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.
Hello Everyone,

Although we are cleaning our gardening tools and putting them away for the 2009 season, Master Gardeners are already looking forward toward spring. Sign up for a project now and get in on the ground floor. Winter dreams will become spring gardens.

Don’t forget to tell your friends to sign up for Master Gardener training and see what they are missing.

Compost: A collection of unattractive materials that, when mixed together and properly treated, becomes something useful and enriching.

Submit articles, photos, reports, and other items to Cindi Barnhart by March 1, 2010 for publication in the Spring 2010 newsletter. Submit calendar items to Janet McGrane by March 1, 2010. Articles and pictures may also be submitted at any time for future publication.
Bay-Wise Visits the Accokeek Ecosystem Farm

By Ronda Goldman

On November 21, 2009, Bay-Wise team members visited another stop on the Southern Maryland Heron’s Trail. The Accokeek Ecosystem Farm is a wonderful example of everything organic. We arrived at 10:00 am and peregrinated through the muddy fields of southern Prince George’s County. The property, at the Accokeek Foundation, has several hiking trails; ours led us along the Potomac River and yielded a beautiful view of Mt. Vernon.

The farm sits on eight acres of soil that once belonged to the Native Americans and has a history of being cultivated for corn, tobacco, soybeans, and wheat. The soil has suffered greatly from the years of cropping, and presents several opportunities to devise creative approaches to farming on marginal soils. The Ecosystem Farm is particularly successful at demonstrating the importance of using what is available and making it count. Despite topsoil and drainage issues, it regularly yields crops of cabbage, broccoli, sweet potatoes, daikon radishes, butternut squash, and much more. The bountiful harvest is known for its pulchritude and healthfulness.

The farm is Bay-Wise certified and is a paragon of sustainable practices. Their holistic approach to farming provides opportunities to instruct local residents on the importance of environmentally sound farm management practices. They are a USDA-certified organic farm and they provide consumers with food through their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project. If you would like to participate in the program please contact Michael J. Snow at (301) 283-2113 or msnow@accokeek.org. Michael Snow is the Ecosystem Farm manager who led our guided tour. He was also nominated to be the White House Farmer in January 2009. Our next stop on the Heron’s Trail will be the Mat-tawoman Creek Art Center at Smallwood State Park in January.

Deer Management and the Bow Hunter

By Margery LaMar

The 4th annual Master Gardeners Bug Day was celebrated on the farm of one of our newest members, Nancy Maude. Nancy and her husband live in a 1913 farmhouse on 70 acres in Newburg, Maryland. Thirty members and guests attended this advanced training event, planned by Carol Teets.

Steve White, a bow hunter, described the mission of Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry (FHFH) to provide deer meat for the hungry people of Southern Maryland through recreational deer hunting. Steve is one of many experienced deer hunters who donate the deer. Participating butcher shops process the meat, with the cost paid by donations to FHFH. The deer meat goes to food banks in Southern Maryland for distribution. More information is available from southernmdfhh@yahoo.com and at www.fhfh.org. Steve is available to answer questions and investigate over-populated deer herds on private property. Contact him at 301-536-2742.

The hunt for good and bad bugs was lead by Pam King, our own Charles County Extension Agent. Nancy’s home provided several different environments for insects, including her country gardens, meadow, and marsh. Of particular interest were the tomato and squash plants growing vigorously atop her compost pile. One of her “compost squash” won a ribbon at the recent Charles County Fair. The Maude boxwood was investigated for both “bugs” and nutritional deficits. The gnarled hundred-year old maple in the front yard was admired. The goldenrod in the marshland was enjoyed.

(Continued on page 23)
Kingly Advice

(like other insects) that might gobble up a little maggot that is all alone. These masses are most often noticed when moving across a sidewalk or driveway.

Control is usually not needed. Ignore it and it will go away. (This is one of my best recommendations.) If not, successful management of fungus gnats involves finding and eliminating the source of moisture. Inside the house, allowing the soils in overwatered plant pots to dry out on a regular basis is not only a good way to prevent the growth of fungi and fungus gnats, but it may also be better for plants themselves. Treating outdoor areas with insecticides usually doesn’t work very well, especially if you cannot identify the key infested areas. When things dry out the population of fungus gnats will go down and they should cease to be a problem.

