These grow 8 to 12 feet high and 8 to 15 feet wide.

Photo by Beth Bonifant
AHS River Farm Tour: Great Day of Learning

By Millie Head, Intern

On August 17 nine Master Gardeners toured the gardens at River Farm, the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society, in Alexandria, VA. Joining me on this trip were Anne Gillespie, Cindy Barnhart, Janet McGrane, Celine McLaughlin, Mary Grant, Mary Beth Chandler, Dianne Shisler and Pauline Spurlock. Mary Grant and Anne Gillespie served as our drivers.

Sylvia Shmeichel, our tour guide, started us off with an introductory presentation in the Parlor, where there was a fantastic view of the front porch, the gardens on the grounds below, and the Potomac River.

Our outdoor tour began with the colorful plantings at the front entrance. Afterward we visited the Meadow, filled with various ornamental grasses and perennials. Sylvia described the burning of the Meadow, one of the tasks that maintains the Meadow and contributes to eliminating invasive plants.

The Green Garage has this name because of its green roof, covered with grasses. It features the proper choices of tools, equipment, materials and techniques to be used for environmental sustainability. We visited one of the oldest trees of its type in the USA. [See Editor’s Note below.] Its huge trunk and limbs spread out to form a great shaded area. We could see where cables held up the limbs to prevent breakage. And that was only one of the issues involved in keeping this tree alive!

Other sights included the children’s garden and butterfly garden, and a garden with wrought iron gates at the entrance. The gates were brought to River Farm from the White House, but there’s a mystery as to exactly how they happened to be placed on the grounds of River Farm. Our last stop, the gift shop, was very tempting, and some of us gave in.

We finished our field trip at the Town Mouse in La Plata, with a lively discussion of various Master Gardener activities.

Watch for a notice about the next garden tour, planned for May 2013.

Editors note:
The very large tree Millie de-
(Continued on page 19)

Bay-Wise Advanced Training Course

By Ronda R. Goldman, Class of 2006
Charles County Bay-Wise Coordinator

October 10, 17, 19, 2012
9:30 am - 3:30 pm

The Charles County Master Gardeners will be hosting an advanced training course in October 2012. The Bay-Wise program is designed to equip Master Gardeners with the skills to evaluate, consult, and certify landscapes within the state of Maryland. Please join us for three days of cutting-edge knowledge and field experiences that will give you the tools to impact your county’s streams, rivers, and lakes, as well as the Chesapeake Bay.

Master Gardeners and Interns are invited to participate and the fee is $45.00. Current Bay-Wise Master Gardeners may also re-take the course for free, but must bring their original homework notebook. The course will be held at the Charles County Extension Office, 9375 Chesapeake Street, Suite 119, La Plata, MD 20646.

If you are interested, please respond by October 1, 2012 with a check made payable to Charles County EAC. Send the check and registration form to the extension office at the above address.

We hope to see you there!

BAY-WISE ADVANCED TRAINING COURSE
Registration Form

NAME: ____________________________________________________________
COUNTY: ___________________
ADDRESS: _________________________________________________________
PHONE: ____________________________ (H) _________________________ (C)
EMAIL: ____________________________________________________________
What are the water sources, do they need drought and deer resistant shrubs, full sun or shade, and what is the budget? For instance, one homeowner was interested in landscaping around his swimming pool but on a limited budget because the installation cost of the pool exceeded his expectations.

Then there are the older homes with overgrown shrubs and depleted lawns looking for a facelift. What do you keep and what do you purge, and can you integrate the two?

Beth Bonifant and I recently worked with a gardening friend who wants to re-establish an old perennial garden. This was a challenge because we were crossing age differences of about 15 years. Beth is youthful and is known to garden at night with a miner’s hat, while the homeowner is a senior citizen. We had to come up with a plan that was easy on the back and low mainte-

(Continued on page 16)
Toward the end of the hot summer, I also discovered bottom end rot on some of my plants. As a novice, many valuable lessons were learned from our garden.

All in all, our magical garden was a great adventure that gave our family great pleasure and pride. The grandkids are already talking about what we will plant next year!

