

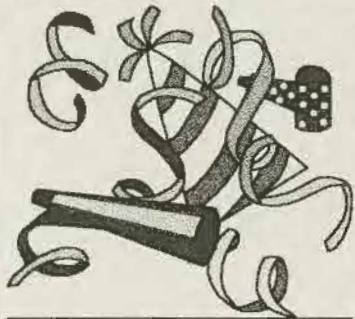
# The Laurel



Connecticut Master Gardeners' Association

January/February, 2001

Volume 14, Issue 1



## FROM THE (NEW) PRESIDENT

At this writing I am curled up by the stove, door bolted shut against the northwest wind. I am grateful that I got the last of those bulbs in at Gillette Castle (just last week!) and that all my cut-backs are done. A recent knee surgery created a new slant on my gardening posture. As gardeners, we are a tenacious lot; we lay awake and conjure up the ways we will meet our gardening challenges. I am currently dreaming up a Deer Early Warning System, complete with all the bells and whistles, hyena urine, putrefied egg solids, and assorted screaming-hot pepper juices ...

During the past 6 years I have watched the Master Gardener program evolve in some amazing and wonderful ways. Outreach programs are popping up all

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## STATE OF THE CMGA - GOING FORWARD

By Larry Van Der Jagt

Over the past few years, I have traveled through out the state of Connecticut, visiting each UConn Cooperative Extension Center. In addition, I have spent many hours brain-storming and negotiating with our UConn partners on many items pertaining to the Master Gardeners (MG) and MG programs. It would be too difficult to single out any one individual who has helped make my term in office a success. Therefore, I would like to offer my most sincere thanks to all the Master Gardeners, UConn staff members and anyone who has generously given their time and talent to successfully enhance the MG Program in Connecticut.

I would like to address a few areas of concern as we move forward:

**CMGA Newsletter The Laurel:** There is no doubt that The Laurel has become the showpiece of our organization. We have received nothing but kudos for this wonderful addition to our publications. However, it comes at an expense of \$2 a copy. The newsletter is published 6 times a year, add to that the expense of the directory and we now have a cost of \$14 per member. This exceeds our income per member by \$4. I have asked our co-editors, Kate Cheromcha and Mary Collins to see what steps may be taken to reduce this cost without changing the context of our newsletter. Our membership chairman, John Carlson is also looking into ways of reducing the cost of publishing our annual membership directory. I ask the entire membership for your ideas to reduce this expense. Please forward any ideas to Mary or Kate (see page 2 for contact information). An easy solution would be to increase our membership fee. This will not be considered until all other possible solutions have been considered.

**State Wide Accessibility:** For years our members have been asking for local support for activities. Now, UConn has provided a sound structure for local support by providing MG Program Coordinators at nine locations around the state. Located at each of the eight County Cooperative Extension Centers, this also includes a second location in Fairfield County, the Bartlett Arboretum in Stamford, due to their geographical location. The Home and Garden Education Center in

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The Laurel is published by the CMGA six times a year; January, March, May, July, September and November.



Please submit any articles, suggestions or inquiries by the 10th of the month prior to The Laurel's release to:

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Please include your phone number. Space availability is on a first-received, first-printed basis. Thank you!

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### South-West District

Bethel: Sandi Wilson - (203) 207-8440  
No. Haven: Mira Schachne - (203) 407-3161  
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### North-East District

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Home and Garden Center - UConn Storrs  
1-877-486-6271 (toll-free)

### NOTICE!!!

Please remember, when sending emails to the co-editors, to note the subject as being for the CMGA newsletter. Any emails received from an unfamiliar address without a subject noted will **NOT** be opened. Thank you for your cooperation!



### WELCOME TO THE NEW MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2001!

WE WISH YOU A NEW YEAR,  
FILLED WITH NEW FRIENDS,  
LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND  
SUCCESS! BEST OF LUCK!



## FROM THE PRESIDENT (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

over the place, where there were only a few isolated programs in the past. The offices are now state-of-the-art, with the addition of microscopes, computers and some wonderful hard-copy resources. The new classes are fortunate to have access to these wonderful tools. And the newsletter is an informative source. I would like to commend Mary Collins and Kate Cheromcha on their works. I encourage everyone to consider adding their expertise to the newsletter.

In the next year, I hope to continue the good works that Larry Van Der Jagt has begun. The formation of Master Gardener teams at each of the county extension centers will provide many opportunities for all of us, recent and not-so-recent graduates. Your extension office is also planning an Open House party. Your help is needed! And, don't forget to fill out your membership form. You don't want to miss the next newsletter.

Now that we have recovered from holidays, we can settle in with a few good seed catalogs. I retreat to the basement, to play at my light table. If the winter doldrums get you down consider visiting a garden or Arboretum and study the bark and forms of plants in winter. Or, visit a garden center that has tropical plants. I am fortunate to be employed at one of those. If you would like to visit, feel free to call me at (860) 873-8145 or (860) 873-8878 (days). The earthy smell and humidity are good medicine!

I look forward to meeting all of you. See you at the Symposium!

*Wendy Drenga*

President

## CMGA Board Meeting

The next CMGA Executive Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 9, 2001, 11:00 a.m., at the Hill-Stead Museum, 35 Mountain Rd., Farmington. The meeting will be held in the Makeshift Theater, adjacent to the Museum Gift Shop.

**DIRECTIONS:** Easily located from I-84, off Rtes. 4 & 10, just watch for the signs. A good map is found online at smartpages.com, or call the Hill-Stead at (860) 677-9064.

A complimentary tour of the museum is being offered following the meeting.

Any and all CMGA members are welcome to attend.

CMGA

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## Landscape Design Study Program - Reserve the Date!

The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut is offering Course 3 of the Landscape Design Study Program which will take place March 27-29, 2001, at the Jones Auditorium of the Connecticut Agricultural Experimental Station, 123 Huntington Street, New Haven. This program is highly recommended for people who work on civic projects in their communities. Lectured by landscape architects, this curriculum will focus on Color in the Landscape, Landscape Design Accessories, Design Maintenance, Development of LA from 1840-1940, Introduction to Urban Design, Parks, Playgrounds and Conservation Areas, Graphics Interpretation, Guidelines for Evaluating Landscape Design and a special interest lecture on Water Garden Design. The fee for one day is \$35 and \$70 for two day course. The required reading if taking the course for credit certification, consists of chapters in the text, *Stewards of the Land: A Survey of Landscape Architecture and Design in America*, which is available ONLY through the books chairman, Maria Nahom (860) 355-5363. Also required is a subscription to the **NATIONAL GARDENER**: send \$6.50 for 1 year or \$18 for 3 years to The National Council of State Garden Clubs, 4401 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110-3492. Registrations accepted until March 15, 2001. If you have any questions, or would like to be on the mailing list please contact:

Florence C. Flynn  
LDSP State Chairman  
27 Hi-Lo Road  
Durham, CT 06422-2304  
860-349-0504  
E-mail: Flogarden@aol.com

### EMAIL ALERT!

With people changing their online carriers left and right, their email addresses often change, and thus the directory is "out of date". If you wish to "keep current", please feel free to share your new email address with us, and we'll post it here in The Laurel, so other members may update their directories.

**Please note:** New CMGA president, Wendy Drenga's email address is incorrect in the directory ... it should read [rdrenga@snet.net](mailto:rdrenga@snet.net)



### LIMERICK CHALLENGE!

Now that the holidays are over, and the mid-winter dole-drums approach, it's the perfect time to dabble in a little fun poetry ... entries for the gardening limerick competition are still being accepted (deadline Feb. 10th). Prizes will be given to the best three limericks to be submitted (judges to be announced), so sharpen your pencils, and your wit and share a little fun whilst the winter winds blow! The only rules are the theme must be somehow related to gardening or plants, with no higher than a "G" rating. Good luck ... and just to help inspire you ... another gardening limerick:

There once was a weed in a garden  
In the yard of Farmer McFarden.  
When he yanked on the weed,  
He muttered "Indeed!"  
"The roots of this thing go a yard in!"

Come on folks, don't let Mary's entries be the only ones in the competition! Send your entries by mail, or via email to one of the newsletter co-editors today! (see pg. 2).

### Help is Needed!!!

A volunteer (or two) is STILL needed to take over the fundraising, ordering, storing and selling of the CMGA logo sweatshirts, t-shirts, aprons, bags and hats ... the current stock is getting quite low, and now is an ideal time to consider new stock items ... for example, hooded zip-up sweatshirts, or polo or tank-top style shirts, etc. The bags are always a popular item with the students, as we all know how heavy that textbook material can be!

New stock will need to be ordered in time to have them available at the 2001 Symposium in March. Anyone willing to take on this role within the Association, is urged to contact Larry Van Der Jagt as soon as possible at (860) 658-7716. Thank you!

## The Roadside Farm Stand

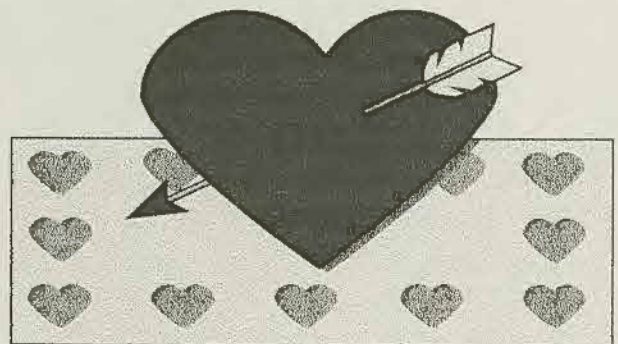
The purpose of this column is for listing any gardening or other miscellaneous items, tools, information or plants that you may wish to find, sell, buy, barter, trade or just plain get rid of! If you would like to list in this section, please leave your name, number and a detailed message at (860) 228-9436, or contact one of the co-editors (see page 2). Your free "ad" will be run for two (2) consecutive issues, unless notified otherwise.

Looking for Lavender seeds, any cultivar, and Perovskia seeds, also any cultivar. I have Rosa rugosa, Israeli melon and Butterfly weed seeds to swap. Please contact Susan Hendricks-Wilson - email [sdhwilson@email.msn.com](mailto:sdhwilson@email.msn.com) (see page 2 for her telephone number).

For Sale - Consolidated Dutch West Wood Stove - \$450. Right-hand load. Has glass doors, screen, new blower, catalytic converter, brass trim & chimney insert. Call Linda Gardiner at (860) 742-0865.

Wanted - In Tolland County area - storage space for tag sale donations. Planning for a Master Gardener tag sale to be held in the spring of 2001. Please contact Mary Collins at the Vernon office - (860) 875-3331.

For Sale: HP Ink cartridges suitable for an HP 800 Series DeskJet computer printer. 2- HP51645A (black) and 1 - HP51641A (color). Suggested asking price \$15 each, or B.O. for all three! I killed my old printer, and these won't fit the new one ... No reasonable offer refused! Call Mary at (860) 228-9436.





*(Continued from page 1)*

Storrs is providing a toll-free number for questions that need more extensive research than the local Extension Centers can provide. Now it's time for the MGs to enhance their structure by providing support to the local coordinators. We have talked about setting up the CMGA by district organizations. Local team set-ups should be by counties with additional support at the Bartlett Arboretum. Establishing these local teams will be a priority for 2001. I would like anyone interested in helping establish these teams to volunteer to help get things going. Please contact me at (860) 658-7716, or your local coordinator (see page 2).

**Advanced Master Gardener Program:** In the year 2000, the first Advanced Master Gardener courses were offered. The selections were excellent and thanks to your support the program was very successful. Additional courses are planned for the current sessions. The future calls for a more intense training in specific areas. The ultimate goal is to provide subjects that will continue to enhance the MGs' skills and interests with the specific goal to keep the CMGA members involved.

**CMGA Support of UConn Extension Centers:** Our 2001 budget includes a \$5000 expense in support of the Extension Centers. This includes \$500 for each center. The UConn coordinators and MGs who work at fairs and other public events requested a large banner to improve the quality of the booths provided at these events. The banners will identify the local extension center involved in the activity along with the UConn and CMGA logos as partners. In addition, a carrying case, black folding display board with Velcro interior for securing display material will also be provided. Each location will be provided with additional research material, such as new books to assist the MGs working at the centers. Last, but not least, one of the cameras previously approved is finally in operation. The Middlesex Extension Center is presently working on evaluating the camera on a microscope, with the goal still being to have a camera available at each County Extension Center in the future.

At the annual membership meeting in November, Roy Jeffrey spoke on the recent accomplishments and future plans for the MG program at UConn. The presentation was well received. UConn has taken significant steps to expand and enhance the MG program (i.e. Advanced MG program, staffing local extension centers, establishing the Home and Garden Education Center and improving diagnostic technology). As my last act as President of the CMGA, I would like to ask you to share your ideas for future enhancements to the MG program. To help sustain these enhancements into the future, additional funds will be needed. I would like each of you to consider making an individual tax-deductible contribution to the UConn

Foundation, Master Gardener Account, to help augment the funds provided by the state for these programs. There will be no forms, no limits or recommendations on the amount of your contribution. Just be sensitive to the need for your support and give generously. Your suggestion and contributions may be sent to: Roy Jeffrey, c/o UConn Cooperative Extension System, 1376 Storrs, Road, U4143, Storrs, CT 06269-4134. Checks should be made payable to **UConn Foundation**; please make sure to note "**Master Gardener Account**" in the memo space.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone for their help during my tenure as president and I wish the new president, Wendy Drenga, and the board a successful term in office. I will continue to be active with the MGs and CMGA in whatever capacity I may be helpful.

Larry Van Der Jagt

### NOTICE!

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The 2001 CMGA Symposium will be held on Saturday, March 17, 2001. The program/registration form is included in this newsletter. Seating is limited, so register early! Volunteers are still needed for a variety of jobs and duties. If you are able and interested in giving a helping hand at this major CMGA fundraising event, please give Marie Dube a call at (203) 389-6136. Thank you!

### MEMBER WINS AWARD!

Regarding the article in the November/December 2000 issue of The Laurel, regarding Dr. Mark Bridgen being the 2000 recipient of the G.E. Mehlquist Award, it was brought to our attention that it was not clarified what organization awards this honor ... our apologies ... this prestigious award is given by the Connecticut Horticultural Society.

Congratulations, once again, Dr. Bridgen! We look forward to having you as an instructor in the upcoming series of Advanced Master Gardener courses!







## A ROCK FOR THE KILLINGWORTH LIBRARY

by Penny Dobratz, Class of 2000 - Vernon

My search for a community service project ended when I found an ad for gardening help on the web site for the Killingworth Library.

The first step was to meet with Heather Greenaway, a landscape architect and the chairperson of the Library Association's Grounds Committee. Heather expressed the need to have several areas of liriopie grass relocated from beneath foundation plantings in front of the building into a newly established ovoid raised bed in the parking lot, which already contained 2 previously planted sweet gum trees.. We also decided that adding a hard element, such as a rock or boulder, to the newly planted areas would be desirable, if the volunteer manpower could be located.

Among the things that Killingworth is most noted for are the poem, The Birds of Killingworth, which was written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Chatfield Hollow State Park, and the fact that the town is well endowed with rocks. There would be no place finer to search for a rock to use as a hard element in my gardening project!

My search for locating a rock began by enlisting the help of my husband, Jeff, who was to be the "volunteer" to help me move the rock to the library garden. We walked our property in the areas where many rocks of varying sizes charmingly dot the landscape of our home. Killingworth rocks everywhere - small ones, flat ones, big ones, round ones ... so many choices, so little time! One by one I ruled out the most unlikely candidates - too big, too small, not interesting enough. Then we came to just the "right one".

Lifting and loading this rock into the bed or our truck was another thing however! We pushed and wedged and pried this rock for what seemed an eternity, but to no avail. It was during this struggle that I gained a new appreciation for the wonders of the Egyptian pyramids!

Knowing Jeff as I do, I knew if there was any way it could be done, he would find it. And once again he didn't let me down ... this marvelous rock finally hung suspended from the bucket of our tractor, ready to be deposited into our truck bed.

But alas, the truck groaned even under partial weight of the load, and it was decided that other transportation must be enlisted. Luckily we live a short distance from a neighbor who owns a landscaping business and a BIG truck ... good time to introduce myself to him I thought ... hopefully he would give this project a helping hand.

Thankfully, several hours later, and with the help of more friends who shared their holiday weekend with me, this rock finally came to rest in the Killingworth Library parking lot garden. Let the gardening begin!

*Liriopie Spicata* is called "Creeping Lilyturf" and for good reason as I soon found out when I began to dig up the first area of the Liriopie! The overgrowth of grass much resembled a jute mat as I attempted to pull it up. I quickly realized why this plant material is not recommended for use in the perennial garden, because its dense growth would choke out the other plantings in a garden. Caution should also be used when planting close to foundations, as I found areas where the grass was growing up under the clapboards of the building.

Work went slowly as I combed the root clumps with my small hand rake to free the roots, and then planted the groupings. Around each area I sprinkled a top dressing of organic material, watered them well, and then spread mulch gently around the base of each plant.