Question: Why are there grass clippings in my window sills on the second floor?

Answer: This one took me 2 years to figure out - so never give up. Each year the poor man would bring me a container of grass clippings, tree crickets and cocoons from his window sills. A very strange mix. It turns out that this is caused by the unusual and seldom seen “grass carrier” wasps of the genus *Isodontia*. The name refers to the nesting habits of the female wasp. The wasps fill nest cavities with grass and occasionally other plant fibers until the nest resembles a loose pile of brown grass clippings stuffed into a protected opening.

In nature the nests are located in hollow stalks or stems of plants, galleries in wood, abandoned bee galleries, and vertical clay banks or bluffs. However, most people who observe grass-carrier wasp nests find them in the sliding tracks of windows or in the space that is left between the screen or storm window and the house window frame.

A nest is made when the female wasp gathers and carries grass or plant fibers to the chosen cavity and provisions it with tree crickets (*Oecanthus* sp.) that it has stung and paralyzed. The tree crickets are the 1-inch long, slender, light green dead insects found mixed into the grass-clipping nest. The wasp lays eggs on or near the tree crickets and the larvae feed on the paralyzed prey. Full-grown larvae spin papyry cocoons when mature. There is one generation per year and the overwintering stage is the larva within the cocoon.

Grass-carrier wasps are solitary. Each nest is the effort of a single female. Solitary wasps generally do not aggressively defend their nests. They are capable of stinging but will do so only if harassed or handled.

No special controls for grass-carrier wasps are necessary. Discard the nests as they are discovered (usually when cleaning windows or changing window screens). Chemical treatment is not necessary. Prevent future nesting in the area by installing tighter fitting windows and screens or by plugging gaps and openings.

photos: http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/O&T/flowers/note29/fungusgnat.jpg

http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/iiin/node/144

**Weird**

*Continued from page 4*

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http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/iiin/node/144
Algal

(Continued from page 10)

oil, and the discharge of O₂ that is produced from photosynthesis into the atmosphere.

The University of Maryland and the Smithsonian Institution are working on the banks of the Susquehanna River in southern Pennsylvania. They are using troughs to grow their “crop”. Nitrogen and phosphorous uptake occurs, so these chemicals don’t get into the runoff. The algae that are growing in the troughs are packed with oils that scientists are converting into vehicle fuel. Their work is in its early stages, but it could potentially create a new energy source while taking up nutrient pollution that eventually clogs

Parks

(Continued from page 5)

explore leaf and vermicomposting (worm composting); while Kindergarteners will focus on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) by learning to recognize beneficial insects. The Preschool classes will be mulch monitors and help the school lead the way to healthy trees.

The Leadership Council was scheduled to launch the project this year by starting a communication campaign on December 8, 2009. They planned to notify the community through announcements, the Pony Express, a TV skit, and a puppet show. This Bay-Wise adventure is just beginning!

2010 PROJECT ORIENTATION & MEMBERSHIP MEETING
OPEN TO ALL INTERNS AND MGS

On Tuesday March 23, the monthly Master Gardener meeting will become a clearinghouse for projects to help new interns, as well as more experienced MGs, to complete their volunteer hours. Project leaders will explain their projects and ask for volunteers.

More than 50 MGs and interns attended the initial Project Orientation Day in March of 2009. The impressive results can be seen throughout this newsletter.

Bay-Wise

Contact: Ronda Goldman

JC Parks Takes the Bay-Wise Challenge

By Ronda Goldman

JC Parks Elementary School is becoming Bay-Wise. In September 2009 the science teacher, Deanna Wheeler, agreed to lead Parks in becoming a pilot school for Charles County’s Bay-Wise School and Communities Project. As a pilot school they agreed to 1) develop a Bay-Wise Environmental Leadership Council, 2) develop Bay-Wise Environmental Action teams throughout each school grade, 3) restore 90%-95% of their turf to a natural sustainable wildlife habitat, and 4) establish multi-disciplinary outdoor classrooms in the restored spaces.

