

In Season

Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners and the Virginia Tech Department of Horticulture



MG COLLEGE – WHAT A GREAT TRADITION!

Vol. 20, No 3, Summer 2006

Were you aware that trees are hormonal organisms? Or that washing the soil off your recently purchased tree before you place it in the ground could enhance its chance of surviving a transplant? Or that redesigning a garden could Border on Insanity? These are just a small sample of the information tidbits that were shared with 230 VCE MG volunteers, coordinators, and agents in June at our 19th Annual Master Gardener College. Specialists, University and Field Faculty, and even a VCE Master Gardener or two shared their knowledge, expertise, and passion for horticulture through a variety of keynote sessions, pre-conference tours, and concurrent sessions on the campus of Virginia Tech.



Statewide we recognized more than 750 VCE MG volunteers having reached a service milestone. The career total volunteer service of these award recipients exceeded 489,000 hours which translates into FIFTY-SIX years of service and experience! Of those 750 volunteers, more than 100 were present at MG College and they accounted for more than 140,000 hours of career total service. WOW! I never cease to be amazed by the level of dedication, effort, and work you as VCE MG volunteers invest in your local communities. Major kudos to you all! This year we were thrilled to have a large number of Extension Agents and Coordinators present for the awards ceremony and much of College. We all appreciated the support they each demonstrated to their volunteers by being present during MG College and especially the Annual State Awards Ceremony.



Finally, we had the largest turnout for leadership training ever! A good mix of veteran local leaders, Extension Agents, paid and volunteer local coordinators, and new local leaders participated in one and half days of training. We used a Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator as an exercise to see how personality ties into leadership. We also spent some time talking about what motivates volunteers and how we should be sensitive to that aspect of leading a local VCE MG unit. The day was then wrapped up and tied together by a presentation delivered by Jim Orband, Extension Agent from York County and two of his volunteer leaders, Rebecca Cho and Terry Hanson. The energy and interest of the participants was contagious. As a reward for participating in the Leadership Development, we were hosted by Dr. Alex and Ms. Jennifer Niemiera in their private garden for an evening social and dessert. What gracious hosts!

There are so many opportunities to learn, have fun, and meet new friends at Master Gardener College. We try to provide plenty of opportunities to nurture you as a leader and volunteer and we emphasize the fellowship aspect of College too. Sharing ideas and brainstorming new ones with fellow volunteers from all over the Commonwealth has been very rewarding for those that have attended.

We hope to see you next year for our 20th Annual Master Gardener College!

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NEWS AND NOTES



MG College 2007

Mark June 19-24, 2007 on your calendar now! Planning began for our 20th Annual Master Gardener College in 2005. We already have the ever popular Tony Avent lined up as one of our keynote speakers. There will be other big-named speakers and we will keep you posted in coming months. We will have some other special events and special guests to help celebrate this important milestone in the history of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program. Come join us! You won't want to miss out!



2008 INTERNATIONAL MG COORDINATORS

MEETING TO BE CO-HOSTED BY VA

Every two years a conference is held for state and local Extension Master Gardener Coordinators. So far the group has met in Colorado and most recently in Illinois. The next meeting, set for 2008 (specific dates to be determined) will be co-hosted by Virginia and the District of Columbia. I will be working closely with Sandy Farber, the Master Gardener Coordinator for the District in developing the program and tours. I will also be calling on folks in Northern Virginia to assist with this fantastic opportunity! I hope many of you will be able to come and participate in this wonderful conference.



NATIONAL EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR/CONSUMER HORTICULTURE COMMITTEE FORMED

In May 2006, Jim Green, National Horticulture Program Leader for Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service Plant and Animal Systems of USDA, solicited nominations from each of the four CSREES regions for someone to serve on a national Extension Master Gardener Coordinator/Consumer Horticulture Committee. Dave Close was nominated and selected to serve the Southeast CSREES region which includes the following states and US Territories: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North & South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Mr. Close will serve a one year term with the possibility of serving a second year if selected. This committee will be working to bring concerted national attention to the Extension Master Gardener Program and Consumer Horticulture. Stay tuned for future updates and further information about the activity of this group.



MG SPOTLIGHT



Anne Olsen, *Northern Neck, Class of 1990 and*

Richard Conners, *New River Valley Class of 2005*

When did you first find out you were interested in gardening?

“Around my fortieth birthday... before then, I had cut overgrown shrubs at my parents’ place... My future husband suggested that I plant a tomato behind our condo building...when it grew I started filling in with perennials...Also took classes at the National Arboretum...from basic gardening to woody plant identification...After moving to Virginia discovered that I didn’t know as much as I thought I did and took the MG class.”