As my project began during an extremely hot period of the early summer, the heat was a limiting factor for the amount of time I could tolerate planting at any one time. One of my biggest concerns throughout this whole project was whether the grass would survive at all since most of it had been understory plants. Watering, replanting and removal of dead leaves became my main chores for many weeks. Slowly I began to see signs of life as the plants began sending up new shoots — I felt as though the project would actually reach a successful completion!

Once the plantings showed signs of taking hold, I began a series of three applications of a dilute solution of Miracle Grow. Also, at this time, I pulled back the mulch to make it easier for the new shoots to form. Weed, water, replant and feed, and so my summer passed, and now I finally see many places where the "Creeping Lilyturf" has begun to creep, and I know my efforts have been successful.

Since having worked with this grass, I have noticed a number of places that Liriopie has been used as edging material. I know it well, believe me ... hour after hour of intimate knowledge! As to whether I would ever consider incorporating this plant in my landscaping plans, I don't think I want the maintenance of this hardy spreader. Thank you, but I will admire Liriopie in someone else's landscape!

Anyone interested in doing their own outreach project at the Killingworth Library should contact the librarian, Ginny Chapman, at (860) 663-2000.



## OUTREACH AT THE CT AUDUBON CENTER

by Theresa Waltz - Class of 2000 - Vernon  
with Jolly Steffens - Class of 2000 - W. Hartford

We decided to complete our outreach projects at the CT Audubon Center in Glastonbury. Our original objectives were to offer a series of workshops for adults and children, and to place permanent name markers near trees, shrubs, and perennials to identify them for interested visitors.

We planned four free workshops and advertised by placing flyers at the Audubon Center, the library, and at various garden centers in town. We also submitted ads to the *Hartford Courant* and *The Glastonbury Citizen*.

The first workshop, Soil Testing, pH, Amending Your Soil and Lawn Tips, was apparently not scheduled at a good time of day, and no one signed up for it. Consequently we changed the times of the remaining ones. The second, Planting a Raised Bed Garden, had two registrations who did not show up on a rainy day.

Eight people attended the third workshop, Framing and Planting a Butterfly Garden, and 12 attended the fourth, Pruning Workshop. We incorporated some of the material from the missed workshops into the ones we actually gave, and had a wonderful time. The workshops incorporated lessons, sharing, questions, and hands-on activities. We even sent home plants with the attendees who wanted them!

Working from drawings made years ago, and a more recent plan, we set out to identify the trees and shrubs on the property. Some samples were sent to UConn for identification. Signs were made by a local company, and special screws and springs which will "grow" with the trees were used. Signs were attached directly to larger trees and to stakes for shrubs and smaller trees.

In addition to our original objectives, we suggested changes to be made to the landscape plan which included removing invasive Autumn Olive and pruning and removing several overgrown trees and shrubs. We also supervised some local teenagers who had been assigned community service. They did a lot of the physical labor.

Jolly Steffens is working on a scale drawing that will eventually be posted inside and outside the building.

The Audubon Center has an ongoing need for volunteers, and the Director, Judy Harper, would like to encourage future Master Gardeners to get in touch with her at (860) 633-8402, regarding potential outreach projects.

## A BIT OF HISTORY

This column features historical gardening and plant information and is also an excellent location to highlight and feature historical projects and gardens in and around Connecticut. So if your particular interest is in historical gardens and plantings, please share your knowledge!

\* \* \* \* \*

An extensive assortment of plants were used in the depiction of a typical 18th century kitchen garden at the Benton Homestead in Tolland ... and the following are just a few of those plants.

**Bee Balm, Bergamot (*Monarda didyma*)** The name *Monarda* honors the Spanish medical botanist Dr. Nicholas Monardes of Seville, Spain, who wrote his herbal on the flora of America in 1569. The Oswego Indians infused bergamot as a drink, and it became a popular tea substitute in New England after the Boston Tea Party in 1773. Several Indian tribes used wild bergamot for colds and bronchial complaints, and it contains the powerful antiseptic, thymol. Its uses today include decorative, culinary, household, cosmetic, aromatic, and medicinal purposes.

**Chamomile (*Morticaria recutita*)** This herb was once thought to be the "garden's physician"; people believed that it would cure sick or dying plants when grown next to them. It has been thought to be valuable in treating many nervous conditions, insomnia, neuralgia, lumbago, rheumatic problems, rashes and reducing inflammation.

**Elecampane (*Inula helenium*)** Helen of Troy was believed to be gathering elecampane when she was abducted by Paris, and its botanical name has captured this association. Its root contains a sweet starchy substance called inulin, which is responsible for elecampane's popularity as a crystallized sweet. In the Middle Ages, apothecaries sold the candied root in flat, pink sugary cakes, which were sucked to alleviate asthma and indigestion and to sweeten the breath. In ancient China, large-leafed plants were grown under scholars' windows so they could listen to different sounds of rain. Today, its uses are decorative, culinary, household, cosmetic and medicinal.

**Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)** Mint was brought to New England at a very early time, and, in fact, was recorded as being seen growing wild in 1672. The oils from this herb were used in medicines and perfumes, and the leaves were (and still are) used in drinks and food.





## A WINTER VIEW

By Becky Paul

What lovely memories are reflected in the photographs of our past summer's gardens in Connecticut and Vermont — so much color and texture. All of the planning, time and effort were well spent.

Outside the window this December morning was another perspective on the same Connecticut garden. This too was rich in form, color, and texture. This is our winter landscape.

A landscape designed to provide focus and interest for the cold, dark months. We have a view from the kitchen of a teak bench and chair arrangement on slate against a backdrop of three large rhododendrons. Our glass in the living room looks out upon an interesting arrangement of stone, a weeping spruce and blue-berried cedar. The rock garden holds its winter form using the lichen-covered climb, wooden buckets of silvery lavender, and a year-round garden figurine as its components.

Our Vermont gardens were designed with winter in mind. The yard uses rustic split rail as its key backdrop component, along with wonderful ornamental grasses, red stem varieties, and plenty of red berries. The bright fruit of the ornamental crabapples remain. The snow against these elements provide a magnificent view from the kitchen bay window and a happy retreat for the winter birds.

What is in your winter landscape?

Michael P. Harvey, Director of the Bartlett Arboretum, spoke to the CMGA during our recent Annual Members' Meeting at the Bartlett. He provided wonderful slides and ideas of how we can plan to enhance our winter views by designing our gardens with winter elements in mind.

A winter landscape should create interest using plants and details — creating drama with sustainability and structure. This can be a challenge with our deer population, harsh winds and road salts. But we can, with planning, create a lush winter landscape environment to provide us with enjoyment during the cold winter months.

Here is a sampling of Michael's excellent ideas of what we can design into our landscapes for magnificent and creative winter views.

Think in five areas: Structure, Stems/Twigs/Bark, Foliage, Flowers and Fruit.

**Structure:** Create a vignette using stones, gates (especially painted!) red/black brickwork, garden benches, urns, and garden sculptures. Living sculptures may include a Yew topiary, trained Wisteria, a Beech Hedge (deer don't care for Beech), and Hydrangea (don't prune the seed heads until March!). Try mixed plantings such as *Lavandula* with *Yucca* and *Mahonia*. Or, add a whimsical element by forming a living fence of willow.

*"The snow against these elements provides a magnificent view from the kitchen bay window and a happy retreat for the winter birds."*

**Stems/Twigs/Bark:** For texture and color; use Willow, Dogwood, Maple and Flowering Forms: *Salix actiflora* 'Blue Streak', *Salix caprea* with *Cornus sericea* 'Flavirnea', *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica', *Acer griseum*, *Prunus serotina* bark/form, *Pinus bungeana* bark/form. Think red twigs and beautifully textured barks! For a touch of yellow use *Euonymus fortunei* 'Yellow & Gold'.

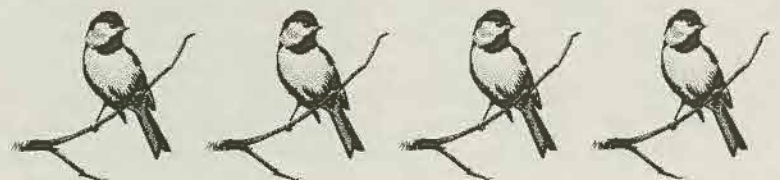
**Foliage:** Use of holly (*Ilex aquifolium* 'Silver Queen'), Witch Hazel ('Arnold's Promise' - bold yellow), and your broad-leaf evergreens. Simple additional thoughts include Russian Sage and Lavender.

**Flowers:** The Christmas and Lenten Rose (*Helleborus orientalis/foetidus*) are a delight. Winter aconite (*Eranthus Hyemalis*) and Cyclamen (*coum*) add beautiful color. Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) are cheerful to find in March, especially if set off by the Cyclamen.

**Fruit:** A touch of red against the snow is a marvelous combination. Try *Viburnum wrightii*, Holly (*Ilex verticillata* 'Winter Red'), and Sumacs for form and color (*Rhus typhina* 'Laciniata'). Mixing berries with ornamental grasses is a winning combination.

We can plan to paint the future's winter view if we take the time this winter to observe our existing canvas. To quote from Gertrude Jekyll, our winter gardens can be "fashioned into a dream of beauty, a place of perfect pictures — a treasure of well-set jewels".

(Quote from The Illustrated Gertrude Jekyll, publ. Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1988.)





by Lloyd Hinrichs

A recent column in The Hartford Courant's gardening section about composting leaves prompted a letter to Erwin Goldstar, that paper's gardening columnist.

Reading it over before signing, sealing and stamping, it occurred to me that maybe therein was the meat of an essay for the Laurel.

My wife, Patricia, and I have been gardening for 40+ years, with composting in one form or another always an integral part of the process. Initially we raised only vegetables to be sure our seven offspring and we had the best and most nutritious of produce. We composted kitchen scraps, grass clippings (ours and our neighbors'), weeds, hay or straw which had been mulch from the previous year's gardens, rabbit, gerbil, chicken, etc. waste, using the "pile-it-and-forget-it" method. Early on, we may have turned the pile occasionally, but as the family and gardens grew, the turning became history. Instead, every three or four years, we would scrape off the top 6-10" to be the start of a new pile, and harvest the balance as gardener's gold. We never had enough.

There came a time when I had a virtually endless supply of bagged leaves. Initially we would spread them on our two 25x100' vegetable gardens about 6" thick and then till them in with a tractor (a real one - farm size) mounted 54" Kuhn tiller. It worked beautifully. Our soil was beautifully tilthy despite the fact that in the N.W. corner of the Catskill Mountains there is more stone and rock than soil where the soil should be. That soil that we amended each year with all those leaves plus the shredded corn stalks, bean and pea vines and the broccoli plants (and no commercial fertilizer) was highly productive, producing all the vegetables the entire family could consume for the whole year. Naturally we canned, froze and root cellared.

When the quantity of the leaves was more than we could use in the gardens, I began to stack the unopened bags of unshredded leaves in a corner behind the barn to let them spend a couple of years breaking down. This also worked. The resultant leaf mold was dark, wonderfully aromatic and crumbly. We added this to the gardens as mulch. We also used it in potting mixes. And so we went.

In July of 1999, we moved to our new location, a very old house in Vernon, CT, and had to start over with gardens. We found lots of garden spaces around the 1 1/3 acre, all covered with stone under which black plastic had been spread. All over the place ... along the driveway, around the house, all the corners, around the garage and just everywhere anything might have been planted at anytime in the past. But wait, as they say on the TV ads ... it gets worse. After removing (and salvaging the stones for future use as the greenhouse floor) and getting rid of the black plastic, we found, much to our total astonishment, under about 3-4 feet of soil, another layer of stone and black plastic. Believe it. The soil under the second layer was, of course, very dead (so indicated by UConn soil tests).

That's a long lead-in to the current project. Having been here such a short time, we had no compost, although there was a pile of partially rotted garden and shrub debris

tucked away under the trees in one corner. Fortunately, we found out that the Town of Vernon composts the leaves it picks up along the streets and avenues each fall and makes the resulting leaf mold available free of charge to anyone who is willing to go get it. Double fortunate for us at 62 Church Street, the distribution point is diagonally across the street in the parking lot for the bike trail (Rails to Trails). We used a great deal of that the first full summer and even a bit in late summer and fall of 1999.

In the fall of 1999, I discovered that now I had to rake leaves in my own yard and that there were a whole lot of them. Seventy-some very large bags full to be precise. They were not shredded because we had no way to do so, having sold our tractor, tiller and shredder before we came here. We piled them up and stacked them under the trees along a side line for future reference.

This year, we bought a used shredder and shredded all the leaves. Mostly maple, some oak, one elm and quite a bit of evergreen. We produced 30 some bags, each weighing about 50-60 lbs. We were going to stack and forget these bags too, until I read an article in a local paper about composting leaves, and that began a new odyssey.

I bought wire and posts and erected a 4x12' rectangle next to the pile of garden debris, on one edge of the yard. The wire was 4' high and I knew that it would be a bit of a bother to lift those big bags of leaves that high, so we split the 32' of wire into 2 pieces each 2x32', and wrapped just one around the posts, and began to fill. First 6" of shredded leaves, wet them down with a garden hose, then 1" of soil. For soil, I dug into the pile of old debris and was able to salvage quite a lot of nearly rotted compost. Enough for quite a few 4'x12'x1" layers.

One would think that with 48" of wire height that 6" of leaves plus 1" of soil would fill the bin after 7 or 8 layers. But one would have forgotten compaction which meant that more like 10-12 layers had to be built up. In any event, we ran out of leaves and soil just as the top of the wire was reached. I forgot to mention that after the first 2' of wire enclosure was filled, we added the second piece and so got our 4' depth.

Now here's this magnificent pile, 4x12x4' high, each layer of leaves watered for 10-15 minutes because we all know that damp matter decomposes quicker than dry.

The problem is, dear reader, that even after watering the leaf layers for 10-15 minutes, the leaves under the top inch or thereabouts was still dry. Now the question becomes this; will the water that was applied, with compaction, settling and time, be sufficient to thoroughly moisten the pile in order to speed up decomposition? We don't know. Another question that occurred after the pile was completed was this; does it need air? Perhaps a number of 1" PVC pipes with holes drilled in them should be driven down through the pile and so aerate it. These pipes would have to be end plugged so they didn't fill up as they were driven in. We don't know yet.

So, there you have it. A beautiful pile, using all the leaves from a significant number of trees. Enough exercise to replace our gym membership and the promise of about 1 1/2 tons of excellent compost ... plus those questions.



## IMPORTED PESTS & PATHOGENS CONFERENCE - PART 2

By Sandra Wilson, MG Program Coordinator; Bethel

(Continued from the November/December, 2000, issue of *The Laurel*, this is Part 2 of highlights of the conference, held October 10-12, 2000, hosted by the CT Agricultural Experiment Station.)