The Bay-Wise Environmental Leadership Council is comprised of six enthusiastic fifth graders: Andrew (President), Khalaya (Vice-President), Caleb (Communications), Corey (Communications), Mallory (Secretary), and Franchezka (Secretary). The team began the year by evaluating the landscape of the school and determining the

(Continued on page 24)
Detention Center Healing Garden Planning Begins

By Jessica Milstead

Our latest Charles County Detention Center project is a cooperative effort with the Charles County Garden Club. The Detention Center has a large space, open to the sky, inside the perimeter of the main building—a perfect place for a Healing Garden, and that’s what we hope to develop. The vision is a place where inmates will be able to visit, where the surroundings don’t scream “prison”, where they can meditate, think, and begin to heal the traumas that put them in the Detention Center in the first place.

A group of MGs and Charles County Garden Club members met with Detention Center staff on December 2 to check out the location. It’s a blank wall (literally—actually four of them) surrounding a large space full of challenges and possibilities. A funding source has been identified, and the Garden Club will prepare the grant proposal. After meeting we all went home to think and let ideas percolate so that we can meet again soon and develop a plan. As with other Detention Center projects, Gale Kladitis is our fearless leader. Stay tuned.

“The Compost” Needs Your Input and Involvement

By Cindi Barnhart, Editor

I need photographers and writers to help me keep our outstanding newsletter informative and dynamic. We are such a diverse group, we need many hands to cover all our activities.

If you love to write or aspire to be a reporter, join us. Photographs enrich the articles with captured moments. Submit your articles and photos at any time, but remember that the deadlines are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. Material received after those dates will be gratefully accepted and included in the following quarterly issue.

Help us print and assemble our gem of a newsletter. You get a double benefit—volunteer hours and socializing (sharing our garden triumphs and defeats and of course what projects we are working on) with other MGs.

Deer (Continued from page 3)

The event ended with bag lunches on the side lawn and many thanks to Nancy for inviting us to her lovely home for Bug Day 2009.

If you would like to host us for Bug Day in 2010, or beyond, please contact Linda Lockhart or Carol Teets.

Camp (Continued from page 19)

Expenses were $1000 offset by the $1000 award. Donations of plants, supplies, and labor are estimated at $2462 (which only includes July 20 and October 28 work).

Master Gardeners tend to go that extra mile, including Joe who spent a day reinforcing the large bed with wood shoring; Maggie who helped Joe dig out the soil to facilitate the work and who helped me dig out the soil and remove weeds (and grubs galore) from the hexagon; Jessi and Bob checked on displaced plants from the earlier digging, and dug out the dirt from the square. Their labor enabled us to finish the beds on 28th.

Also, Larry made a number of trips to Camp Merrick this past summer to keep the plants watered and weeded, not to mention repairing an entangled hose and adding gaskets to stop the leaking. And Bob turned out for every call to shovels on this project since 2005.

Thanks to all who participated in this long-term project. Congratulations for a job well done.

From left to right; Louise Kearns, Larry Martin, Joe Tiegger, Carole Butler, Nancy Maude, Bob Eppley and Mary Gaskins go about preparing beds and planting on October 28.

Photo by Cindi Barnhart
Two Master Gardeners Awarded Certificate in Woody Plants
By Dianne Shisler
Sherie Zimmer and Dianne Shisler completed the course of study and received a certificate in Woody Plants. This is a Master Gardener Level II course of study comprised of 5 classes of 9 hours each. The required classes are:

- Plant ID/Taxonomy
- Flowering Shrubs
- Ornamental Trees and Vines
- Evergreen Trees and Shrubs
- Shade Trees

Sherie began her studies in 2004 when she took the Plant ID/Taxonomy class. Dianne began her studies in the spring of 2005, and both completed the final course in the summer of 2009. Sherie and Dianne are the first two Master Gardeners in Charles County to receive this certificate.

These courses teach you to identify trees, both evergreen and deciduous, by their leaves and their bark. In the course on Ornamental Trees and Vines we learned the characteristics of each vine and their potential to be invasive. With each class we were subjected to a before and after test. The before test showed us what we didn’t know and what we would learn during the course of study and to hope-fully pass the final test.