What has been your greatest accomplishment as a Master Gardener?

“Giving talks and working at plant clinics...I’ve helped change bad gardening affecting the Chesapeake Bay... encouraged people to try new things.”

What type of projects have you invested most of your time in?

“Plant clinics, teaching MG classes, giving lectures to the public, and working on demonstration gardens...Also as one of the founders of “Just Gardens”, we raise money for The Haven Shelter & Services, a battered women’s shelter...100% of proceeds are donated to the shelter’s building fund.”

What is your favorite aspect of the MG program?

“It’s hard to say whether it’s the MGs themselves or helping the public. How can you not enjoy being with people who are as enthusiastic about gardening as you are?”

What area of gardening would you say you’re most experienced in?

“Native plants, small trees and shrubs, and basic garden design. This summer I’ve been bitten by two new bugs: succulents and water lilies-in-a-pot.”

What advice would you give to new gardeners?

“There’s a whole lot to learn about gardening so just take it one step at a time. Read as much as you can and visit as many gardens as possible. Don’t be afraid of asking questions—experienced gardeners are always asking questions. There aren’t any shortcuts and nobody can learn it for you. And, the more you learn the more interesting gardening becomes... Don’t be shy about speaking to the general public. You know so much more than they do and they appreciate anything you can tell them!”

When did you first find out you were interested in gardening?

“When my wife and I were first married, we lived in an apartment, so we were limited to houseplants...Much of what we learned was through trial and error. My parents were gardeners, but oddly enough, a lot of their knowledge did not rub off on me.”

What has been your greatest accomplishment as a Master Gardener?

“Becoming more comfortable with the field of Horticulture. Also, I take great pride in helping to coordinate educational programs. These programs help to benefit the public and also help increase membership.”



What type of projects have you invested most of your time in?

“Previously, our unit has had a program on organic gardening. Future programs will include Herbs and Herb Gardening, Water Gardening, Hydroponics, and Insect Identification.”

What is your favorite aspect of the MG program?

“Interacting with people and problem solving. I also enjoy the plant clinics that Virginia Cooperative Extension hosts.”

What area of gardening would you say you’re most experienced in?

“Learning how to enjoy a garden yet peacefully coexisting with wildlife. For example, my home is in a mountainous area and is home to a very diverse mixture of wildlife. One of the biggest threats to my garden is deer. I love having the opportunity to watch them, but they can do major damage to my plants! Even though I try to plant deer resistant plants, in a period of drought, deer are likely to eat anything.”

What advice would you give to new gardeners?

“Plan! Always have a plan about what you want to include in your garden. Make sure that you do enough research about: hardiness zones, what your neighbors are planting, and what the local nurseries have to offer. Also, know what makes plants grow. How much sunlight? Are they drought resistant?”

Anything else you would like to add?

“I would just like to tell anyone that is interested in plants, flowers, and landscaping that this is a wonderful program to be a part of. It is a great way to meet people who have a mutual appreciation for plants.”



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Date	Event	Location	Contact
September 16, 2006 9am to 4pm	First Annual: The Virginia Garden Festival 2006	Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens 1800 Lakeside Ave. Richmond, VA 23228	(540) 382-0943 or www.virginiagreen.org
September 28- October 8, 2006	Virginia State Fair	Richmond Raceway Complex 600 East Laburnum Avenue Richmond, VA 23222	(804) 569-3200 or toll free (800) 588-3247 or www.statefair.com/site.asp
September 30, 2006 10am to 3pm	7th Annual: Community Gardening Festival	Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center 1444 Diamond Springs Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23455	www.vbmg.org Or contact Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Beach Office (757) 385-4769
October 2-4, 2006	Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture: 2006 Annual Meeting "Protecting Our Heritage...Growing the Future"	Virginia Beach, VA	(703) 753-0499
October 27, 2006	Fall VMGA Educational Program	Maymont, Richmond, VA	Fran Shelton (757) 721-2948 franshelton@cox.net Pinky Derieux (757) 523-2850 pinkyderieux@yahoo.com

MG COLLEGE 2006 BRAG NIGHT RESULTS



Northern Neck ~ Environmental Stewardship



York ~ Youth



Loudoun ~ Value of Landscape



Nelson County ~ Quality of Life

Overall Winner...Northern Neck!!

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The Virginia Master Gardener Leadership Development Newsletter goes to all active VCE Master Gardeners in Virginia. It is published by Department of Horticulture, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Mail Code 0327, Blacksburg, VA

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