- Plum Pox, a very detrimental virus of stone fruit which has been in Bulgaria since 1915, was introduced in the U.S. in Pennsylvania in 1999. The virus causes blotches on fruit, bark splitting, fruit drop, flavorless fruit and general tree decline. There are a few different strains. Some strains can be transmitted by aphids. Fortunately, the strain currently in the U.S. is inefficiently vectored by aphids so it is transmitted more slowly than other strains. The virus affects 25 species of *Prunus* and also has weed hosts from at least five other plant families. Tree elimination is the only control for the virus at this time.
- Seeds as important vehicles for transporting pathogens was discussed. They are successful at transporting pathogens because they are usually asymptomatic, have a close association with their host, and because they are usually stored in cool, dark places, which provides the perfect environment for pathogens to reside.
- Two examples of seed-borne diseases were discussed. *Fusarium Crown & Root Rot* of Asparagus and *Fusarium Wilt* of Basil. Because the diseases occur on random plants, they are not easily recognized. Both pathogens will reside in soil. A new variety of Basil which is resistant to *Fusarium Wilt* should be available soon.
- Anthracnose of Lupine or *Collectotrichum gloeosporioides* is another pathogen carried by seed. It causes target size lesions on stems which eventually snap from the slightest wind.
- Many of the pathogens that are found on seeds can be eradicated by disinfecting of seed which can be accomplished by soaking seed in a solution of one part Chlorox to 9 parts water.
- Blue Mold or *Peronospora tabacina* of tobacco, a parasite similar to a fungus was discussed. It causes leaf spots on tobacco, and renders them unmarketable. The pathogen which has a lilac blue tint, hence the common name, Blue Mold, seems to spread up from the south annually. It hits in the south around March and affects the east in the summer. Once it occurs, the following year it seems to occur earlier. Scientists believe it is transported by spores through wind. However, they have not ruled out the fact that the pathogen may over-winter. Because of this possibility, sanitation is important. Ornamental tobacco (*Nicotiana*) can also get the infection and may play a role in over-wintering the pathogen. It may survive on plants and in roots. This pathogen has also become metalaxyl resistant. Other fungicide options are available. Acrobat MZ, a systemic; Dithan, a protectant; and Actigard which initiates a plant-resistant response are currently being utilized. Actigard must be applied before the pathogen hits to be effective. There is also some phytotoxicity problems with Actigard, which scientists are working on to reduce the effects. North Carolina State has a web site for growers which provides information on coverage and timing of applications.
- The history of the devastation caused by the Gypsy Moth was discussed. The moth, which was introduced from Europe in the 1860's, feeds on a variety of tree species, especially oaks. Eggs hatch when buds break and the larvae cause the most damage during June in our area. At the end of June, they go into a pupae stage and later emerge a nondescript moth. Females, which cannot fly, lay eggs which perpetuates the cycle. Through the years, management pesticide controls have included spraying with copper compounds, lead arsenate, DDT, and Sevin — many of which caused leaf burning and other environmental concerns. Natural enemies, such as fly parasitoids and beetles, were also enlisted in the control effort. Bt and a virus called *Gypchek* were other biological controls which all have disadvantages. The former kills endangered *Lepidoptera* and the latter not being readily available. Over the years, none of these methods proved successful. Then in 1989, a fungus occurred in Connecticut which infects the caterpillars under optimum conditions (high humidity and rain fall). This fungus, whose spores can live in the soil for years, seems to be keeping the Gypsy Moth in check. The only known severe infestation in Connecticut this year was in Mansfield Hollow. Scientists continue to monitor the situation.
- The problem of leaf miners in apple orchards was discussed. Nineteen species of leaf miners feed on apples in North America. In the past, entomologists examined wings to identify species but now rely on genitalia and hooks on the tips of pupae for identification. Three species are significant in North America; *Phyllonorycter blancardella*, *P. mespilella* and *P. crataegella*. All cause premature leaf abscission, decreased root growth, apple drop, reduced fruit size and other tree problems. Their life cycles are similar. The female lays eggs on the underside of leaves. The larvae and a few instars sap feed, then they become caterpillars that tissue feed and make a tent-like mine on the foliage. The pests do not seem to be attacked by fungal, viral or other pathogens. Chemical controls include organophosphates, synthetic pyrethroids and carbamates, but adults have become resistant. Imidacloprid has been used in the sap feeding stages. Parasitic wasps, such as *Pholetesor ornigis* and *Eulophid sympiesis marylandensis* can be used as biological controls, however, many of these natural enemies are killed by insecticides which are sprayed in orchards to control other pests, such as Apple Maggot, Plum Curculio, and Coddling Moth. Most apple orchards are sprayed 7-10 times during the season to control these pests.
- Research has shown that the primary species of leaf miners varies with the amount of pesticides sprayed. The primary species found in high spray orchards is *P. crataegella* and in low spray orchards it is *P. blancardella*.
- A pest to look out for is the Pear Leaf Blister Moth (*Leucoptera malifoliella*). This pest has so far been intercepted from Europe and Asia, but can be a potential pest in the future.

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(Continued from page 10)

- A major insect pest and defoliator, the Colorado Potato Beetle was discussed. A single over-wintering female can spawn 500 offspring. The insect, which co-evolved with highly toxic solanaceous plants, has the ability to sequester toxins in its body. As a result, it rapidly evolves resistance to all insecticides. Adult beetles, which emerge after August 1st, do not lay eggs, feed or mate. Because of this diapause switch, populations can be greatly reduced by delaying initial invasions. This can be done by rotating crops and physical barriers. Because most beetles over-winter in nearby woods under drip lines of trees, and walk back to fields the following season, plastic lined trenches can be used to collect and kill emerging beetles.
- A less cumbersome method for growers that has proven successful in Potato Beetle control is to treat the edge of fields with an insecticide, such as Imidacloprid, and use Bt in the rest of the field to control larvae. This combination cuts down on pesticide resistance.
- Testing is also being done with insecticide-treated sections of fields and untreated or "refuge" areas of fields. The few remaining Potato Beetles, which have proven resistant to the insecticide, then mate with the large numbers of beetles that have not yet built up a resistance, thus breeding new populations that are still not resistant to pesticides.
- The effects of weather and predators on imported pests were discussed. Examples cited included Red Pine Scale, Elongate Hemlock Scale and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. All three pests are native to Japan and are unaffected by North American native enemies.
- The Red Pine Scale lacks a suitable host in the south and -23 to -25°C kills the scale, therefore the cold keeps it in check in the Northeast.
- The Elongate Hemlock Scale is an armored scale that causes discoloration and premature needle drop from the bottom up. Hemlocks can die in 8-10 years. In Japan, a tiny parasitoid wasp, *Fiorinia externa* attacks the female scale and keeps it in check. In the U.S. the parasitoid and the Hemlock Scale are not synchronized due to the cold killing off some of the Hemlock Scale. Because of this, the second generation of the parasitoid does not thrive, resulting in unsuccessful control of the Elongate Hemlock Scale.
- The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, which are all female, lay up to 300 eggs per year. Populations build up rapidly. They prefer to feed on current year's growth of hemlocks. Their toxic saliva cause problems with the vascular system in trees. Trees can die in as little as 2-5 years. Trees can be treated with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap, but complete coverage is needed to control.
- In the early 1990's, scientists went to Japan to locate and bring back natural predators. Two were discovered. One predator, a tiny mite, feeds on the woolly material, which causes egg masses to drop to the ground. The mite, which was difficult to mass-rear, and had a low reproductive output, proved disappointing in laboratory studies. The other, a true predator, is a tiny ladybird beetle, *Pseudoscymnus tsugae*. After years of testing, it was shown to strongly prefer the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and to feed on all stages of the pest. In 1995, scientists began releasing beetles in Connecticut. In 1997, they released beetles in Virginia and a few selected forests in Connecticut. After 5 months, there was a 47-87% reduction in the Adelgid. Now the beetles are being mass-reared in Trenton, New Jersey, and to date 1/2 million beetles have been released in 10 states. Adult beetles are over-wintering and seem to be cold hardy.
- The Adelgid itself may not be as cold hardy. Last winter's mild weather, which was followed by a cold snap of negative weather temperatures, seems to have caused great numbers of adelgid mortality at the sites where testing and beetle releases are being done. Percent of mortality was between 15-26% along the coast, and between 80-100% in northern testing sites. Research has shown that trees near water and with snow cover seemed to protect adelgids from greater mortality rates. This shows possible threat of adelgids moving further north, if they utilize snow cover to compensate for colder temperatures.
- Scarab Beetle damage and controls were discussed. The Japanese Beetle, Oriental Beetle and European Chafer cause millions of dollars in turf treatment costs and turf loss.
- The Japanese Beetle, which affects the whole East Coast, except for Florida, has for the most part been kept out of Western States like California, due to strict quarantines. However, the pest is easily transported on airplanes and is frequently intercepted in California. Problems with spreading in other areas has also been linked to overnight delivery companies who unwittingly transport the pest to new locales.
- Viruses, fungi, bacteria, rickettsia and protozoa have been used in testing to control scarab beetles. Many of these pathogens, like blue disease or *Rickettsia* were transmitted to humans and thus were dropped from testing as possible controls.
- A protozoa that affects the grubs is being tested as a future control.
- Bacteria, such as Milky Disease, *Bacillus popilliae* or more recently called *Paenibacillus popilliae*, and Amber Disease are being used in the U.S. and New Zealand respectively to control grubs. Another treatment, *Bt Buibui* that was discovered in Japan in 1991, has shown to be quite effective on Oriental, Japanese and Green June Beetle, but is currently not available in the U.S.
- Most insecticides available to treat Scarab Beetles such as Imidacloprid are only good in the larvae stage. Sevin or Carbaryl can be used for adults. Neem stops adults from feeding on foliage; it works well on soy, but does not seem to work on roses.
- Scientists are currently working on a new trap where beetles drop into trap, walk over a fungus and then crawl out with the fungus that kills them and hopefully their eggs in a few days. Testing of these traps show some promise.
- Nematodes are also being used to control grubs. The *Heterorhabditis* species work well on Oriental Beetles, but

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## IP &amp; P CONFERENCE (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 11)*

- the European Chafer doesn't seem to respond.
- A group of scientists from North Carolina are going to China to look for additional natural biological controls for Scarab Beetles in hopes of introducing them in the U.S.
- The Asian Long-Horned Beetle and its destruction was discussed. It was discovered in New York in August, 1996, and Chicago in 1998. As of this date, it has not been reported elsewhere in the U.S. The devastating pest is believed to have arrived in solid wood packing material from China. Because of their appearance, the large black beetles with distinctive white spots are called what translates to "The Starry Sky" Beetle in China. The beetle causes extensive damage in both China and the U.S. where it infests Maples, Horse Chestnut, Elms, Birches, Willows and other tree species. It causes damage and death by drilling holes for egg laying, larval instar and adult feeding, and drilling exit holes. Trees are attacked from the top down, making adult detection quite difficult on tall trees.
- To date, scientists do not know if chemical controls are effective. There is also an absence of a significant biological control and no pheromones have been isolated for the beetle. The only current solution requires cutting down trees, and incinerating them.
- Recently, infestations were found in two new areas in Islip and Flushing, New York.
- The Pine Shoot beetle, *Tomicus piniperda*, a pest of many different pine species was discussed. To date, the insect has shown up in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Quarantines, and the Pine Shoot Beetle Compliance Management Program, which regulates how pines are logged and the monitoring of Christmas tree growers, seems to be keeping the insect confined to the six states. Adults feed and destroy primarily inside lateral shoots. They over winter at the base of the trees on which they feed.
- Funnel traps are currently used to trap beetles. Scientists have yet to find an aggregation pheromone for the Pine Shoot Beetle.
- A biological control is currently being tested for the Pine Shoot Beetle. It is another beetle called *Thanasimus forficarius*. It has not been released to date.
- The USDA Forestry Service, as well as PAPHIS cites proactive measures like stricter inspections of wood products and wood shipping containers, lighting near ship loading docks, increased public awareness, and diversifying our forests as means to prevent and reduce the severity of future outbreaks of exotic pests in the future.



The preceding highlights were extracted from the Imported Pests and Pathogens Conference from presentations given by the following individuals:

- Palm, Mary, Aphis/PPQ/USDA Beltsville, Maryland. **Invasive Fungi: Identification, and Safeguarding Plant Resources (Powdery Mildews as Examples).**
- Kenney, Michael, USDA/PPQ JFD. **Plant Quarantine on the Front Line at Kennedy Airport (The Size of the Problem).**
- Brasier, Clive, Alice Holt Lodge, Surrey, UK. **The World-Wide Distribution of a Tree Disease (Dutch Elm Disease).**
- Smart, Christine and William Fry, Cornell University. **Implications of New Importations of a Plant Disease Pathogen (Potato Late Blight).**
- Anagnostakis, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), New Haven, CT. **The Effect of Multiple Importations of Pests and Pathogens of Native Trees (Chestnut Blight and Ink Disease).**
- Hillman, Bradley, Rutgers University. **Viruses of Plants and Fungi, Good and Bad (Hypovirus, Plum Pox.)**
- Elmer, Wade H., CAES, New Haven, CT. **Seeds as Vehicles for Pathogen Importation.**
- LaMondia, James a. and Donald E. Aylor, CAES, New Haven, CT. **Epidemiology and Management Introduced Pathogen (Blue Mold).**
- Weseloh, Ronald M., CAES, New Haven, CT. **From Unappreciated Import to Unanticipated Control (Gypsy Moth).**
- Maier, Chris T., CAES, New Haven, CT. **Pest Status, Ecology, and Control of Well Established Fruit Tree Pests (Leafminers).**
- Ferro, David, UMass. **Management and Biology of a Well Established Crop Pest (Colorado Potato Beetle).**
- McClure, Mark S., CAES, New Haven, CT. **Effect of Weather and Predators on Imported Insect Pests (Hemlock Woolly Adelgid).**
- Klein, M.G., USDA/Ohio. **Understanding and Suppressing Imported Pests (Scarab Beetles).**
- Souto, Dennis, USDA Forest Service/NH. **Managing Exotic Forest Insects (Asian Long-horned Beetle).**
- Haack, Robert, USDA Forest Service/MI. **Evolving Management Strategies for a New Exotic Forest Pest (Pine Shoot Beetle).**

#### A Comment from a Fellow MG ...

The following email was received from Judy Davies after having read the article on the Benton Homestead in the Nov./Dec. issue ...  
 "The Benton Homestead ... mentioned that to get Sweet Joe Pye 'required a couple of hikes into the woodlands to retrieve good specimens.' I hope this was on the Benton property or of one of the project participants', because it's a 'no-no' to pick wild plants from the woodlands."  
 Thanks for that reminder Judy!



## New England Primroses

The following primroses are woody, hardy; requiring water in drought conditions:

*Primula veris* is the English "cowslip". Bell-shaped flowers, slightly nodding, are available in the original yellow shade as well as orange, red and russet.

*Primula vulgaris* is the species native to Europe. Single soft yellow flowers on 10" stems provide the parentage for the modern hybrids of pink, purple and varying colors.

*Primula x juliana* hybrids are colorful forms developed from *P. juliae*, *P. veris*, *P. vulgaris* and other species. Hybrids do not breed true from seed but are easily divided. Proven examples include 'Jay Jay', 'Dorothy', 'Snow White', and the true 'Wanda' (not hybrids or strains).

*Primula sieboldi* is the species from Japan. Each seed provides a plant with its own delicate flower form on 9-12" stems; star-like lacy, rounded, each differing from the next (like snowflakes), and in shades of white, lavender, pink and red. They go dormant in the heat of summer, offering welcome underplantings for hostas and/or rhododendrons.

*Primula denticulata* is the unusual ball-like "drumstick" primrose. Coming from the Himalayas, it is a very early spring bloomer striking with its tall blossoms. *Denticulata* varies in color from lavender, lilac, white, red and shades of pink. It is the least demanding primrose, only requiring good drainage in winter.

*Primula polyanthus* is a hybrid, not a species, developed from the cowslip, oxslip and other primroses. Rich color combinations including pastel tones, reds, oranges, yellows, blues, white, bronze, purple and velvet shades to almost black always entice the fancier.

*Primula kisoana* is a surprising Asian primula with wide, hairy leaves and stalks and flowers covered with white fur. This species is available with rosy, dark-eyed or white with greenish, yellow-eyed blossoms. Rarely available from seed, *kisoana* develops new plants underground and is easily divided.

*Primula japonica* is more moisture loving, suited for creek, bog or pond sites. It's an easy candelabra-type with several tiers of white, pink, red or almost purple flowers. Its spectacular displays attract hummingbirds and humans alike! This species generously seeds itself when located on the banks of a stream or in moist woods.

Thanks so much to the New England Chapter of The American Primrose Society, who so generously provided this starter list (found in their brochure). Recently reactivated in October, 1999, the purpose of this society is to bring the people interested in *Primula* together in an organization to increase the general

knowledge and interest in collecting, growing, breeding, showing and their use in landscapes and gardens. If you are interested in more information about the NE Chapter of The American Primrose Society, please contact:

Mary Irwin  
6 Spruce Mountain Terrace  
Danbury, CT 06810  
Email: scmgirl77@aol.com

Some primrose websites of interest are:

[www.americanprimrosesoc.org](http://www.americanprimrosesoc.org)  
[www.primulaworld-\(wonderful photos!\)](http://www.primulaworld-(wonderful%20photos!))  
[www.egroups.com/group/primulas/](http://www.egroups.com/group/primulas/)

For further information about these websites, email

## CLASSES IN NEW CANAAN

The Continuing Education Dept. of The NY Botanical Garden is offering the following courses at the New Canaan Nature Center in January and February, 2001. To register, or for more information, call (718) 817-8747. You must be a member of the NY Botanical Garden to qualify for member rates.

**Getting Started with Perennials** - Fri., Jan. 19, 10am-2:30pm - WI-GAR-171B - \$42/member - \$46/non.

**Garden Gate** - Sat., Jan. 20, 10am-2:30 pm - WI-GAR-277B - \$42/member - \$46/non.

**The Heirloom Garden** - Tues., Jan. 23, 6:15pm-8:15pm - WI-GAR-190 - \$32/member - \$35/non.

**Top Landscape Perennials** - Thurs., Jan. 26, 10am-2:30pm - WI-GAR-255 - \$42/member - \$46/non.

**Plant Combinations with Perennials** - Fri., Jan. 26, 10am-2:30pm - WI-GAR-173C - \$42/member - \$46/non.

**Specialized Pruning** - Sat., Jan. 27, 10am-2:30pm - WI-GAR-175B - \$49/member - \$53/non.

**Flower Gardening II** - 3 Fridays, Feb. 2-16, 10am-2:30pm - WI-GAR-342C - \$195/member - \$216/non.

**Getting Started in Design Work** - Sat., Feb. 10, 10am-1pm - WI-LAN-270B - \$31/member - \$35/non.

**Fundamentals of Gardening I** - 4 Fridays, Feb. 23-Mar.16, 10am-1pm - WI-GAR-301C - \$194/member - \$216/non.



## NE DISTRICT NEWS

Plans are being made in Tolland County to organize local "Town Meetings" in each town in the County, to make it possible for Master Gardeners in each town to meet and get to know each other.