Field trips are a part of each course. Some were as simple as going outside the classroom to identify trees. Two others included a trip to the National Arboretum where we saw full-size specimens of trees and shrubs we had studied. One of the highlights was to see the Gotelli collection of evergreens. If you haven’t visited the National Arboretum, plan a trip.

Dianne says, “We would have finished sooner if the required classes had been offered more often in the tri-county area; but often the location was too far for us to travel.” We encourage others to pursue this certificate even if it takes you five years to get it.

Beautyberry (Callicarpa ‘Early Amethyst’) shows winter interest and provides food for birds and squirrels.

Detention Center Landscaping Project Builds Skills
By Jessica Milstead
Gale Kladitis and her cohorts do a magnificent job of teaching classes in horticulture at the Charles County Detention Center. This article is about a project that let the inmates apply their learning. Late in the summer, officials at the Center came to Gale with a request for landscaping for an area next to their new staff training facility. Gale asked me to work with her on the design.

Developing a design was an interesting challenge, but the really interesting part of this project came with the execution. This was truly a joint project. The Center staff acquired all the needed equipment and supplies. Shelby’s Nursery provided them with the plants specified at a very generous price. And now it gets really good —

The design called for a small pergola and bench. The inmates who were participating in the horticulture class proceeded to build and install a really beautiful pergola with a pair of facing benches. They installed pavers to make a pleasant, dry space inside the pergola, and laid stepping stones just right for comfortable walk-

Training center landscape
A Productive Workday with a Garden Party

By Jessica Milstead

Pulling weeds can be a lot of fun - when the staff of the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center throws a garden party for the Master Gardeners. Led by Judi Gardner, Ronda Goldman, Rob Eppley, and I worked with staff members of the Center to put the native plant garden to bed for the season. This was my first visit in a year or two to the garden that a crew of Master Gardeners designed and planted with middle-schoolers several years ago, and I was really delighted to see how well it has matured. A few plants have bitten the dust, but most of them have thrived - to the extent that a few, like the goldenrod, have to be barbered a bit to keep them in bounds. The little gray dogwood is now a large shrub that would give some shade in summer, and the trumpet creeper vines have taken over the arches on which they are planted.

A special treat for me was finding a little native that came to our garden, found it to its liking, and stayed. I recognized it as a sedge, and my grasses book keyed it out to *Cyperus rivularis* or *Cyperus diandrus*. Both of these are annuals, so we need to watch next year to make sure it doesn’t sprout everywhere and try to take over.

After we got things cleaned up, cut back where necessary, and weeds pulled, it was party time! The staff of the Center had brought delicious food for a wonderful lunch. The day was just right for weeding and a party - cloudy but not dismal, and a comfortable temperature. We all felt well rewarded for the time spent.

Special kudos go to Judi Gardner. She has taken on this garden as her own, and works closely with the Center staff throughout the season. Next year when you see an email from Judi about an opportunity to help with the garden, don’t be bashful. You’ll have a great day and will help to maintain the garden as a teaching tool for the school classes that come to NCEEC.

A Pretty Plant We Wish We Didn’t Love

By Jessica Milstead

Many years ago when visiting a resort whose name I have forgotten, I saw a beautiful groundcover plant growing in the middle of a circular driveway. It had multi-colored leaves, with shades of green, yellow, and red; I don’t think I’ve ever seen anything else like it. Eventually I learned its name. Popularly known as “Chameleon Plant”, its scientific name is *Houttuynia cordata* ‘Chameleon.’

A few years ago I planted a piece of this plant in ordinary garden conditions. The first thing I knew it was coming up everywhere. Chameleon Plant spreads by slender underground rhizomes, popping up where least expected. It actually likes wet conditions, and is reputed to grow in water. I was able to dig it out because I went after it as soon as I learned its habits, but I still wonder - perhaps if I had planted it in the wet conditions it really likes I might still be fighting it.

The Global Invasive Species Database warns that concern about this plant is great. To date it is not known to have escaped, but that can change literally overnight. All it takes is one planting
FREE COFFEE GROUNDS... from STARBUCK’S
By Carol Teets
The Starbuck’s location in La Plata will be offering FREE grounds for your garden starting the first week in December.

Here’s how it works: Coffee grounds are a nutritional additive to your soil. During the brewing process most of the acidity is removed, leaving used grounds with an average pH of 6.9 and a carbon-nitrogen ratio 20-to-1.

