The Maryland Master Gardener Program, a volunteer education program taught and administered by University of Maryland Extension (UME), puts research-based knowledge and environmental power into the hands of people who want to create sustainable gardens and landscapes, and protect and improve natural resources.

Have you seen this?

Mother of Thousands

Need a last minute gift? This houseplant can provide, well, thousands. Also called devil's backbone, it may not be flashy, but it's fun. Leaves grow tiny plantlets from each tooth along their edge. Plantlets send out tiny roots ready to drop off and be potted. Reaching 1 ½ - 3 feet, a mature plant can produce flowers--not the primary means of reproduction, obviously. When one gets gangly, replace it with an offspring. A favorite of children, teachers and anyone who delight in the ingenuity of nature, this is a tough succulent. It requires only moderate watering in the growing season, and little the rest of the year, enduring even downright neglect (though that encourages lower leaves to fall.) Place in bright light, not direct.

Christmas Tree Tips

The HGIC has plenty of info about selecting and caring for your Christmas tree. Find out where to purchase trees, how to inspect them for freshness, the importance of freshness in fire-resistance, and how to plant your live tree. See the below publications.

- Selecting and Caring for a CUT Christmas Tree
- Selecting and Caring for a LIVE Christmas Tree

The Maryland Christmas Tree Association is also a great place to find more information.
FIVE Holiday Gift Ideas for the Gardener in Your Life

1) Create self-watering containers from old kitty-litter tubs (pictured above) as detailed by Master Gardener Linda Olson in this [Washington Gardener blog post](#).

2) Compost bins can help the gardener in your life help the environment. Purchase a bin, or build one yourself using these [wire compost bin plans](#) by UMD Extension.

3) A solid arsenal of tools is important. Give shovels, rakes, hoes, pruners, gloves, trowels, etc. Alternatively, a tool sharpener would be great to breathe new life into certain well-used equipment. [Watch "Kent's Favorite Gardening Tools" video](#)

4) The Master Gardener Handbook is a massive tome of in-depth information for all Maryland gardeners, not just MG's. [Order the Master Gardener Handbook](#)

5) This one costs nothing! Give your gardener an IOU for one afternoon of hard, manual labor in the garden. You can offer to weed, mow, dig, or hoe. [Download IOU certificate](#)
Of course you've heard of the HGIC, but are you fully aware of all the great features and information that the HGIC website offers? Watch this quick video for a full (re)introduction. You may discover a new way to utilize the HGIC.

→ Watch on YouTube

David Clement, Extension Specialist and Plant Pathologist, explains two common concerns homeowners have with their pine trees: browning foliage and "what are these growths?" (hint: they're just pine cones).

→ Watch on YouTube
We found these bugs eating stink bugs. Could they be nesting in our attic? Should we be concerned?

This is commonly called an ‘assassin bug’ or a ‘wheel bug’. These insects are excellent predators, as you have observed, and since they will prey on the dreaded Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, they are a prized member of our insect arsenal. They are not colonizers and do not appear in large numbers. This may be the only one in your home. If you have stink bugs in your attic, I would encourage the assassin bug to stay.

Please allow this insect, and any others that you see to continue their activity, but do not attempt to pick one up. They are capable of delivering a painful 'bite'.

If you observe closely, the bug has a lengthy 'stylet' or 'proboscis-like' mouthpart which is folded under its body until needed. They then pierce their prey with the device, inject a powerful toxin and proceed to suck the body fluids from the insect.

--> Read more on assassin bugs

Have a plant or pest question? University of Maryland Extension’s experts have answers! Send in your questions and photos here.