Dates have been set for the following Tolland County towns:

**Andover** - Sat. Feb. 17th, 2:00 pm  
Host: Linda Gardiner

**Coventry** - Wed., Feb. 28th, 7:00 pm  
Host: Teresa Hessler

**Hebron** - Thurs., Feb. 8th, 7:00 pm  
Host: Susan Gagliardo

**Vernon** - Mon. Feb. 26th, 7:00 pm  
Host: Marilyn Ganley

If you live in one of the above towns, please watch your mail for further details and directions.

Volunteers are needed to open their homes as hosts for their own town's first meeting ... There's no commitment or obligation past the first meeting, I promise! If you are interested in being a host, please give Mary Collins (Tolland County MG Program Coordinator) a call at (860) 875-3331 or at home at (860) 228-8230. Further details will be shared at the meetings.

\* \* \* \* \*

The MGs at the Vernon Ext. Center hope to hold a tag sale to raise money sometime in the late-spring/early-summer. Before we can begin to appeal for tag sale donations, WE NEED A PLACE TO STORE THEM! Anyone with a bit of storage space that we may use, PLEASE give Mary Collins a call, either at (860) 228-9436, or at the Vernon Ext. Center. THANK YOU!

\* \* \* \* \*

In Willimantic there are great plans in progress ... the Windham/Willimantic Parks & Rec is, with cooperation from the Windham Mills Corp., creating a "Bridge of Flowers" on the old Jillson Hill Bridge located across from the Textile Museum. Plans include raised planters/beds with UConn supplying landscape architectural and irrigation design and support. An outstanding outreach opportunity, watch future issues of The Laurel for further information.

*"Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who know me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow."*

~ a quote by Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)



## NW DISTRICT NEWS

MG Open House - Mark your calendar - the next open house will be Sat. Jan. 27th, 11am-2pm, at the West Hartford Cooperative Extension Center - 4th floor. All are welcome! Come join us for some winter warmth and share gardening stories. For more info, please call Katie Melvin, Hartford County MG Program Coordinator, at (860) 570-9013. Come see what we've been up to!

## SW DISTRICT NEWS

Some new programs at the North Haven office include:

Working with school-age youth learning how to garden - and why - on their school grounds.

Community garden establishment and maintenance in local areas, including New Haven;

Working with high school summer school students in "summer ecology camp" where they will try to have their gardens supply food of their own school lunches ...

Working with a community to try to grow herbs and veggies for possible marketing and to provide for local soup kitchens;

Working with challenged adults and working with seniors at retirement communities to establish and maintain the area.

These would be excellent opportunities for those seeking Advanced MG status, as well as for those who want to help educate the communities around them. Anyone interested should contact MG Program Coordinator, Mira Schachne (see page 2).

## FAIRFIELD COUNTY

"Decorating the Bartlett" inside and outside with the assistance of Santa and his elves at a wreath-making workshop. Attilo Soprano cut greens that heaped the tables high in the Bartlett's Education Building for Santa (Director Michael Harvey) and his elves (MGs Cheron, Hillary and Pat, plus Bartlett volunteers Alice and Pat) for making wreaths, a mantle piece and baskets for the Bartlett's Visitor Center Building and wreaths/decorations for the homes of all the helpers. Elf Cheron Barton, instructed us all in the how-to; Hilary Forsyth brought her CD player and Christmas carol CDs, providing us with Christmas Spirit. We wish all our fellow MGs Holiday Greetings and a Happy New Year! If you are interested in getting involved with other MGs at the Bartlett Arboretum, or elsewhere in the Stamford area, contact Hilary Forsyth at (203) 353-9847.



## SE DISTRICT NEWS

The Norwich Extension Center received a landscape face-lift this fall. Master Gardeners from the classes of 1999 and 2000 have contributed their time and effort to create a lovely perennial garden at the entrance to the center. Perennials were generously donated by The Judge's Farm in Old Lyme (quality Christmas trees also available). Donations were also received from the Extension Council and the UConn MG. program.

30 certified Master Gardeners and students attended an Open House on October 5th at the Center. This Open House is the first of a series of events designed to strengthen our Association state-wide (see article on page 6).

The accessible greenhouse at Camp Harkness is 75% complete, thanks to volunteers and friends. It is BEAUTIFUL and we look forward to our first program later this year or early 2001. Anyone wishing to volunteer, please contact Julia Griswold (see pg. 2).

In addition to acquiring a new landscape, the Center's MG program has received another generous donation of 2 computers from General Dynamics Electric Boat, the workplace of Jerry McIntyre, Class of 2000. Thank you EBGD and Jerry for helping the program to enter the 21st century!

A Master Gardener is needed to teach 15 students for two 1-week sessions in a new greenhouse or classroom at Ella Grasso Tech. The dates are Feb. 19-23 and April 16-20, 2001, from 9:30 am -2:30 pm. This is through the LEARN program. Botany/plant-related instruction is desired and can be very flexible, including hikes or other outdoor activities. Since it's school vacation weeks, your own children would be welcome. If interested, contact Connie at [cverkade@learn.k12.ct.us](mailto:cverkade@learn.k12.ct.us) or at (860) 434-4890.

## Letters to the Editor

We have been asked to consider a section of the newsletter for "Letters to the Editor." Since actual letters to the co-editors are few and far between, we don't feel it necessary at this time to have an on-going column committed to that subject, HOWEVER, we are ALWAYS happy to include letters from the members. Should you have a topic or concern of a gardening nature you wish to share with the membership, PLEASE feel free to send a "Letter to the Editor," and we'll do our best to include it in an upcoming issue of the newsletter, space permitting. Remember, first received, first printed!

CMGA

The Laurel 15

### CMGA Financial Statement - Jan. 2000- Dec. 2000

BANK ACCOUNTS: (as of Dec. 1, 2000)	
Money Market Savings	\$ 7,423.38
Checking	461.67
1 Year CD	10,123.69
<b>TOTAL ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>\$18,008.74</b>
INCOME:	
Dues	\$ 5,450.00
Current MG Students	2,440.00
Donations	35.00
Interest from above accts (\$332.44=\$mkt / \$13.50=ck)	345.94
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 8,270.94</b>
EXPENSES:	
Admin. - President	\$ 763.90
McNeil	127.92
Bank Fees	163.46
District Mtgs.	133.80
Check Order	9.25
Total Admin.	\$ 1,198.33
Newsletters	8,843.90
Member Directories	1,691.34
CMGA Donations/Gifts	
Harkness Greenhouse	1,000.00
Scholarship Fund	2,000.00
Hillstead Tree	105.00
Flower Show Bags	518.00
Sustainable Garden	100.00
Abington Garden	302.00
Total Donations/Gifts	\$ 4,025.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$15,758.57</b>
CMGA Trips - Income \$5,052.00 / Expenses \$5,264.00 / Net =(\$212.00)	
Fundraising - Income \$4,320.00 / Expenses \$2,620.00 / Profit =\$1,700.00	
Symposium - Income \$7,680.00 / Expenses \$4,214.00 / Profit =\$3,466.00	
Respectfully submitted: Lucy Goodridge, CMGA Treasurer - Rev. 12/18/00	

## JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM!

A Junior Master Gardener program is in the works! Volunteers are needed to help run the program, which will start this spring at the 4-H Auer Farm in Bloomfield, CT. An informational meeting will take place at the West Hartford Extension Center on Tuesday, January 16th at 9:30 am. Those interested in participating in this project are asked to come to the meeting to help plan the direction the program will proceed. For more information, call Cyndi Wyskiewicz, State MG Program Coordinator, toll-free at (877) 486-6271.





## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

If there isn't a telephone number listed by the project, contact the local Cooperative Extension M.G. Coordinator for that area (see page 2).

### SW District:

The **Scott Fanton Museum** in Danbury. Volunteers needed to help restore and maintain lovely historic gardens.

**CSI - Norwalk** - Young girls' short-term detention center. Lovey greenhouse on site. Volunteers needed to work with young girls approx. 10-14 years old. Gardening, greenhouse work and nature craft projects.

**Southbury Training School**, Dept. of Mental Retardation - Need help with many gardens. Call Volunteer Services - (203) 586-2485.

**New Canaan Nature Center** - Call Gail Egol (203) 966-9577.

**So. Stamford Community Garden** - call Chris Hadin (203) 323-1978.

### NE District

**Nature Trail** - located at the Vernon Ext. Center. Help is needed in all aspects including trailwork, field trip curriculum and promotion/marketing. Call Barry Tuttle at (860) 487-1638, or Mary Collins at the Vernon Ext. Center.

**Vernon Ext. Center** - Plans for gardens around the center to be done in the spring.

**Immaculata Retreat House** - Willimantic. Contact Marie Kuchy at 860-537-5556 or email kuchiman@snet.net

### SE District

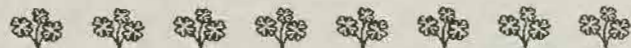
#### Community Gardening

Town of Groton — Town of Waterford

#### Gardening with Disabled

Camp Harkness, Waterford — Byran House, Haddam  
DMR Group Homes - Alliance for Living, New London

## CT Flower & Garden Show



The Home & Garden Education Center, the Soil Testing Lab & the CMGA will again have a combined booth at this event. Certified MG volunteers are needed to help run the booth and answer gardening questions. The Show runs from Thursday through Sunday, February 22-25, the hours being Thursday, noon-9pm; Friday & Saturday, 10am-9pm; Sunday, 10am-5pm. Shifts will be divided into 3 or 4 hours apiece. At least 2 volunteers will be needed per shift. Please call Bobbie Orne, CMGA Volunteer Coordinator, at (860) 875-3005, if you are interested in volunteering ... shifts will be filled on a first call basis, and fill up fast. By volunteering you will be given a free pass for parking and entrance into the event. Don't forget to visit our booth at the show!

### SE District (cont.)

#### Correctional Facilities

York C.I., East Lyme

Montville Expansion Minimum Security Facility

#### Historic Gardens

Florence Griswold, Old Lyme

Hart House, Old Saybrook

Shaw Mansion, New London

### NW District

Help needed creating a statewide community gardening information booklet and also organizing and running a statewide community gardening conference.

**W. Hartford Ext. Center** - help needed creating a garden at the Center in the spring.

**Jubilee House**, Hartford South End - teaching urban gardening.

**Hungerford Nature Center**, Kensington - creating new gardens & working with children. Call Bob Levitt at (860) 827-9064

**Plymouth Historical Society** - historic gardens

**Prime Time House**, Torrington - working with disabled clients.

**Community Gardens**, Torrington

**Auer 4-H Farm**, Bloomfield - A new Junior Master Gardener pilot - contact Cyndi Wyskiewicz (see pg. 15)

Also multiple projects - contact Beth Salsedo at (860) 570-9066.

**Please!** Tell us of outreach opportunities in your area!



## REAPING THE HARVEST!

Welcome to our new corner, for a recipe (or more), and tips for storing, growing, and preserving the season's harvest. Submittals may be sent to the co-editors (see pg. 2). Come and share "the harvest!"

Thanks to Eve Mauger, of Darien, for sharing the following story ...

\* \* \* \* \*

After reading about Lemon Balm in the November/December 2000 issue (Historical Plants), I thought that MGs might be interested in a recipe for cookies using their leaves, since they always grow so abundantly! This recipe was given to me by a dear German friend in Bellevue, Washington, so is known as

### Gaby's Lemon Balm Cookies

2 Tbsp. minced lemon balm leaves  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 cup butter, softened  
2/3 cup sugar  
1 egg  
2 1/3 cups all purpose flour  
1/4 tsp. salt  
whole lemon balm leaves for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In small dish, combine first two ingredients. Press mixture with back of spoon to blend. In large mixer bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and lemon balm mixture. Gradually beat in flour and salt. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours or until firm.

On lightly-floured surface, roll dough about 1/8" thick. Cut into 2" rounds. Arrange rounds on ungreased cookie sheets. \*\* Top each with a lemon balm leaf. Bake 8-10 minutes, or until lightly browned. Cool on wire racks.

\*\* A quicker method is to roll the dough into a sausage shape and cut into slices about 1/4" thick.