So... just add grounds directly to your garden or your Compost pile. Starbucks recommends that you use grounds within 2-3 weeks of brewing to capture the most nutritional value.

Here’s how the Master Gardeners can help with this new project: Stop by and pick up your FREE grounds as often as possible and tell your friends and neighbors. Starbucks has a display featuring the FREE grounds that is educational and will include information from the Extension office concerning COMPOSTING.

How educational is that!! We do need a few volunteers to monitor the literature and be sure the grounds are being taken. The grounds are sealed in their original bag and are easy to transport home. No mess!

This is a test project that the Starbuck’s Manager, Alvin, and the Manager-in-Training, Sam, have agreed to execute. What they don’t want to happen is that they make the effort and the grounds are not used, so let’s support this business’s efforts to GO GREEN. And who knows, you may meet a friend there and have a cup of coffee. If you do, say hello to the staff there and thank them for their efforts.

Thank you in advance for your support on this project.

La Plata Shopping Center
6675 Crain Highway
La Plata, Maryland 20646
301 392-5212

MG ANNUAL TRAINING DAY 2010
The keynote speaker will be Lee Reich. Lee Reich, PhD, an avid farm-dener (more than a garden, less than a farm) who turned from plant and soil research with the USDA and Cornell University to writing, lecturing, and consulting. His books include A NORTHEAST GARDENER’S YEAR, THE PRUNING BOOK, WEEDLESS GARDENING, UNCOMMON FRUITS FOR EVERY GARDEN, and LANDSCAPING WITH FRUIT.

Grow It Eat It: Join the State Committee
By Robin Hessey
Join this ongoing statewide committee to help Maryland residents grow more of their own food. This very successful outreach was created to meet the high public demand for food gardening information in tough economic times. Our one-year-old effort is now more organized, has more resources and is picking up speed. However, we need lots of help to successfully bring our efforts to the public. Please join us for this meeting to find out what’s happening and be part of the coordinated spring effort.

East Coast seed companies that cater to vegetable gardeners:
Landreth Seed Co. - http://www.landrethseeds.com/
Johnny’s Selected Seeds - http://www.johnnyseeds.com/
Meyer Seed - http://www.meyerseedco.com/
FEDCO - http://www.fedcoseeds.com/
Pinetree Garden Seeds - https://www.superseeds.com
Algal Blooms and the Chesapeake Bay

By Caridad A. Vicente

We’ve heard much about the algal blooms and their impact on the Bay, so the question becomes, what can be done to rid the Bay of the blooms, and thereby help it on its road to recovery?

Scientists, and lately Exxon, have been experimenting with the use of algae as a fuel source. Given the problems with corn, the goal is to avoid using a human food source.

What’s interesting is that the concept of turning algae into a fuel source is not new idea. As early as the 1950s, scientists at Scripps have found that the protein left after harvesting algal oil can be converted to animal feed.

Recently, Exxon noted that they’re investing $600 million toward their research to find the algae species that produces the greatest amount of oil in the least amount of time.

Colorado State University, with the Southern Utes native tribe’s help, is seeing how they can make fuel from algae and reduce heat-trapping gases. They plan to co-locate a facility next to a natural gas processing plant. Rather than growing the algae in a pond, they will use tubes into which the CO2 derived from the processing would be pumped.

The expected result: extracted

(Continued on page 24)

Camp

(Continued from page 11)

Unfortunately there were a few stumbling blocks along the way. Work was halted in 2007 because of a new septic system planned at Camp Merrick. With infrastructure issues delayed, the Lions club encouraged us to finish the garden in 2009 and on July 20, 13 volunteers assembled at the camp with drills and screwdrivers whirring.

We agreed to raise all the beds to 2 ½ feet instead of the planned 2 feet. We amassed 39 hours that morning attaching 74 joints to 37 new “boards”, then attaching them to the beds.

A multilayered, engraved wood plaque of a simple mouth for “taste” was mounted on the square bed so children may trace the shape of the mouth—as they will an eye for “sight” on the pentagon; a hand for “touch” on the rectangle; an ear for “sound” on the triangle; and a nose for “smell” on the hexagon. The plaques were designed by Master Gardener Larry Martin and crafted and donated to this project by Greg Ferris of Nanjemoy.