SITE VISITS (Continued from page 8)

Scribed. She has taken on a lot of those visits, while I focus on problems such as “My dogwoods are dying. Why, and how can I fix the problem?” “Or, what are these funny-looking white things all over the stems of my cherished shrub?” What adds to the interest of requests like these is that it never stops there. There’s always a lot of “While you’re here…” that usually involves broader landscaping issues. So do contact me if you’re interested.

Can you identify this plant? Turn to page 19 to see if you are right.

SUMMER-PLANTED GARDEN YIELDS TASTY FALL

By Gale Kladitis, Class of 2008

Our fall horticulture sessions for inmates started on Wednesday, September 5. We were based in the garden. Even though our spring sessions ended on June 20, we continued to visit the garden every Wednesday to monitor progress and to help harvest the vegetables. And what a harvest this year! We did especially well with peppers. With the new students we did an introduction to the garden; harvested the watermelons, peppers, and tomatoes; and planted the cold crops. We’re hopeful these new crops will flourish as well as the earlier crops did. The vegetable garden just seems to get better with each year; we sampled the watermelons at the end of the first class. It was a treat to watch the students enjoy fresh fruit from the garden. The fall classes will continue through October 18 with the assistance of the project co-leader, Dave Lewis. Many thanks to all of the Master Gardener volunteers for making this project such a joy.
Editor’s note:

Problem-solving courts respond to the underlying problems that bring certain people into court—drug or alcohol addiction, mental illness, and/or family or personal issues. Charles County Circuit Court’s rigorous programs combine ongoing judicial oversight with intensive treatment and supervision. Participation in either program is voluntary.

The programs identify appropriate persons and place them under ongoing judicial monitoring, drug and/or alcohol testing and community supervision, coupled with effective, long-term treatment services. National research shows drug courts are successful and cost effective for dealing with drug-addicted offenders in the criminal justice system.

The Charles County Family Recovery & Juvenile Drug Court held their second annual luncheon on August 9 at the Holiday Inn Express in La Plata. Our Director, Karol Dyson, who is a member of the Steering Committee for the organization, sent a request to the Master Gardeners for fresh garden vegetables because the Extension Office had been asked to donate the salad.

The only item we had to purchase was the lettuce; the rest was available from our gardens. The Extension employees busied themselves happily making the salad for an estimated 60 to 70 people. Since it was a fund raiser, Cindi Barnhart and I joined in to help and enjoy lunch. The group was so large that three more tables were needed to seat everybody. A lovely program was presented with former Redskins player, Rod Milstead, as guest speaker. Karol Dyson and Emily Ferren were in charge of the silent auction and “yes”, you guessed it, Cindi and I did not leave empty handed. I look forward to the third annual luncheon and see a need for a bigger space to hold it in their future.

By Gale Kladitis, Class of 2008

Charles County Family Recovery & Juvenile Drug Court
August 9, 2012
Contact: Gale Kladitis

Our beautiful garden gave the family such pleasure! Every day, we would go into the garden to see how it had grown, what vegetables were ready to harvest, and whatever surprises it offered. We had an abundance of zucchini, yellow squash, and cucumbers. Our four tomato plants were thriving and lots of jelly bean and grape tomatoes were ripening. My grandchildren were so excited when they would come to visit. The kids were really excited and proud to help me pick the vegetables.

One day when we entered the garden, we discovered that something had been eating our tomatoes. Upon close inspection, we discovered a bright green worm about the size of one of my fingers on the tomato plants. We ran back to the house to get our bug jar and clippers. The boys were excited about the cool bug; however, my two year old grand daughter just looked at it and said “ooh.” Afterwards, we went inside the house to research on the computer to determine exactly what was this giant worm!

Yes, it was a green Hornworm (really a caterpillar)! It then became my daily ritual to take the bug jar to the garden to remove any other unwanted bugs and save them so the grandkids could see them at their next visit. I discovered the Hornworm also enjoyed eating my pepper plants. Later, I noticed the leaves of my squash looked like they had a power or mildew. Since I wanted an organic garden I just had to keep dealing with all the surprises. I also found a few stink bugs, which immediately went into the bug jar!

I think I was the most excited when we discovered the cantaloupes were growing. After a two-day trip, I came home and immediately went out to inspect the garden. To my horror, I found that something had eaten into most of the cantaloupes! I just wanted to cry. It was my goal to find out who was the culprit. Later that day, I saw three squirrels enter the garden and head toward my few remaining cantaloupes! It then became my intention to protect those ‘lopes until they were ready to harvest.