## MG OF THE MONTH!

This certificate will be awarded by the Master Gardener Coordinator Team to a Master Gardener who has shown particular energy and enthusiasm for the MG program, and has supported the program by participating in mentoring, an outreach project, or in other ways. If you know of a Master Gardener who you feel deserves such recognition, please submit their name to your local coordinator, for consideration. In addition to receiving a certificate of recognition (to be awarded at the Annual and Semi-Annual CMGA meetings), they will also be featured in The Laurel, so they can be recognized by their peers as well!

~~~~~  
The **MASTER GARDENER OF THE MONTH** certificates for January and February are being combined and shared by an exceptional group of dedicated MGs lead by Bruce Reiber (1993). This team has completed the construction of the greenhouse at Camp Harkness in Waterford, following Mary Smeraldi's extremely generous donation. These certified MG volunteers who assisted Bruce are as follows: Ken Graham (1993), Albert Romboni (1991), Mary Smeraldi (1993), Chuck Weitig (1993), Bob Regan (1999), and Dave Maria, husband of Mary Maria (1993). After several months of planning and research, ground was broken on June 13, 2000, and now, six months later, benches are being assembled, heat is on and plants have moved in. The project is a truly remarkable achievement and is an inspiration to us all. A huge **THANK YOU** to all the above people for their expertise and endless hours of hard work. Horticultural activities will be offered to challenged gardeners living in the local community, starting in January. For more information, or to volunteer, please call Julia Griswold at (860) 887-1608.

Congratulations to our most recent MGs of the Month!

## DOES ANYONE KNOW ...?

A member asks ...

"... if any one knows if the Master Gardeners' International still exists. Several years ago they published a comprehensive newsletter and were located in Falls Church, Virginia, and then suddenly they disappeared and I was unable to renew my membership or get a return phone call."

Anyone with information, please forward it to the co-editors (see page 2) and we'll gladly include it in the next newsletter.







# The Laurel



Connecticut Master Gardeners' Association



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

At this writing we are digging out from Storm Crystal. I am surveying the damage wrought by 2 hours of frozen sleet followed by snow and wind, and I am wondering how to repair the damage done to a specimen dogwood. I know that there will be other signs of this weather that will show up in the months to follow. However, I am grateful for this "real" winter, as it will make the spring seem ever so sweet.

The CMGA Symposium on March 17 will give us all some great ideas for the spring garden. Registration has been closed, as it filled up fast. We can accommodate 200 at the Symposium. In the future we may have to consider a larger venue. Manchester Community-Technical College has been a

*(Continued on page 3)*

March/April, 2001

Volume 14, Issue 2

## WINTER DREAM GARDENING

by Deb Pouech

A visit to my mailbox can bring a special treat this time of year. When the postman delivers a new seed catalog, I must take time out to put on a pot of tea, take out the marking pens and sit down to dream of the perfect garden. I mark the seeds that I want, turn down pages for future reference on tools and books that should be added to my library and gaze out the patio doors, trying to figure where to plant my new dreams.

While planning and planting your gardens this year, give some thought to the honey bees that have been devastated in the past few years due to weather and to the various mites that are preying on them. Attracting bees to your garden will also help generate seed and give you a better harvest.

One of the honeybee's favorite plants is borage (*Borago officinalis*). The flower turns from blue to pink after the bee visits. Other herbs that bees love are coriander, hyssop, thyme and sage. Bees will visit most flowers of the mint family, which includes anise hyssop, catnip, lemon balm and horehound. The bees are attracted to lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*), not for the flowers, but for the scent. It contains aromatic compounds that closely resemble bee pheromones, which are important in orientation and swarm clustering. Beekeepers have used lemon balm to rub on tree branches near apiaries to attract swarming honeybees.

Sweet clover (*Melilotus officinalis*) is a favorite and makes wonderful honey, as well as a good mulching ground cover. But red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) is another story. Bees cannot reach the nectar in the center of the red clover flower. Their tongues are not long enough. That is a job for the bumblebee. Lamb's-ears (*Stachys byzantina*), with their soft leaves and tall light purple flower spikes are easy to grow. Don't forget the dandelion. It seems to be one of the bees' favorites in the springtime. Last summer, I could not get near my chives and had to be careful when picking squash. The honeybees were all over the flowers during bloom. In the late summer and early fall, the bees will be seen buzzing all around

*(Continued on page 5)*

### Inside This Issue

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The Laurel is published by the CMGA six times a year; January, March, May, July, September and November.



Please submit any articles, suggestions or inquiries by the 10th of the month prior to The Laurel's release to:

Mary Collins  
13 Basketshop Road  
Hebron, CT 06248  
(860) 228-9436 (ans. machine)  
email: Cooknwme@aol.com  
or

Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
Quaker Hill, CT 06375  
(860) 439-0099  
email: dkak1@home.com

Please include your phone number. Space availability is on a first-received, first-printed basis. Thank you!

**NOTICE!!!** Please remember, when sending emails to the co-editors, to note the subject as being for the CMGA newsletter. Any emails received from an unfamiliar address without a subject noted will NOT be opened. Thank you for your cooperation!



## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MG COORDINATORS

### North-West District

West Hartford: Katie Melvin - (860) 570-9010  
Torrington: Karen Anderson - (860) 626-6240

### South-West District

Bethel: Sandi Wilson - (203) 207-8440  
No. Haven: Mira Schachne - (203) 407-3161  
Stamford - Bartlett Arboretum: Cheron Barton  
(203) 322-6971

### South-East District

Haddam: John Castagno - (860) 345-4511  
Norwich: Julia Griswold - (860) 887-1608

### North-East District

Brooklyn: Kim Kelly - (860) 774-9600  
Vernon: Mary Collins - (860) 875-3331

Home and Garden Center - UConn Storrs  
1-877-486-6271 (toll-free)

## 2000 CMGA OFFICERS

- President:** Wendy Drenga  
27 Maple Ave.  
East Haddam, CT 06423  
(860) 873-8145  
Email: rdrenga@snet.net
- Vice-President:** Becky Raiola-Paul  
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Guilford, CT 06437  
(860) 458-8413  
Email: R.R.Paul@worldnet.att.net
- Treasurer:** Lucy Goodridge  
90 Mountain Terrace Rd.  
W.Hartford, CT 06107  
(860) 521-9762  
Email: lucyg\_laxref@yahoo.com
- Secretary:** Susan Hendrick-Wilson  
245 Bayview Blvd.  
Stratford, CT 06615  
(203) 378-5804  
Email: sdhwilson1@aol.com
- Membership:** John Carlson  
209 Old Cart Rd.  
Haddam, CT 06438-1247  
(860) 345-8807  
Email: john.l.carlson@worldnet.att.net
- Extension Liaison:** Cyndi Wyskiewicz  
(877) 486-6271 (toll free)



(Continued from page 1)

wonderful accommodation, but we are growing! We already have over 540 renewals and new memberships for this year. Thank you for renewing early! Our membership directory will be quite extensive. Look for a new format, as we have outgrown the booklet form offered last year.

I also want to thank those members who enclosed additional contributions along with their membership renewal to help support the newsletter.

The West Hartford Open House held on January 27th was a refreshing outpouring of support from recent and not-so recent Master Gardeners (there was even a 1978 graduate in attendance). Coordinator Katie Melvin had a wonderful bagel buffet and an informative program. We enjoyed a slide presentation by Carl Salsedo, who was an Extension Educator the year I took the class. For those of you who were lucky to have Carl, well, his style hasn't flinched a bit. Katie presented some of the outreach programs that her office is doing this year. Her appeal for support was met by the sign-ups of many MGs who will help as mentors in her outreach programs.

I am encouraging all of you who want to "get back in the fold" to call your office and offer to be part of the county task force support team. Our coordinators need your help, as they only have a limited amount of time to accomplish their tasks.

Our January Board meeting was held at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington. After the meeting we were treated to a wonderful tour of the museum. The Hill-Stead hosts the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival every summer. The gardens are maintained by MGs, and last year, thanks to their efforts, the gardens were ready in time for the Festival. A beautiful brochure and map were created by Cheryl Dauphin, Class of 2000, as her outreach project. This is an example of the diversity of ideas available as outreach opportunities to Master Gardeners.

The CMGA is proud to announce that it has provided two full scholarships to students in this year's program. These scholarships will enable the recipients to enjoy the benefits we have known and to give back to their community.

We are currently taking ideas for a slogan, and ideas that will be incorporated into our Mission Statement. These will appear in our newsletter and other correspondence. We have considered having a contest to find the perfect slogan. If you have an idea for a slogan, please email me with your slogan at [rdrenga@snet.net](mailto:rdrenga@snet.net) (and also with your feelings in regard to a Mission Statement).

### WE'RE SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE!

This issue of The Laurel was delayed due to modern technology failure ... Mary's computer crashed ... and the prospect of producing a 20-page newsletter by the old-fashioned "cut-and-paste" method was just too daunting a task! Thankfully she's now up and running with a new system. Apologies to anyone who may have tried to email information to her over the past few weeks.

Please be reminded that the deadline for submitting material for The Laurel is the 10th of the month prior to publication. This deadline must be met to allow a more prompt process and publication of the newsletter. Any submittal received after the 10th will be held until the next issue, unless time and space allow otherwise. Please make sure to include your name and number, in case there are questions or concerns. Thank you!

### CMGA BOARD MEETINGS

The next CMGA Executive Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 8th, 2001, 11:00 a.m., at Elizabeth Park, Hartford.

REMEMBER ... Any and all CMGA members are welcome to attend.

Pencil in Saturday, June 23rd on your calendar ... that's the TENTATIVE date for the Semi-Annual Members Meeting ... which we HOPE to hold at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington. Watch for confirmation and further details in the next issue of The Laurel.



I am looking forward to seeing you at the Symposium. Also, be sure to watch the next issue of The Laurel for the location of the June Members meeting. I'm off to transplant delphiniums ...

*Wendy Drenga, President*



**CMGA BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Submitted by Susan Hendrick-Wilson, Secretary

Wendy Drenga, President, called the meeting to order at 11:16 a.m., January 9, 2001, at the Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington, CT

**Present:** Wendy Drenga, President; Lucy Goodridge, Treasurer; Sue Hendrick-Wilson, Secretary; Larry VanDerJagt, Past President; John Neff, Past President; Cyndi Wyskiewicz, Program Specialist Education Outreach, UConn, Storrs; Katie Melvin, MGP Coordinator, Hartford Cty.; Mary Collins, MGP Coordinator, Tolland Cty.; Rose VanDerJagt.

The Sept., 2000 Board Meeting was devoted to a discussion of the 2001 Symposium. In the absence of the Secretary, no minutes were taken.

**Treasurer's Report:**

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Certificate of Deposit | \$10,222.73 |
| Money Market Account   | 7,435.43    |
| Checking Account       | 692.78      |
| Total                  | \$18,863.72 |

215 members have renewed to date. A letter to members who have not renewed must be mailed out by the 3rd week of January, extending the deadline for appearing in the membership directory. Later renewals will receive the newsletter only. There are 540 members in the current directory.

**Old Business:**

**Symposium Update:** Larry presented the 8th Annual Symposium brochure & application. Jonas Zucker, Past President, is in charge of vendors. Speakers receive free lunches.

**2001 Flower Show:** Feb. 22-25 - Members who volunteer for 3-hour shifts at the MG booth receive free admission. \$400 approved to provide handled paper bags with CMGA logo to be given out at the booth. Mary Collins to prepare a oversized bookmark-style flyer describing the CMGA to be handed out to the public.

**Membership Directory:** Discussion tabled due to absence of John Carlson.

**CMGA Sales Items:** Items will be stored at the Home & Garden Center in Storrs. John Neff to coordinate sales. Items will be sold at Open Houses, Semi-Annual meetings and new classes. Need to order and upgrade designs of shirts. Other items considered: trowels & garden holsters.

**New Business:**

**Scholarships:** CMGA awards 2 full scholarships of \$275 each to students in the Master Gardener Program. USDA has awarded 6 scholarships for Community Gardens. Dr. Suman Singha and Nancy Weiss are UConn Scholarship contacts.

**Newsletter Costs:** The estimated cost is \$2 per member per issue and \$12 per member annually. Treasurer expends \$1,600 per issue. Larry stated the Board needs a detailed breakdown of newsletter costs in order to make informed decisions for our members.

**Banners & Display boards:** Tabled until next meeting.

**Locations for 2001 Board Meetings:**

- Tues., March 6 - North Haven Extension Center - 11 a.m.
- Tues., May 8 - Elizabeth Park, Hartford - 11 a.m.
- Sat. June 23 - Semi-Annual Member Meeting - possibly at Hill-Stead Museum.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:14 p.m., followed by a tour of the Hill-Stead Museum.

**HELP WANTED**

**HELP WANTED:** Gardening assistant needed. 12-15 hrs./wk, for perennial and shrub borders. Attitude more important than experience/knowledge. Hamden/North Haven/New Haven area. Call 203-230-1080.

Established Interior Landscape Co. is seeking an out-going, creative and energetic individual for our Sale/Design Department. Must be able to service existing accounts as well as generate new clientele. Background in Horticulture, Floral or Landscape Architecture an asset. Salary plus commission, benefits, 401K. Call (860) 242-2554; Fax (860) 243-1713 or go on-line for application at [plantationsinc.com](http://plantationsinc.com)

Garden Center/Landscape Co. in Southington area accepting resumes for the following: Garden Center Manager, Garden Center Support, Landscape Designers, Foremen. Industry leading pay rates & benefits. Call 860-378-0071.



**TRAVELING OPEN HOUSE**

The next MG Open House will be held on Sat., April 7th, from 11am-2pm in the Windham County Extension office in Brooklyn. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please come and see what outreach activities we are involved in. Meet guest speakers and other Master Gardeners from the area. To register, or for more information, please call Kim Kelly, Windham County MG Program Coordinator at 860-774-9600.



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM & THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

By Roy F. Jeffrey

The University of Connecticut is a land grant university – the only one in Connecticut. Land grant universities were authorized by Congress through the Morrill Act of 1862 to support the development of a public university in each state. UConn was founded in 1881. As a land grant university, UConn's mission is to serve the varying needs of the state's population through a combination of teaching, research and outreach functions.

At the University of Connecticut, the Cooperative Extension System (CES) is a part of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The college, as with the University, has three main mission areas – teaching, research, and outreach (including CES).

CES at UConn is part of a national program that is conducted at all land grant universities across the United States. Authorized by Congress in 1914, CES's mission in Connecticut, as in all other states, is to conduct outreach education to the State's residents as a complement to the teaching and research functions previously authorized by Congress through the Morrill (general education) and Hatch (research) Acts.

In Connecticut, we operate our outreach educational programs from eight offices located across the state. The Centers are located in Bethel, Torrington, West Hartford, North Haven, Haddam, Vernon, Norwich, and Brooklyn. The Master Gardener program is just one of a variety of program offerings extended to a wide mix of adults and youth, including – among others – nutrition, land use planning and management, water quality, family financial management, and agriculture.

At the national level, the Master Gardener program was begun at Washington State University in 1972, and is now offered by virtually all land grant universities across the country. Connecticut CES implemented our program in 1978. Well over 3,000 fellow state residents have been educated through the Master Gardener program. These thousands of Master Gardeners have offered countless hours of educational service to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of our fellow residents around the state.

Over the years, the design and management of our program has changed somewhat, but the overall goal and objectives of the program have not. Our main program thrust is to extend knowledge about horticulturally-related topics to the State's residents through a mix of educational efforts from each of our eight CES centers and through various outreach education programs conducted at the community level.

(Prepared in January, 2000, this History is now included as part of the standard text for the Master Gardener program.)

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## WINTER DREAM ... (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

goldenrod. It is rich in pollen for their winter stores. After it passes, it will be almost six months before they can forage again.

Beware of using pest controls! Even insecticidal soap will kill. Honeybees usually forage in the morning and early afternoon when the temperature is above 55-60°F. Bees will travel two to three miles from their hive for a good nectar flow. Dust and wettable powder formulations are more hazardous to bees than granules and emulsifiable concentrates. The bees may be killed while out foraging on blooming plants, but the greatest hazard is that they may unintentionally carry insecticides with pollen back to the hives.

**"What a man needs in gardening is a  
cast-iron back, with a hinge in it."**

Charles Dudley Warner  
My Summer in a Garden (1871)  
(From The Quotable Gardener  
Edited by Charles Elliott  
Published by The Lyons Press)

## LIMERICK WINNERS!

Thanks to everyone who sent submittals for our garden limerick challenge ... it was a hard decision, but two were chosen as our "winners" ...

Master Gardeners should know there's a moral  
With which they can't quibble or quarrel  
Instead of just reading  
Get on with the weeding  
MGs cannot rest on The Laurel!  
(written by Hilary Forsyth)

When the weather is mild, fair, and sunny  
I know where I'll be spending my money.  
Many plants I'll be buying  
In the fear of supplying  
The dinner of some hungry bunny.  
(written by Cindy McGranor)

Our "runners-up" will be featured in future issues of The Laurel. Thanks again for the fun!





## NOT IN MY BACK YARD

Submitted by Susan Parr, reprinted with permission from the author, Joan Enright, GCNJ Horticulture Chairman, and The National Gardener (March/April, 2000 issue).

I don't want them in my back yard, front yard, or anywhere in the neighborhood. I write, of course, of those invasive plants that sprout everywhere and are next to impossible to control. While their origins might be clouded in mystery, their presence is felt in even the best-manicured neighborhoods.

I'm not talking dandelions here. They're part of that never-ending battle we call lawn care. Nor do I refer to those freely self-seeding friends that pop up all over the yard like Johnny Jump-ups, Columbine or Cardinal Flowers. These are usually appreciated in the garden and its no real problem to keep them under control. It is the other ones you have to watch.