On October 28, more volunteers amassed 59 hours shoveling tons of rain-soaked soil into the beds. The hearty souls who accomplished this muddy feat were Cindi Barnhart, Carole Butler, Janet Cooney, Bob Eppley, Mary Gaskins, Louise Kearns, Gale Kladitis, Larry Martin, Nancy Maude, Jessi Thibault, Joe Tieger, Maggie Tieger, and Jan Lakey-Waters.

The volunteers then turned to planting the dozens of beautiful, healthy plants provided by our members to fill the beds. Purple asters, balloon flowers, moss phlox, pink evening primrose, scented geranium, black-eyed Susan, and lamb’s ear are a vision growing around the blue Atlas cedar in the “sight” pentagon.

Giant hyssop, hay-scented fern, gay feather, ponytail grass, various sedums, blue-eyed grass, heather, and lamb’s ear—plus landscape rock—provide textures for touch in the rectangle. The triangle is filled with purple coneflowers, switch grass, blue-eyed grass, black-eyed Susan, little blue stem grass, blue sea holly, lamb’s ear and wind chimes for sound.

Aromatic lavender, lilies, lemon balm, sage, oregano, fennel, coreopsis, lamb’s ear, tall aster, apricot sprite hyssop, bee balm and garlic chives grow in the “smell” hexagon while the “taste” square has anise hyssop, onion chives, garlic chives, peppermint, and a low-bush blueberry.

(Continued on page 23)
On a very warm day in mid-summer we visited a home where the owner wanted to turn several acres of overgrown property back to native plants. It was an interesting challenge to figure out what was desirable vs. the thugs that should go. She had already done a lot of work on a property with great potential, but I know she'll be busy for years to come.

Problems that aren’t quite what they seemed

Later on in the season we had a call from someone who was worried about “borers” in her crabapple tree. When we got there we discovered the neat rows of holes all around the tree that are the signature of the sap sucker, a bird, not a bug. There isn’t much to do about sapsuckers except try to keep the tree healthy so that it can support the sapsucker and ward off any infections that may come via the breaks in the bark.

And then there was the one with damage to the bark of a mature Japanese maple that turned out to be a gray-white lichen. We were able to explain to the homeowner that the lichen is perfectly benign, and it actually added to the mature appearance of her garden, which showed Oriental influences. The maple had been beautifully maintained over the years, and the lichen on the bark was actually a perfect finishing touch, put there by nature.

Join in next year

When we receive a request for a site visit we never know just what we’ll find. Sometimes the most interesting part (and useful to the homeowner) is what we find after we get there and s/he says “While you’re here…” For these visits I put out a call for MG volunteers via email. There’s always room for an intern or other less experienced person on a team. All you have to do is start watching your email sometime in March, and don’t wait a couple of days to think about whether you want to do it. Typically the first respond-

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

Congratulations For A Job Very Well Done

By Carole Butler  In 2004, CCMG began working with the Lions Camp Merrick organization to plan a children’s sensory garden (with plants to hear, see, smell, taste, and touch) to enhance the residential camping experience for deaf children, blind children, and children with diabetes—the brainchild of the late Ed Spurlock, a CCMG and a Lions Club member.

We designed five raised beds of recycled plastic “lumber” shaped as a square, triangle, rectangle, circle, and pentagon—each dedicated to one of the five senses. With a $1,000 Chaney Foundation Beautification Grant Award, we completed the first bed (a pentagon) on May 17, 2005, and dedicated the garden to Ed, on June 11, 2005, pictured below.

Fast forward to 2009, we have completed a triangle and a square in 2006 and a hexagon and a rectangle in 2007.

Photos on this page by Carole Butler

(Continued on page 19)
An Assortment of Site Visit Requests in 2009
By Jessica Milstead

I thought this past gardening season had been relatively slow on site visit requests, until I counted up my list and found that we had made 14 visits (vs. over 20 in 2008). The season started off with a bang, but then was much quieter through the summer. This article is a potpourri describing some interesting findings and events from this past season’s site visits.