(The Continued on page 16)
While at the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference in the mountains of North Carolina this summer I came across a great book. Even though the scope is the southeastern states (Virginia, Carolinas, Tennessee, and Georgia), it’s well worth having for a Maryland native plant enthusiast. Many of the plants included also grow in Maryland, and even where a particular species is more southern, a closely related species is likely to be here.

Even though the subtitle is “A Naturalist’s Guide…” this is not a field guide. It covers about 500 plants in total (trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants), but what it gives you on those 500 plants warrants a place on the bookshelf. Each plant has a clear photograph, and an essay of several hundred words covering matters such as its ecology, its habitat, and its place in the taxonomic structure. This is the sort of information that you find yourself wishing for when you’ve identified an interesting plant and want to know more about it. The focus is on the plants you’re most likely to see, but there are some rarities here too.

While it was the plant descriptions that made this book a must-have for me, there are also descriptions of a wide variety of kinds of habitats, and the plants are keyed to these habitats. I don’t consider this a book to carry into the field. It weighs 2.5 pounds, but more importantly, the paper is a clay-coated slick variety intended for good photographic reproduction. Papers like this don’t take well to getting wet. But if you’d like to have a good read about native plants that you can put down and pick up again after you get home, get this one.


Book Review: Good Book About Native Plants
By Jessica Milstead, Class of 2002

While at the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference in the mountains of North Carolina this summer I came across a great book. Even though the scope is the southeastern states (Virginia, Carolinas, Tennessee, and Georgia), it’s well worth having for a Maryland native plant enthusiast. Many of the plants included also grow in Maryland, and even where a particular species is more southern, a closely related species is likely to be here.

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**Fall / Winter Events**

**October**

2  Quarterly MG Volunteer Activity Log for hours/activities July 1 through September 30 due in the Extension Office

3  Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.; CC Detention Center class, La Plata, contact Gale Kladitis

10  Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.; Bay-Wise Advanced Training, Extension Office, $45, contact Ronda Goldman

13  Saturday, Plant walk, time and place TBD, contact Jessica Milstead

17  Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.; Bay-Wise Advanced Training, Extension Office, contact Ronda Goldman

19  Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.; Bay-Wise Advanced Training, field exercise location TBA, contact Ronda Goldman

23  Tuesday, 10 a.m.; Membership meeting, Extension Office, Open to all MGs

**November**

27  Tuesday, 10 a.m.; Membership meeting, Extension Office, Open to all MGs

**December**

4  Tuesday, 6 p.m.; Holiday Potluck, Hampshire Neighborhood Community Center, Waldorf

**January**

22  Tuesday, 10 a.m.; Membership meeting, Extension Office, Open to all MGs

**February**

19-28  Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Master Gardener 2013 Training Class, Extension Office, La Plata, contact Barbie Walter

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**CALENDAR (Continued from page 12)**

26  Tuesday, 10 a.m.; Membership meeting, location TBA, Open to all MGs

**March**

5-28  Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Master Gardener 2013 Training Class, Extension Office, La Plata, contact Barbie Walter

26  Tuesday, 10 a.m.; Membership meeting and Project Day, location TBA, Open to all MGs

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**WANTED**

**COPY EDITING FOR THE COMPOST**

By Jessica Milstead

I have been helping Cindi with copy editing of our newsletter ever since Cindi became Editor. Since she is stepping down, this is an opportune time for me to step down as well, so that the new Editor can structure the tasks of preparing the newsletter as she or he wishes. Besides, it’s been long enough! My work has consisted primarily of checking names and catching grammatical bobbles and the like. If this is your forte, why don’t you volunteer your services to the new Editor? Contact Cindi so that she can pass the information along. While I’ll be available to consult as needed, I believe it is time for someone else to have a chance to put her or his impression on The Compost.

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The next issue of The Compost will have an article on Bug Day at David Lewis’s house and I am looking for a photographer and writer to cover this annual event. Please send photos and a writeup to me by October 20. The newsletter will be sent out in January, but I am gathering materials early because of the holidays.

If you would like more information on a project, please contact the project leader by referring to your Membership Directory.