Every area has its own invaders and many of them started out as invited guests. Some were introduced into the garden as exciting new trees, shrubs, groundcovers, annuals or perennials. Others were introduced to serve some specific need or provide a fast growing solution to a specific problem. But then they took that leap over the garden wall and became the enemy.

Several of my neighbors wage a never-ending battle with bamboo. Years ago, someone liked and planted it but it has been a dreadful nuisance to all concerned in recent years. Its "tender" new growth will shoot up through a newly paved driveway within a few days. Plants do that. Some invasive plants increase, like bamboo, with runners under the ground. These are difficult to control because you never know where they will pop up next and their root systems can go on for yards. If you really need bamboo for a special look in the garden, get a variety that does not spread through runners but, rather, grows in clumps of increasing size. These are easier to control. Like bamboo, many of our ornamental grasses can be a problem. Be selective when choosing plants.

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), or "Purple Plague" as it is called by The Nature Conservancy, has become a menace in wetland areas. You will notice it in drainage ditches along most of our highways. It's pretty to look at and some garden centers still make it and its hybrids available, but almost half of the states in the U.S. have banned the importation and sale of this plant. It is considered a noxious weed and rates number one on The Nature Conservancy's list of "Least Wanted Species." Gooseneck Loosestrife (*Lysimachia clethroides*) is also a menace in the garden. *Phragmites australis*, the

Common Reed is another wetlands invader. Coming from Eurasia and Africa, the plant is useful in many ways. However, it spreads so rapidly and grows so densely that native plants, some fish and even waterfowl lose their habitat.

These plants that clog wetlands crowd out our native plants. Instead of maintaining diversity, the invader takes over totally. Why is this a problem? As on dry land, native plants provide food and shelter for native insects, birds and animals. Natural enemies exist to keep the natives under control. When new plants take over an area, the native plant species are over-run and native insects, fish, birds and animals lose their food supply. Invasive plants can flourish because there are no natural controls for them. New and usually unwelcome creatures might move in with the invasive plants. They too will prosper without control. There goes the neighborhood!

My small lawn has no crabgrass, probably because it was choked out by the ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) that abounds. You may see this plant recommended as a groundcover and in some areas it probably works well. *Ajuga reptans*, or Bugleweed, is a popular ground cover. It does the job in shady locations but don't use it as an edging near the grass. It will scoot across the lawn in no time. In the southeast, Kudzu vine (*Pueraria lobata*) was introduced as a fodder crop. It is also effective in controlling erosion. Now it runs rampant. Fortunately for us in the north, this plant is not winter hardy.

Our most common street tree, the Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) has established itself in our local woodlands. It has overwhelmed the native trees and changed the environment in our forests. Its dense canopy limits the under-story growth. Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) has become very invasive in some locations. It has spread into fields and woodlands, shading out native plants. Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*) has moved from the garden to the roadside and though not an immediate challenge, it is colonizing where left undisturbed.

English Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle and Russian Olive - it sounds like an international conspiracy. From White Poplar to Black Locust, the invasive plants are out there. What might seem a simple problem actually gets quite complex when you factor in the billions of dollars that these invasive plants have cost. Gardeners have been part of the problem. We plant Foxglove, Baby's

(Continued on page 7)



(Continued from page 6)

Breath, Bee Balm, Periwinkle, Bachelor's Button and Evening Primrose. We get them from our friends who have too many of them. Does this tell you something? Anytime you get the idea that a plant may be invasive, beware! Can we grow the above plants? Sure. Should we control their spread? Definitely! Bringing alien plants into the landscape is a mistake. We have so many wonderful native plants that might better decorate our gardens.

Hand pulling or hoeing is the most environmentally friendly way of controlling invasive plants. It works well for smaller plants and seedlings. Mowing also works if you get the plants before they flower and set seed. As the plants get larger, you will need to employ stronger methods. If you are digging them out, make sure to get all the roots or you may end up with several plants instead of one. If you are using a herbicide, make sure you read and thoroughly understand the label. Some of the safer ones can still be hazardous to aquatic life.

The American Nursery and Landscape Association strongly backed the Noxious Weed Coordination and Plant Protection Act (S.901), pointing out that plant protection and pest safeguarding are shared federal/state responsibilities that can only succeed with close cooperation among those involved. We can do our small part in helping to solve this nationwide problem. Information is available on invasive plants. Check with local botanical gardens, libraries, The Nature Conservancy or your Cooperative Extension Service. See what you can do to help keep invasive plants under control.

Dear Friends at the CMGA,  
As I sit by the fire with my gardening catalogs and plan for the glories of another gardening season I am reminded of you all and your generous gift of a "splurge" at White Flower Farm. Thank you so much for the gift certificate. I will surely buy something that will be a permanent marker in my garden to remind me of my time as Vice President and the friends I made during that time.  
Many thanks again — See you at the Symposium!  
Fondly,  
Marilyn Shirley

## A BIT OF HISTORY

This column features historical gardening and plant information and is also an excellent location to highlight and feature historical projects and gardens in and around Connecticut. So if your particular interest is in historical gardens and plantings, please share your knowledge!

\* \* \* \* \*

An extensive assortment of plants were used in the depiction of a typical 18th century kitchen garden at the Benton Homestead in Tolland ... and the following are just a few of those plants.

**Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)** - Fennel is one of our oldest cultivated plants and was much valued by the Romans. Roman warriors took fennel to keep in good health, while Roman ladies ate it to prevent obesity. It is one of the nine herbs held sacred by the Anglo-Saxons for its power against evil. Charlemagne declared in 812 A.D. that fennel, with its healing properties, was essential in every imperial garden. To this day, fennel is widely used for decorative, culinary, cosmetic and medicinal purposes. The bronze form of fennel, with its pink, copper and bronze leaves, is a favorite in many formal gardens.

**Rue (*Ruta graveolens*)** - Common rue was a very popular herb in early New England. Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts grew it in his Boston common garden. It was symbolic of repentance. This "herb of grace" was used to sprinkle holy water in churches. It was used as an ingredient of charms worn to ward off evil influences. During Elizabethan times, rue was used as a disinfectant in prisons and courtrooms.

**Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)** - Everyone knows about the seasoning properties of sage, but, in past times, sage was thought to be a cure-all for numerous ailments ranging from wounds and broken bones to stomach disorders and loss of memory. Drinking sage infusions regularly was recommended for a long life and the herb was regarded as a panacea.

**Sweet Woodruff (*Asperula odorata*)** - Early Saxon books of 1000 A.D. refer to this herb as being valuable in smelling salts for headaches, but it was never considered to have any medicinal value of importance. It was German custom to place sprigs in white wine because it contains coumarin, a blood thinner. Early colonists appear to have used this herb more for household purposes because of its sweet aroma.

(See page 8 for more information on Sweet Woodruff.)





## SWEET WOODRUFF

by Hillary Forsyth

*Asperula odorata* (from Latin *asper* [rough] referring to roughly hairy stems). Also listed as *galium odoratum* (from Greek *gala* [milk]). It was fed to goats to improve milk flow.

*Odorata/oderatum* = sweet-scented. Family: *Rubiaceae*  
Perennial herb - Native to Europe, N. Africa, W. Asia

Sweet Woodruff is a perennial ground cover which grows in Zones 4-8, in partial shade, and requires moist, well-drained soil. The plant slowly forms loose clumps, 6 to 8 inches tall, each stem having 2 or 3 whorls of mid-green, sandpapery leaflets about 1 inch long. In April to May, clusters of tiny, star-shaped flowers give a dainty appearance against the green background of the leaves. The small, round fruits are covered with hooked bristles.

To appreciate the sweet fragrance of this plant, pick a couple of leaves. At first, the leaves only smell 'green', but after 15 or 20 minutes, you will notice a sweet, musty smell, like new-mown hay, which the leaves retain for several weeks. The scent of Sweet Woodruff is that of coumarin, a fragrant organic compound. To harvest this plant, it is best to cut stems in spring, just before or during flowering.

In the Middle Ages, Sweet Woodruff was said to 'make the heart merry and help the liver'. It was also used as an herbal tea, to flavor May wine, in potpourri and herb pillows. Dried sprays will remove mustiness from cupboards and closed bookcases.

The related *Galium verum* is commonly referred to in Europe as Lady's Bedstraw: the dried stems were used to stuff mattresses (perhaps only ladies had mattresses?). Sweet Woodruff was used as a strewing herb, i.e. scattered on the floor to mask less salubrious odors. The herb was also used to curdle milk.

In my garden (Stamford suburbia, south of the Merritt Parkway), Sweet Woodruff is happily establishing itself as a ground cover under trees in not-very-moist soil. The plant is not evergreen and does disappear when the real cold sets in. In February, new shoots will appear and show even through the late snows and frosts, bringing a welcome, bright green-ness to the

early spring landscape. The masses of white flowers and new green leaves are a perfect foil for the bright yellow of daffodils and forsythia, and the foliage of the developing Sweet Woodruff plants helps to hide maturing daffodil leaves.

Throughout the summer, Sweet Woodruff provides a soft, green ground cover, lighter and more airy than the more commonly grown pachysandra. Is Sweet Woodruff invasive? Well - I don't think you should try to grow it as an edging plant in your flower border - stick to the ground cover concept. Sweet Woodruff is shallow-rooted, so when it starts taking up too much space, it is easy to dig up and divide. Spring is the best time to do this.

As far as I know, Sweet Woodruff is not a plant that deer regard as food. I hesitate to state that it is deer-proof, but so far, so good! It is certainly a good plant to grow as a ground cover under trees - far better than grass, or expanses of wood chips. Try growing Sweet

Woodruff on a shady slope, combined with *Ajuga reptans* (Bugleweed) and *Lamium maculatum* or *Lamiastrum*. This plant is also "crush-proof" so is an excellent candidate for growing between flagstones in light-traffic areas, or next to pathways. In my experience, Sweet Woodruff does not suffer from any diseases, and is generally a care-free addition to any shady garden.

### Bibliography:

*Dictionary of Plant Names* - Allen J. Coombes  
*The History & Folklore of North America Wildflowers* - Timothy Coffey  
*The Perennial Garden* - Jeff & Marilyn Cox  
*All About Herbs* - Janet Dampney & Elizabeth Pomeroy

**"Is Sweet Woodruff invasive? Well - I don't think you should try to grow it as an edging plant in your flower border - stick to the ground cover concept."**

## ADVANCED PROGRAM

The Advanced MG program brochure for Spring 2001 is finally ready and is in the mail. Classes are expected to fill up fast, so don't delay, get your registrations in today! If anyone did not receive their copy yet, please call Cyndi Wyskiewicz at the Home and Garden Education Center, toll-free at 1-877-486-6271.



## BOOK REVIEW

by Tulay Luciano

Choosing Plant Combinations, by Cathy Wilkinson Barash, Des Moines, Iowa; Meredith Books, 1999. Better Homes and Gardens books. 264 p. ISBN: 0-696-210114-2. Contains an index and color pictures.

The purpose of this book is to plant combinations as a basis to create an artistic garden, thus saving the gardener time, money and frustration. The book contains the plants common to the United States and Canada.

The book is divided into three main sections: Color, Form and Index. The Color and Form sections are further divided into "single", "subtle" and "bold" sections. Under each combination there is a brief description of the scheme, such as "Find the central theme: the similar shapes of flowers and seed heads make for dynamic partners." (p. 160). Each plant combination includes alternative combinations. Coleus is the most repeated plant. Subtle color combinations consist of pale or pastel colors.

The Form section examines the overall plants with their leaves and flowers included for their shapes, growth habit, size and texture. Single form combinations include plants, flowers, or leaves of the same shape, as well as similarly-textured plants. The combination can be very simple, such as in the combination of several daisy-like flowering plants together. Subtle form combinations are created with an addition of different form within the single form, such as adding a pompom dahlia to the daisy-like flower grouping. Bold forms are achieved with contrasting the forms, such as fuzzy leaves with spiny ones.

The Index section is an alphabetical listing of the plants mentioned in the book. The plants are listed with their common names. Under each plant name, there is a list of its botanical name, type (annual, perennial, bulb, etc.), height, time of bloom, color of flower, hardiness zones, and light requirements.

Every plant combination has an interesting title, such as "burn up the heat with fiery colors". Quality of the photos are excellent, too excellent to believe that they are real. The jacket of the book mentions that the photographs were from gardens across America, however, no credit was given for them. Although a good print size (sometimes large) is used, reading is sometimes not easy, even frustrating, due to the background of some pages are in color and the print on them is white.

Overall an excellent book to get good ideas for creating beautiful borders.

## PLANT MICROPROPAGATION AREA MEETING SCHEDULED

The Eastern Region of the International Plant Propagators' Society (IPPS) and the University of Connecticut have planned an Area Meeting specifically on Plant Micropropagation. The meeting will be held at UConn in Storrs on Wed., March 21.

The keynote address will be made by Deb McCown of Knight Hollow Nursery in Wisconsin. Deb has been in the plant micropropagation/nursery business for 20 years and grows more than 100 clones. The majority of the plants that Knight Hollow Nursery propagates are ericaceous, however their business still demands that they make 13 different media recipes. Dr. McCown is a past president of the IPPS and has given several presentations relating to micropropagation. Her presentation, "Problems up Upscaling Production Including Scheduling and Record-Keeping" will review the problems of up-scaling production, going from hundreds to thousands.

Other speakers during the meeting include Ken Torres, President of PhytoTechnology Labs in Kansas, who will speak on new products for plant tissue culture. A few university personnel will address the group, including Sherry Kitto from the University of Delaware who will speak on the micropropagation of native plants; Mark Bridgen from UConn, speaking on avoiding mutations in a clonal system; and Mark Brand, also from UConn, who will talk about tissue proliferation. Kent Kratz from Just-for-Starters in Eastford will speak on developing spread sheets for cost accounting and scheduling. Bobbie Rose, who started Clinton Nursery's laboratory a few years ago, will review her experiences starting up a micropropagation lab.

After the speakers have given their presentations, several experienced micropropagation laboratory managers will serve on a question and answer panel. This session will allow members of the audience to ask questions in the spirit of the IPPS motto: "To Seek and Share."

At the end of the meeting, a tour of UConn's new Agriculture Biotechnology Building and its micropropagation service facility, ConnectiCulture, will be given. A demonstration of the Biolistic Particle Delivery System (Gene Gun), used for genetic engineering, will also be given.

For registration information, contact Dr. Mark Bridgen at 860-486-1945, or email [bridgen@uconn.edu](mailto:bridgen@uconn.edu).



## INVASION OF THE MILE-A-MINUTE ANNUAL VINE

by Rose Hiskes

Help is needed! Mile-a-minute, *Polygonum perfoliatum*, an invasive annual vine, has been found in Fairfield County, Connecticut. Every gardener in the state needs to be on the lookout for this plant. If you find a plant fitting the description below, please bring or mail a sample of the plant to Donna Ellis, Dept. of Plant Science, Unit &-4163, UConn, Storrs, CT 06269-4163. If mailing a sample, please protect it by using a bubble pack or cardboard. A website on invasive plants, with images of mile-a-minute, is available at: [www.eeb.uconn.edu/invasives](http://www.eeb.uconn.edu/invasives).

**Description:** Mile-a-minute's light green leaves are simple, alternate and in the shape of an equilateral triangle, one-inch to three-inch long and wide. Recurved spines are found on the green stems, petioles and leaf undersides along the veins. Thus, another common name for this plant is devil's tearthumb. At each node on the stem is a large green saucer-like bract. The stems are reddish near the soil line. Individual plants, while poorly rooted, can grow up to 25 feet per season. Inconspicuous flowers ripen into clusters of blue-purple fruit that look like the blooms of grape hyacinth.

**Life Cycle:** In Connecticut, mile-a-minute seed germinates from late April through June. Plants grow until our first frost, which can be as early as late September or as late as the end of October. Young leaves found on seedlings are more elongated and lack spines. Flowers form in midsummer and ripen into viable seeds from late July through frost. Studies have shown that seeds are viable for at least 18 months.

**Habitat:** Mile-a-minute loves moist, well-drained soil and full sun, but will grow less vigorously in shaded areas with drier soil. It is most frequently found at the edges of fields, woods, nurseries and roadways.

**Dispersal:** Since this plant is an annual, its only chance for dispersal is by seeds. Birds and rodents eat the fruit and the viable seed passes through the animals. Fruits also can be dispersed in surface water such as streams or brooks filled with the fall rains.

**"Mile-a-minute's  
prolific growth -  
up to six inches per  
day - and abundant  
seed production  
make this plant a  
public enemy."**

One of the earliest records of mile-a-minute is from a nursery in southeastern Pennsylvania. It is thought they accidentally imported the seed in rhododendrons from Asia. Seeds may be mixed in the soil of nursery stock containers and moved with the plant from nursery to retailer to home landscape. Mulch producers may also unknowingly spread mile-a-minute seed in their products.

Mile-a-minute's prolific growth - up to six inches per day - and abundant seed production make this plant a public enemy. The spines help the vine grow up and over shrubs and small trees, thus killing native plants and other invasives - such as multiflora rose and Japanese honeysuckle - by blocking sunlight from reaching the foliage.

**Where to Look:** In the spring, when walks in the woods and gardening resume, keep an eye out for the triangular light green leaves and vining habit of mile-a-minute. Look along streams in sunny spots in minimally managed areas such as wildlife sanctuaries or state forests.

Also look in nurseries and garden centers as you shop for plants. Inspect plants before you purchase and during installation, and also during the first and second year after planting, because seeds can stay viable over two winters.