Landscaping a church building
Most of our visits are made to private homes, but some of the most interesting and challenging ones involve organizations. Back in March we received a call from Metropolitan Baptist Church in Bryans Road. They were looking for some advice in sprucing up the landscaping near their building. The main feature on the front of the building is a beautiful relief of a cross. We designed some simple shrub plantings that would draw attention to this central feature.

Elsewhere we worked out ways to beautify on a budget by integrating a few new plants (and some annuals and perennials) with what was already there.

Saving a treasure
On another visit, the homeowner showed us an odd green branch growing out of her beautiful cut-leaf Japanese maple. It took some hunting and poking around, but we found the join of the graft. The understock, an ordinary green Japanese maple, had grown a branch and would soon have crowded out the desirable top of the plant. Specialized and delicate cultivars of shrubs and trees are often grafted onto a more vigorous understock, to speed growth and ease propagation. If the understock manages to put on top growth its vigor will overwhelm the desirable grafted plant. Sometimes when you hear about a shrub or tree “reverting”, this is what has happened. I’ve also seen it in a weeping cherry, and it’s not unusual in roses.

Going back to nature - but with a little control, please

(Continued on page 18)

How to Report Volunteer/Advanced Training Hours
By Madelene Weinberger and Lois Manning

Certified Maryland Master Gardeners are required to complete at least 20 hours of volunteer service and 10 hours of advanced training each calendar year. The Master Gardener Volunteer Activity Log is used to report these hours. At the end of each calendar quarter, the log is submitted to the Extension Office, in care of the Master Gardener Record Keeper. The address is: Charles County Extension, 9375 Chesapeake Street, Suite #119, La Plata, MD 20646.

A hard copy of the completed log is requested because we are required to keep the log in each Master Gardener file. When email logs are submitted, the record keeper has to print the copies; this is time consuming and expensive.

When completing the log, please remember the following:

► Do: count the time you spend traveling to and from the volunteer site as part of your volunteer hours;
► Don’t: count the time you spend traveling to and from the advanced training site as part of your advanced training hours; and,
► Don’t: duplicate reporting. When more than one Master Gardener is involved in an activity with the public, avoid duplicate reporting by designating one person to complete the “race and gender” information on the log. (Do not include Master Gardeners in the race and gender count.) Each Master Gardener involved with the project should report their own volunteer hours.

Maintaining the Master Gardener hard copy records and entering the data in the State Database is a time-consuming job. Please help your current record keeper, Caridad Vicente, do the best job possible by reporting your hours in a timely manner.

Blank forms can be downloaded from the Master Gardener website (http://extension.umd.edu/gardening/masterGardeners/Administrative1/index.cfm) and are available at the Extension Office. An Excel spreadsheet that you can type your hours into is also available at the web site (but remember to print it at home and mail the hard copy to the office).

Remember to report your hours for 2009 by December 30.
in check. Without a question the Master Gardeners made a difference for these gentlemen. Thanks to Pam King and Gale Kladitis for their great leadership role in this project.

Thank you, Master Gardener program, for the opportunity to serve.

Gale Kladitis, project leader, adds this to Carol’s article about the fall Detention Center Project:

“In a million years I could not express how truly valuable I find each and every one of you, the volunteers. The program works and is remarkable because each of you accepted your job as being second nature to you. All of you are so casual and easygoing with the tasks. If I were asked last year to find twenty people who could be like-minded on any project, I would have said “impossible.” Now I would have to say not only possible but it has been done! Please accept my thanks and gratitude for making this the happiest project ever.”

Our brilliant volunteers for this session: Janet Cooney, Ronda Goldman, Dianne Goodrich, Pam King, Jan Lakey-Waters, Janet McGrane, Jessica Milstead, Judy Norris, Joyce Rose, Dianne Shisler, Carol Teets, Danielle Webber and Sherie Zimmer.

Cover photo: From left to right; Joyce Rose, Gale Kladitis, Jan Cooney, Dianne Goodrich, Pam King, Janet Lakey-Waters, Judi Norris, Danielle Webber, Carol Teets and Jessica Milstead on the pergola built this session.

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2010 CHARLES COUNTY MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

Classes will be held at the University of Maryland Extension Charles County Office in La Plata.

Prospective Master Gardeners will explore topics such as diagnosing plant problems and organic vegetable gardening each Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., from February 2 to February 25.

The fee for this 40-hour training is $165, which includes the new Maryland Master Gardener Handbook. For more details on becoming a Master Gardener, click on “How to Become a CCMG”, on the website: http://mastergardener.umd.edu/local/Charles/index.cfm or contact the University of Maryland Extension Charles County Office (301-934-5403 or 301-753-8195) for more information or to enroll.

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Christmas In April

Ongoing

Contact: Carol Teets

This valuable community effort provides a wonderful opportunity for earning volunteer hours. Assess assigned Christmas In April properties before April 24 or join us for the actual day of service, on Saturday April 24, 2010.

Site Visits

Ongoing

Contact: Jessica Milstead

When someone calls or visits the Extension office with a question about problems with their plantings, or for advice on landscaping, the call is referred to me. Mary Beth Chandler and I share the task of putting together a team to go out to look and give advice.

Invasive Plant Identification and Removal

Contact: Marc Imlay

301-699-6204 or 301-283-0808
marc@anacostiaws.org

Chapman Forest and Ruth Swann Park. Dates: First Sundays and the following Saturday, monthly

Time: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Educational plant removal walks with botanist Marc Imlay.

Gardener’s Soap

Ongoing

Contact: Linda Lockhart

$4.00 / bar

MG Marsha Back is preparing a new batch of soap, with new designs to be available for graduation. These fragrant soaps are great gifts and support our MG program.

Library Project

Winter 2010 and Beyond

Contact: Barbie Walter

Staff an information table or give a presentation on a subject you choose. Set up a display window for the 2010 MG Training class. We need you to jump in and help advertise our MG program and expertise.

Charles County Detention Center Horticultural Project

Ongoing

Contact: Gale Kladitis

Speakers Bureau

Ongoing

Contact: Barbie Walter

Use your knowledge to inform the public or your fellow MGs.

Mount Zion United Methodist Church Gardens

Ongoing

Contact: Nardine Daniels
### Winter / Spring 2010 Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.; Membership Meeting, Extension office, Open to all MGs and Interns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>2–25</td>
<td>Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Master Gardener Training class, Extension office, Contact Barbie Walter for more information. See page 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Thursday, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.; MG Training Class Graduation and Potluck at Hampshire Community Center, Waldorf. 1 p.m.; Advanced Training topic TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wednesday, 10 a.m.; Dr. Mudd house garden maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Project Orientation and Membership Meeting, Extension office, Open to all Interns and MGs See page 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wednesday, 10 a.m.; Dr. Mudd house garden maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>La Plata Community Garden Club trip to Biltmore in North Carolina, Counts as Advanced Training, Contact Joyce Rose</td>
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<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Saturday, Christmas In April; Contact Carol Teets</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.; Membership Meeting, Extension office, Open to all MGs and Interns</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>25 / 26</td>
<td>Master Gardener Annual Training Day, Date TBA See page 20</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday, MG Plant Sale; Date TBA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wednesday, 10 a.m.; Dr. Mudd house garden maintenance</td>
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<tr>
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### A Magnificent Detention Center Session

By Carol Teets

The fall session for the Detention Center training class concluded on Tuesday, November 10. As with most training classes there is a graduation and a celebration. But this year’s celebration not only included the inmates and the Master Gardener volunteers but numerous Detention Center officers as well as their photographers. The excitement has been growing since the inception of this project but this was a special day. As the pizza and the cake were served everyone shared what they had learned, what they would like to learn in the future, and most importantly what the inmates thought they would do with their knowledge upon release. At this point, as a Master Gardener volunteer I began to wonder who had learned more from this experience...them or me. Needless to say the rewards are many.

After the proud inmates had received their graduation certificates we made our way outside to visit the completed garden area. WHOA! What a difference a few weeks makes. They took a site that was very unpleasant looking, prepared the soil, planted per the landscape plan, built a pergola with seating, and mulched. This was a time for the inmates to shine and share their stories on a one to one basis with the volunteers. Just ask any of the Master Gardener volunteers; this was a time to keep your emotions

(Continued on page 16)