**Management:** Mile-a-minute seedlings easily can be pulled. Mature plants also can be pulled because of how weakly they are rooted, but be sure to wear heavy gloves to protect hands. Mowing prior to seed production will prevent the plants from reproducing. If a large patch is found, professional advice should be sought immediately. Call Todd Mervosh, Valley Lab, CT Agricultural Experiment Station at 860-683-4982, or Donna Ellis, UConn, at 860-486-6448.

#### References:

- Abby, T. 1999. *Mile-a-minute. Invasive Plant Information Sheet.* [www.eeb.uconn.edu/invasives](http://www.eeb.uconn.edu/invasives).
- Fredericks, J., 1998. *On the lookout for mile-a-minute: A new season.* Mile-a-minute InfoLink USDA Forest Service, Morgantown, WV.
- Johnson, C.F., 1995. *Achene germination, viability in the soil seed bank and abundance in the soil seed bank for the exotic invasive mile-a-minute.* Conference Proceedings, Penn. State.

Many thanks to Rose Hiskes, and the Connecticut Horticultural Society (CHS), for allowing us to reprint this important article. CHS Newsletter -Vol. 44, No. 4; January, 2001. Anyone interested in more information regarding the CHS, may call 860-529-8713, or email [cthort@connix.com](mailto:cthort@connix.com)



## UPCOMING EVENTS, LECTURES & CLASSES

### NE District

**HerbFest of Connecticut**, sponsored by **CT Herb Assoc.**, at Topmost Herb Farm, Coventry, CT - Sat., June 2nd. Workshops, weed walks, vendors, refreshments and children's programs. Contact Carole Miller at 860-742-8239 or email [chaherbfest@hotmail.com](mailto:chaherbfest@hotmail.com)

#### **Gazebo Garden Series**

Instructor: Astrid Belanger, MG  
Gazebo Gardens, 54 Hennequin Rd., Columbia  
Tues. March 27, 7 - 9 pm - **Secrets of the Gardens**  
Sat. April 21, 2 - 4 pm - **Plant Division**  
Sat. May 19, 2 - 5 pm - **Designing a Rock Garden**  
Tues. May 22, 6 - 8 pm - **Propagation by Cuttings**  
Sat. May 26, 2 - 4 pm - **Garden Tour**  
Fee: \$24 each - for further information, contact **EASTCONN** - Windham - 860-423-2591; Danielson - 860-779-3770

Another **EASTCONN** offering:

#### **Attracting Birds & Butterflies**

Instructor: Bettylou Alexander, of Bettylou's Gardening  
Monday, April 9 - 6:30 - 8:30 pm - Fee: \$24  
Putnam High School, Putnam  
For further information, contact **EASTCONN** at the numbers noted above.

### SE District

#### **East Lyme Public Library - Garden Programs**

Wed., March 21 - 7 pm - **Preparing for the Garden Season** - Master Gardeners will discuss soil preparation, buying or starting plants, successful garden practices, controlling garden pests, and diseases, and answer your questions.

Wed., April 18 - 7 pm - **Landscape Design is Problem Solving** - Master Gardener JoAnn Greenwood of JoAnn Greenwood Associates will present a slide lecture on common landscape problems and techniques for solving them.

Wed., May 16 - 7 pm - **Gardening with Wildflowers** - Master Gardener Florence Marrone will present a slide program on wild flower varieties best suited for Connecticut.

Registration required - call 860-739-6926.



## CMGA The Laurel 11

**Haddam Land Trust Plant Sale** - 2 Sats. May 5 & 12, 9 am - 4 pm - Rain or Shine ... at the Town Green, Higganum, intersection of Rtes. 154 & 81 - featuring native plants, unusual perennials, shade plants, wide variety of ferns.

### SW District

**Spring Garden Fair - Bartlett Arboretum Association**  
Sat., May 12 - 10 am - 4 pm - Rain or Shine - 151 Brookdale Rd., Stamford, CT - Members Preview 8:30 - 10 am.

**Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society - 3rd Annual Plant Sale** - Sat., April 28th, 10 am - 3 pm. Hamilton Ave. School Cafeteria, 184 Hamilton Ave., Greenwich, CT. Perennials, temperennials, annuals, herbs, vegetables & small shrubs. Seminars include:  
10:15 am - **Using Perennials & Annuals** - Carrie Greenwald  
11:15 am - **Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants** - Jim Carr  
1:15 pm - **Container Gardening & Demo** - B.B. Stamats

**Green Fingers Garden Club - Bloemenfest - A Major Flower Show Celebrating Holland's Flowers and Gardens** - March 9th - 11th - Fri. 10 am - 5 pm; Sat. 12:30 - 5 pm; Sun. 11:30 am - 3 pm - Christ Church Parish Hall, 254 East Putnam Ave., Greenwich, CT - Free Admission.

Courses offered at the **New Canaan Nature Center**:

**Flower Gardens for Shade** - Fri. March 23 - 10 am - 2:30 pm - WI-GAR-130 - Jane Brook Barba - \$42 members; \$46 non-members

**Renovating the Home Landscape** - 2 Sats. March 24 & 31 10 am - 1pm; WI-GAR-126 - Paul Trader - \$62 members; \$69 non-members

**Practical Pruning Workshop** - Sat. March 24 - 10 am - 2:30 pm - WI-GAR-237B - B.B. Stamats - \$47 members; \$52 non-members

**Cutting Garden** - Sat. March 24 - 10 am - 1 pm WI-GAR-219B - Jane Brook Barba - \$32 members; \$35 non-members

For further information, call 718-817-8747.

### NW District

Let us know what's happening in your area!



MG OF THE MONTH!

This certificate will be awarded by the Master Gardener Coordinator Team to a Master Gardener who has shown particular energy and enthusiasm for the MG program, and has supported the program by participating in mentoring, an outreach project, or in other ways. If you know of a Master Gardener who you feel deserves such recognition, please submit their name to your local coordinator, for consideration. In addition to receiving a certificate of recognition (to be awarded at the Annual and Semi-Annual CMGA meetings), they will also be featured in The Laurel, so they can be recognized by their peers as well!

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March - Cheryl Dauphin, Class of 2000

Submitted by Katie Melvin

As I begin my second year as Hartford County MG Coordinator for the Master Gardener program, I am regularly amazed at the talent that the students bring into our program and the CMGA. It was not easy for me to choose a Master Gardener of the Month, because there are so many remarkable MGs in our area. The Class of 2000 from Hartford and Litchfield Counties as a whole went above and beyond when it came to their outreach projects. Since I must choose, I would like to tell you all about Cheryl Dauphin, Class of 2000.

Cheryl was one of many who answered the call to help from the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, CT. This fabulous estate boasts a lovely home full of important art, including early impressionist paintings. Master Gardeners were (and still are!) needed to help care for the beautiful sunken garden on the property. With the help from last year's class, the garden was ready for the world-famous annual Sunken Garden Poetry Festival.

So when I speak of above and beyond, what I mean is that every time Cheryl saw a need at the Hill-stead, she used her talent to help. Cheryl spent hours in the Sunken Garden, re-edging the beds so that they would reflect the original plan for the garden. When she looked at the original plan, she noticed that it was confusing and hard to read, so she used her talents as a graphic designer to create a very clear, user-friendly plan in a brochure format that is now used as a self-guided garden tour for all visitors. And she didn't stop there. Cheryl became a volunteer tour guide at the museum.

The last time that I was at the museum, I saw a permanent exhibit of historical photographs of the

museum that Cheryl developed for the property's Make-shift Theatre. This was something that the museum wanted to do for years, but due to lack of funding, could not afford. Cheryl saw a need and donated her services.

Because of the remarkable talents and seemingly endless generosity of Cheryl and other Master Gardeners at the Hill-stead, we Master Gardeners have received a lot of visibility and recognition for what we do. Each night at the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival last summer, Master Gardeners were thanked for their hard work.

Thank you, Cheryl, for being such a wonderful ambassador for our program and the CMGA.

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April - Cyndi Wyskiewicz, Class of 1997

Is there anyone in the CMGA who DOESN'T know Cyndi? It seems like she's EVERYWHERE, doing ANYTHING and EVERYTHING possible to support, encourage and improve the Master Gardener Program and CMGA as a whole.

She is the State Coordinator of the MG Program, fearless leader of the MGP Coordinators Team, overseeing the entire program, including the Advanced classes, and the newly piloted Jr. MG Program. In addition to her MG activities, she's also an Extension Educator, and diagnostician at the Home & Garden Education Center at UConn, and cookie-baker extraordinaire. She's involved with the CT Horticultural Society, American Horticultural Society and the East Hartford Garden-Club. Along with all those hats, she also is working towards her Masters in Horticulture, involved with liatris trials at the Research Farm in Storrs.

From the MGP Coordinator team, we just want to say "THANK YOU CYNDI!!!" for your support, enthusiasm, leadership, and just for being you.

\*\*\*\*\*

Congratulations to our most recent MGs of the Month!

"If one were as good a gardener in practice as one is in theory, what a garden would one create!"  
V. Sackville-West - Some Flowers (1937)  
From the book The Quotable Gardener  
Edited by Charles Elliott  
The Lyons Press - 1999





## WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY WINTER GARDENS (With a Little Help From Humans)

(Reprinted with permission from Nancy Hall, Editor; Broadcaster Newspaper - South Edition for the week of 2/9/01.)

During the colder months, most critters are "gearing up" for spring by searching for high-energy food, reliable water sources for drinking and bathing, and safe shelters from harsh weather and predators.

Now, according to the Backyard Wildlife Habitat program of the National Wildlife Federation, it's possible for backyard gardeners to make a difference for wildlife by providing food, water, cover and places for wildlife to raise young.

The easiest and best way to offer winter food for wildlife, says the agency, is by planting vegetation that produces berries, nuts or seeds. Many berry-producing shrubs native to the Northeast, such as the high-bush cranberry, sumac, and deciduous winterberry holly, produce abundant fruits that serve as an important food source for birds well into early spring.

Seed heads of wildflowers should be left rather than deadheading them. This will provide visual interest in a winter garden and feed the wildlife at the same time. Some mammals and bird species depend on these plant foods for sustenance.

Bird feeders see the most activity in winter when natural foods are scarce. The Wildlife Federation says high-calorie foods like black-oil sunflower seed and suet can provide enough energy to help birds through cold winter nights. Feeders should be protected from the wind, and kept clean to protect birds from the spread of disease caused by moldy seed or seed contaminated by droppings.

By collecting yard debris like branches, twigs and fallen leaves into a brush pile, backyard gardeners can create cover for birds and small mammals like rabbits, and at the same time offer a hibernation place for some species of turtles, salamanders and insects. Many butterfly species and other insects will lay their eggs or over-winter as pupae in brush piles.

Water can be scarce for wildlife in winter when natural sources are frozen. A bird bath may attract more kinds of birds than a bird feeder, as bathing helps birds stay warm by keeping their insulating feathers in tip-top condition. Keep the bird bath clean and free from ice, or purchase a heated bird bath.

To find out how to get your yard certified as an official Backyard Wildlife Habitat, visit the National Wildlife Federation's website at [www.nwf.org/habitats](http://www.nwf.org/habitats), or call them at 1-800-822-1919.



## 2001 PERENNIAL PLANT CONFERENCE

Tuesday, March 20th, is the date for this year's Perennial Plant Conference, organized by the Ornamental Plant Extension Team at UConn.

Held at the Lewis B. Rome Commons, on the UConn campus in Storrs, this full-day conference includes the following information-packed lectures:

- \* Marketing Herbs: Where's the Beef?
- \* Breeding Better Perennials at the Chicago Botanic Garden
- \* A Nursery of Distinction: How We Do Things at Plainview Farms
- \* Predicting the Next Stella D'Oro
- \* The Best Perennials from the Midlands
- \* Weed Management in Perennial Plant Production
- \* Herbaceous Survivors
- \* Five Steps to Successful Native Meadow Establishment
- \* Applying Period-Inspired Gardens to Modern Landscapes
- \* A Primrose Path
- \* Gardening with Moss
- \* Winter Hardy Cacti for the New England Landscape

Registration - \$60.00/person (after March 13th). For further information to register, contact Mark Brand, UConn Dept. of Plant Science, at 860-486-2930.





### NE DISTRICT NEWS

#### **New CMGA County Rep for Tolland County!**

Lloyd Hinrichs, 62 Church Street, Vernon, CT 06066 – telephone: 860-872-9720, email: mosflower@msn.com  
Welcome Lloyd!

The MGs at the Vernon Ext. Center hope to hold a tag sale sometime in the late-spring/early-summer. Before we can begin to appeal for tag sale donations, WE NEED A PLACE TO STORE THEM! Anyone with a bit of storage space that we may use, PLEASE give Mary Collins a call, either at (860) 228-9436, or at the Vernon Ext. Center, (see pg. 2) as soon as possible. THANKS!

\* \* \* \* \*

In Willimantic there are great plans in progress ... the Windham/Willimantic Parks & Rec. is, with cooperation from the Windham Mills Corp., creating a "Bridge of Flowers" on the old Jillson Hill Bridge located across from the Textile Museum. Plans include raised planters/beds with UConn supplying landscape architectural and irrigation design and support. An outstanding outreach opportunity, watch future issues of The Laurel for further information.

### SE DISTRICT NEWS

The accessible greenhouse at Camp Harkness is complete, thanks to volunteers and friends. It is BEAUTIFUL and we look forward to our first program in 2001. Anyone wishing to volunteer with this project, or other areas opportunities, please contact Julia Griswold (see pg. 2).

### WINTER ORCHIDS

*Insignis. Paphiopedilum insigne* is one of the most easily grown orchids for winter bloom. Vita Sackville-West agrees. She says a greenhouse isn't necessary; "a window-sill in a room where the temperature never dropped below 45 degrees should suffice. They do not like very strong sunlight, and they do like plenty of water."

Taken from the book  
Gardener's Latin - A Lexicon by Bill Neal  
Published by Algonquin Books  
of Chapel Hill - 1992

### NW DISTRICT NEWS

MG Open House - It was great to see so many familiar faces and meet lots of MGs from years past at the Open House on January 27th in West Hartford. Over 50 people attended at find out what we are up to in Hartford County and reconnect with the Extension office. Carl Salsedo spoke to the group about his work on sustainable landscapes and what he has been doing since leaving the MG Program. Cyndi Wyskiewicz told us about her work developing the new Advanced MG program and the pilot Jr. MG program, to be started this spring at Auer Farm. We also got to meet our new CMGA president, Wendy Drenga. Thank you all for coming!

Katie Melvin,  
MG Program Coordinator  
for Hartford County

### SW DISTRICT NEWS

A group of more than a dozen members of the 2001 MG class and affiliated Mentors of New Haven County gave up part of their Saturday recently to brainstorm ideas about community gardening. Some members of the class are already involved in local projects and shared their expertise. Committees were formed to research further information. We will be establishing a master list of community garden outreach opportunities as well as other areas for outreach. Contact Mira Schachne, MG Program Coordinator for further details (see pg. 2).

For a talk to be given about the Bambi family ... I'd like to get anyone's "homegrown" deterrent suggestions or anecdotes about your experiences with these critters. Information needed by March 28th. Contact Mira Schachne in the New Haven office (see pg. 2).

Any New Haven County Certified MG who wants to contribute time and rejoin our active group – or who needs outreach for Advanced Certification, please contact MG Program Coordinator, Mira Schachne (see page 2). Mira may also be reached by email at mschachn@canr.uconn.edu

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **New CMGA Correspondent in SW District!**

Diana Ringelheim, 121 Godfrey Road, Fairfield, CT 06432 – telephone: 203-372-8498, email: diana@ringelheim.com Welcome Diana!



## WIND CHILL

|                   |    | ACTUAL AIR TEMPERATURE |    |     |     |     |     |     |      |      |
|-------------------|----|------------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
|                   |    | 40                     | 30 | 20  | 10  | 0   | -10 | -20 | -30  | -40  |
| WIND SPEED IN MPH | 5  | 36                     | 27 | 17  | 5   | -5  | -15 | -25 | -35  | -46  |
|                   | 10 | 29                     | 18 | 5   | -8  | -20 | -30 | -43 | -55  | -68  |
|                   | 15 | 23                     | 10 | -5  | -18 | -29 | -42 | -55 | -70  | -83  |
|                   | 20 | 18                     | 4  | -10 | -23 | -34 | -50 | -64 | -79  | -94  |
|                   | 25 | 15                     | -1 | -15 | -28 | -38 | -55 | -72 | -88  | -105 |
|                   | 30 | 13                     | -5 | -18 | -33 | -44 | -60 | -76 | -92  | -109 |
|                   | 35 | 11                     | -6 | -20 | -35 | -48 | -65 | -80 | -96  | -113 |
|                   | 40 | 10                     | -7 | -21 | -37 | -52 | -68 | -83 | -100 | -117 |

This table, published by the Museum of Science in Boston, gives the effective temperature which, due to the wind chill effect, is equivalent to the actual temperature in still air. The zero wind condition is taken as the rate of chilling when one is walking through still air. Due to the present weather conditions, this chart has been printed for your personal protection.

(Reprinted from the Plainfield Post, Vol. XXIX No. 6, January 21, 2000 issue)

## SEEDLING & PLANT SALE

The Tolland County Soil & Water Conservation District is holding its 2001 Seedling and Plant Sale. The sale is its main fund raising event for the year, and all proceeds are used to fund conservation programs, environmental education and technical assistance to landowners and municipalities. Deadline for ordering is April 2nd.

Some of the selection this year includes:

**Evergreens:** Pines: White, Austrian, Scotch.

**Spruce:** White, Colorado Blue, Norway. **Fir:** Douglas,, Balsam, Fraser. American Arborvitae.

**Deciduous:** Paper/Canoe Birch, Butterfly bush/ Summer lilac, Sargent Crab apple, Snowberry, Milky Way Dogwood, American Filbert.

**Potted Plants:** Azaleas, Hydrangea, Lilac, Antique Roses, Mountain Laurel, Feather Reed Grass, blueberries

**Perennials:** *Astilbe* (Chinese Astilbe), *Caryopteris* (Bluebeard), *Echinacea* (Purple coneflower), *Galium* (sweet Woodruff), *Heliopsis* (False Sunflower) *Hosta* (Plantain Lily), *Lavandula* (Lavender), myrtle.

**Seedling Packets** for Wildlife, Hardwood or Windbreak, and **bluebird houses**.

Call Barbara Kelly at 860-870-4730 ext. 109 for more information, prices and/or an order form. Pick-up will be April 20th & 21st.

Similar sales may be being held at your local Soil & Water Conservation District ... give them a call!

## KEEP AN EYE ON THE ICE!

The figures on this table of ice strength are for clear, blue ice on lakes and ponds. Reduce strength values 15% for clear, blue river ice. Slush or snow (white) ice is only one-half the strength of blue ice and can be very treacherous. "Honeycombed" ice, which occurs in the spring or during major winter thaws as the ice is melting, is the most dangerous ice, and best avoided unless you are certain there is a safe layer of solid ice beneath the honeycombed surface. You should also be aware that many lakes and ponds contain spring holes and other areas of current that may create deceptively dangerous thin spots in areas that are otherwise safe. Always use caution, and don't venture out onto unfamiliar waters without checking ice thickness frequently.

### ICE THICKNESS

| Permissible Load<br>(in inches) | (clear, blue lake ice)         |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2                               | one person on foot             |
| 3                               | group, in single file          |
| 5                               | group (6-8 people) together    |
| 7.5                             | passenger car (2 ton gross)    |
| 8                               | light truck (2 1/2 ton gross)  |
| 10                              | medium truck (3 1/2 ton gross) |
| 12                              | heavy truck (7-8 ton gross)    |
| 15                              | 10 tons                        |
| 20                              | 25 tons                        |
| 25                              | 45 tons                        |
| 30                              | 70 tons                        |

(From the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife ... reprinted from the Plainfield Post, Vol. XXX No. 9, March 2, 2001 issue.)





## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

If there isn't a telephone number listed by the project, contact the local Cooperative Extension MG Program Coordinator for that area (see page 2).

### SW District

The **Scott Fanton Museum in Danbury**. Volunteers needed to help restore and maintain lovely historic gardens.

**CSI - Norwalk** - Young girls' short-term detention center. Lovely greenhouse on site. Volunteers needed to work with young girls approx. 10-14 years old. Gardening, greenhouse work and nature craft projects.

**Southbury Training School**, Dept. of Mental Retardation - Need help with many gardens. Call Volunteer Services - (203) 586-2485.

**New Canaan Nature Center** - Call Gail Egol 203) 966-9577.

**So. Stamford Community Garden** - call Chris Hadin (203) 323-1978.

### NE District

**Speaker needed** - **Ellington Senior Center** is looking for a speaker to talk on florals and/or ornamentals. Date flexible, late April/early May. Call Erin Granziani at 860-870-3133.

MGs wanted to give advice and assist customers at the **Tolland Cty. Soil & Water Conservation District's Annual Seeding & Plant Sale**. Fri., April 20, 2-8pm; Sat., April 21, 8am-2pm (flexible, partial shifts available), at the Tolland Agricultural Center, 24 Hyde Ave., **Vernon**. Fact sheets and reference materials will be available. Call Barbara Kelly at 860-875-3881.

**Nature Trail** - located at the **Vernon Ext. Center**. Help is needed in all aspects including trailwork, field trip curriculum and promotion/marketing. Call Barry Tuttle at (860) 487-1638, or Mary Collins at the Vernon Ext. Center.

**Vernon Ext. Center** - Opportunity to design and plant gardens around the center.

## CT Flower & Garden Show

Many thanks to the CMGA members who helped us run our joint booth this year at the show. The show was a huge success! It was busy all weekend, and we handed out tons of gardening info to the public. I look forward to working with you again next year!

Cyndi Wyskiewicz

### NE District (cont.)

**Willimantic - Bridge conversion** - get involved with converting the old Jillson Hill bridge into a walking bridge/park with flowers, trees and more! Contact the Brooklyn Ext. office.

**Immaculata Retreat House - Willimantic**. Contact Marie Kuchy at 860-537-5556 or email kuchiman@snet.net

### SE District

#### Community Gardening

Town of Groton — Town of Waterford

#### Gardening with Disabled

Camp Harkness, Waterford — Byran House, Haddam  
DMR Group Homes - Alliance for Living,  
New London

#### Correctional Facilities

York C.I., East Lyme  
Montville Expansion Minimum Security Facility

#### Historic Gardens

Florence Griswold, Old Lyme  
Hart House, Old Saybrook  
Shaw Mansion, New London

### NW District

**Jubilee House**, a community center located in **Hartford**, needs help with maintaining their garden. There is also a need to develop urban gardening classes.

We want to build a sustainable/butterfly garden on the **W. Hartford campus**. This would be a joint 4-H, MG project. We are in the early stages, but need names of people that will be willing to help.

(Continued on page 17)



## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES (cont.)

(Continued from page 16)

### NW District (cont.)

**Elizabeth Park** will be opening a visitor's center in the spring of 2001 and would like MGs to volunteer to man it on the weekends. Our job will be to answer questions about horticulture and the park. Would you be willing to volunteer for a Saturday or Sunday afternoon this summer?

There will be a **Community Gardening Conference** in Sept., more info soon. Any interest in helping plan the conference or create test plots in an existing community garden? Contact the Ext. office in W. Hartford.

The **Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington** needs volunteers for the spring and summer to help maintain the sunken garden.

**Auer Farm in Bloomfield** always needs loads of help!

**Hungerford Nature Center, Kensington** - creating new gardens & working with children. Call Bob Levitt at (860) 827-9064.

**Plymouth Historical Society** - historic gardens

**Prime Time House, Torrington** - disabled clients.

**Community Gardens, Torrington**

**Please! Tell us of outreach opportunities in your area!**

## PROJECT WILD Course Being Offered!

The DEP course PROJECT WILD will be being offered for anyone interested in this fascinating environmental educational program.

The course is being offered at the Tolland County Extension Center in Vernon on two dates ... Fri., May 11th, and Sat., May 19th ... 9:00 am-3:00 pm. You need only register for one or the other date. This course will be held indoors and out, rain-or-shine, so plan accordingly. Fee: \$25/person.

Anyone interested in becoming involved with the Nature Trail project at the Vernon office will be required to take this course, as it will be the basis of our program planning.

For further information and/or to register, please call Mary Collins at the Tolland County Ext. Center (see page 2.)

## THE ROADSIDE FARM STAND

The purpose of this column is for listing any gardening or other miscellaneous items, tools, information or plants that you may wish to find, sell, buy, barter, trade or just plain get rid of! If you would like to list in this section, please leave your name, number and a detailed message at (860) 228-9436, or contact one of the co-editors (see page 2). Your free "ad" will be run for two (2) consecutive issues, unless notified otherwise.

Looking for Lavender seeds, any cultivar, and Perovskia seeds, also any cultivar. I have *Rosa rugosa*, Israeli melon and Butterfly weed seeds to swap. Please contact Susan Hendricks-Wilson - email [sdhwilson1@aol.com](mailto:sdhwilson1@aol.com) (see page 2 for her telephone number).

For Sale - Consolidated Dutch West Wood Stove - \$450. Right-hand load. Has glass doors, screen, new blower, catalytic converter, brass trim & chimney insert. Call Linda Gardiner at (860) 742-0865.

Wanted - In Tolland County area - storage space for tag sale donations. Planning for a Master Gardener tag sale to be held in the spring of 2001. Please contact Mary Collins at the Vernon office - (860) 875-3331, or at home at 860-228-8230

For Sale: ComposTumber, large size, on legs, good condition. Paid \$450, asking \$175. Call 860-583-9553, or email [TBB910@Gateway.net](mailto:TBB910@Gateway.net)

Member interested in buying one ticket for the CMGA Symposium on March 17th ... if you've purchased a ticket, and are unable to attend, please call Lesia at 860-742-5853.

LAST CHANCE - MOVING SALE! Large/small house plants, perennials, annuals, tomato plants, herbs - also many pots (plastic & clay), trays & flats. Sale date: Wed. through Sun., May 16-20. Call Joan at 203-938-2489.





## NEW CLASS LOCATION AT THE BARTLETT ARBORETUM

by Diana Ringelheim

For the first time the Bartlett Arboretum in Stamford is hosting a Master Gardener class. Until now the people of southwestern Connecticut have always been at least an hour drive from a Master Gardener program; and this class grew quickly from the pent-up demand. While we all have common challenges as Connecticut gardeners, people living on the coast have somewhat different conditions from people living farther inland: climate, air quality, urban and suburban density being some of the most obvious. One of the greatest benefits of the Master Gardener Program is meeting people of similar experiences and interests, and the sharing of wisdom in informal moments makes us better practitioners of our craft. It is this understanding that conditions can vary in a state even as small as Connecticut that makes the regional Master Gardener Programs and Extension offices so valuable.

Many of the classmates at the Bartlett are here from distant places and are taking the course to learn about growing conditions in Connecticut. Two participants are from England (they admit that gardening is easier there!). Some are from the mid-west and southern U.S. and want to know who refills their gardens with rocks each spring. Several have been gardening for years and are wondering if their instincts are correct. Some are professional landscapers who take their work very

**“Some [classmates ...] want to know who refills their gardens with rocks each spring.”**

seriously. Others consider themselves complete novices and are amazed that they can hold their own while chatting with the pros. All are congenial, companionable, and cooperative in the spirit of Master Gardeners, interns and graduates alike.

Being so far from Storrs, the Bartlett program has created special challenges for the lecturers, who have a two-hour drive (each way), through rush-hour traffic.

Since the Visitors' Center was the Bartlett family home, the lecturers have the option of using a guest room for an overnight stay and make the 9:30 a.m. class without stress. Cyndi Wyskiewicz tested the facilities first and found them quite satisfactory and ghost-free.

Eventually we hope spring-like weather will provide an opportunity to

use the grounds of the Arboretum for some hands-on experience for the class. The conifer garden, the witch's brooms, the tropical plants in the greenhouse, the Melquist rhododendron collection, and the numerous deciduous trees will add living examples to the lectures. Ed Marrotte's diseases and insects can also be found at the Bartlett, although perhaps not as readily as elsewhere because of the professional maintenance the grounds have received. The Bartlett Arboretum is a resource for everyone interested in gardens and the natural world, and will provide an enhanced educational experience for these students and all who visit.

### A NEW LILAC FROM THE USDA

There is a new cultivar of lilac being introduced by the USDA's Agricultural Research Service called 'Betsy Ross'. This cross with *Syringa oblata*, an introduction from China, has white fragrant flowers, lush green foliage and a compact growth habit. An important strong point is its resistance to powdery mildew, the major disease of lilacs. Hardy in USDA Zones 5-7, it thrives in full sun and can be used in mass plantings, as a hedge or as a specimen plant.

(Taken from the Nov./Dec. 2000 issue of the Home & Garden News, through UConn's Home & Garden Education Center. If you are interested in subscribing to this publication, call the Center, toll-free, at 1-877-486-6271, or email ladybug@canr.uconn.edu)

### Just an observation ...

I've had the opportunity to meet many MGs since my certification in 1999, and subsequent involvement with the newsletter. I've often heard comments that MGs are disappointed there isn't more information for their particular areas ... i.e. activities, classes, outreach opportunities, etc. ... and I have to ask them, "Have you sent in happenings in your area to share with the rest of the membership?" Usually the answer is "No" ... PLEASE!!! Send in notices of up-coming events/opportunities in your area! Any and all submittals are appreciated! The Laurel can only be as good as the CMGA's membership makes it! Make this newsletter better for all of us! Thank you!

~ Mary Collins – Co-Editor



## REAPING THE HARVEST!

Welcome to our corner, for a recipe (or more), and tips for storing, growing, and preserving the season's harvest. Submittals may be sent to the co-editors (see pg. 2). Come and share "the harvest!"

### Buried Treasures

Submitted by Kim Kelly

You don't have to be Irish to love potatoes! Growing potatoes is a marvelous treat for everybody.

In my garden, harvest time is a family affair. We wait until all the vines are completely dead and the soil is dry. Cure them for 10-14 days in the dark at 45-60°F. Optimum storage is 40°F at 80-90% humidity for 5-8 months. Bulkheads, basements and garages make wonderful storage areas as long as you keep the rodents away. But even in the best conditions, some will become soft and spongy. While many of these will end up in my compost pile, quite a few will be used to make a family favorite; Rosemary Potato Boules. I over-winter my rosemary inside, so I have fresh rosemary, but dried is fine. I must confess, I am a big fan of bread machines. The dough cycle is a fool-proof, convenient method of preparing the bread dough through the first rise.

### Rosemary Potato Boules

- 1 recipe for basic white dough for your bread machine (2 lb. size, if possible)
- 1 medium sized potato
- 2 Tblsp. fresh minced rosemary (or substitute thyme)

Microwave potato until cooked through, cool completely. Scoop out and mash inside of potato to make 1 cup. In your bread machine, add ingredients in order specified by your machine's instructions, adding the potato and 1 Tblsp. rosemary with the flour. Run the 'Dough Only' cycle. Carefully remove dough onto a cookie sheet. Carefully cut into 6 squares, tucking the corners under to create a round ball. Top with remaining rosemary or sautéed onion. Let rise for 45 min. to 1 hour. Bake in preheated 375° oven until golden brown. Enjoy!



## THANK YOU!

Eleven years ago, Bob McNeil asked me if The Day would like a free garden column by Master Gardeners to replace two syndicated columns which we had dropped from publication. After some discussion, I agreed to try it and the Garden Corner was born. For the past eleven years it has been published weekly from March through October with the writers from all areas of the state identified as "a Master Gardener with the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System." It has been well received by our readers and Master Gardeners have become well known in our area.

In addition to the weekly columns, Master Gardeners have contributed many articles to our special Spring and Fall Home and Garden editions. Gardening is a popular activity and we thank all of the Master Gardeners who have provided a great variety of gardening information to our readers. We anticipate continuing to publish the columns as long as Bob and the writers are willing.

Many thanks from The Day.

Ed Murphy, Associate Editor  
The New London Day

May I add my thanks to all the Master Gardeners who have volunteered to share their gardening knowledge and educate our readers. I estimate that about 350 columns have been written by about 65 different Master Gardeners. We're looking forward to our 12th year in March. If you would like to join us, write to me at 16 Damon Heights Road, Niantic, CT 06357, or call 860-739-5134, and I will send you information.

Bob McNeil

## JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM!

The Junior MG program is moving ahead. The pilot program is going to start Sat., March 31st at the Auer Farm in Bloomfield. The class is limited to 20 students from grades 3-5. Classes will be from 10am-12pm on Saturdays for 8 weeks. Volunteers are still needed to assist with the activities. If interested, please call Cyndi Wuskiewicz at the Home and Garden Center, or Katie Melvin, MG Program Coordinator for Hartford County (see page 2 for telephone numbers).



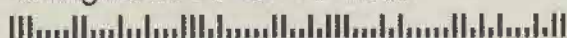
## The Laurel

CT Master Gardeners' Assoc.  
c/o Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

Next Newsletter Deadline:  
Tuesday, April 10, 2001

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## 2001 INTERNATIONAL MG CONFERENCE

### "The Magic of Gardening"

**WHEN:** May 28th - June 1st, 2001

**LOCATION:** Hilton in the Walt Disney World  
Resort (1751 Hotel Plaza Blvd.,  
Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830).

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**visit their website:**

<http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~conferweb/mg/>

**or contact:**

Tom Wichman, M.G. Coordinator  
(352) 392-8836  
twichman@ufl.edu  
University of Florida  
Environmental Horticulture Dept.  
P.O. Box 110670  
Gainesville, FL 32611-0670

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## GARDEN TOUR DIRECTORY

From an email from Richard Shaffer, Class of '99:

"... I wonder if you are aware of a great publication issued by The Garden Conservancy called Open Days Directory, 2001 Edition? It gives directions and descriptions of hundreds of private gardens open to the public on a scheduled basis, and public gardens located across the United States. Its span of time begins in March with gardens in New Orleans and Houston and continues through October for spectacular displays of fall color in the Northeast. The non-member price is \$15.95, Conservancy member price is \$10.95. Purchase includes one free admission coupon to a private garden. This year's issue includes two new indexes: Open Days by Location and Open Days by Calendar."

For further information call toll-free 1-888-842-2442, or visit their website at [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org)

Thank you for sharing, Richard!



# The Laurel



Connecticut Master Gardeners' Association



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to Spring, Master Gardeners!

An urge to rake and clean up the yard has struck, probably some primal instinct to uncover signs of life, anything that might be green and living. It is early April at this writing and the sight of a pansy in a barrel almost looks out of place in nature's ultimate plan. I have to take a cue from this and resist the temptation to fry innocent plants.

The Eighth Annual CMGA Symposium provided us with a treat to the eyes and a wagonload of great information. Kudos and thanks to the Symposium crew who put together this magnificent event: Larry and Rose Van der Jagt, John Neff, Marie Dube, Paul Grimmeisen, Cyndi Wyskewicz, Cheron Barton and ALL of the others who

(Continued on page 3)

May/June, 2001

Volume 14, Issue 3

## SEEING THE TREES FOR THE FOREST

By Sandra Wilson

I remember the first time I really saw the trees. It was in the spring after my first horticulture class. It was like looking at them for the very first time. Until that point in time, I never really noticed them. They were just green blobs that I barely glanced at while I frantically went about the hustle and bustle of my daily life. But after that class, I realized that they were out there and they were beautiful. Each tree is a unique living thing constantly changing and evolving through the seasons. Suddenly, there were the swamp maples with their red buds glowing in the spring and the oaks and beeches with leaves still clinging to them in the dead of winter. It was like finally seeing the hidden space ship in those 3-D magic eye puzzles after weeks of squinting your eyes. I was so excited!

Trees are amazing things. The more I learn about them, the more fascinated I become by them. Some trees have to huge heights and girth. The California Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) can grow to over 300 feet tall and on average may live 500 to 700 years. The largest tree east of the Sierra Nevada, a Bald Cypress, measures a whopping 53 feet in circumference! The Nature Conservancy is helping to protect this National Champion Bald Cypress at the Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana. Not to be undone, Connecticut has some giants of our own. The National Champion Butternut, is located in Chester, CT. This giant butternut is 78 feet tall, with a circumference of approximately 21½ feet! The "Notable Trees" project, a collaboration of the Connecticut Botanical Society, The Connecticut Urban Forest Council and Connecticut College, is locating these giants and trying to protect them from destruction (To learn more about this project, visit their web site at: <http://camel2.conncoll.edu/ccrec/greennet/ct.trees>).

More astounding than the stature of some trees is their longevity. Some redwoods living in the moist foggy environment of the Rockefeller Forest in California are estimated to be more than 1000 years old. The stump of the oldest known redwood is recorded at 2,200 years old. Even older trees are found among the

(Continued on page 6)

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The Laurel is published by the CMGA six times a year; January, March, May, July, September and November.



Please submit any articles, suggestions or inquiries by the 10th of the month prior to The Laurel's release to:

Mary Collins  
13 Basketshop Road  
Hebron, CT 06248  
(860) 228-9436 (ans. machine)  
email: [Cooknwme@aol.com](mailto:Cooknwme@aol.com)  
or

Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
Quaker Hill, CT 06375  
(860) 439-0099  
email: [dkak1@home.com](mailto:dkak1@home.com)

Please include your phone number. Space availability is on a first-received, first-printed basis. Thank you!

**NOTICE!!!** Please remember, when sending emails to the co-editors, to note the subject as being for the CMGA newsletter. Any emails received from an unfamiliar address without a subject noted will NOT be opened. Thank you for your cooperation!



## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MG COORDINATORS

### North-West District

West Hartford: Katie Melvin - (860) 570-9010  
Torrington: Karen Anderson - (860) 626-6240

### South-West District

Bethel: Sandi Wilson - (203) 207-8440  
No. Haven: Mira Schachne - (203) 407-3161  
Stamford - Bartlett Arboretum: Cheron Barton  
(203) 321-2826

### South-East District

Haddam: John Castagno - (860) 345-4511  
Norwich: Julia Griswold - (860) 887-1608

### North-East District

Brooklyn: Kim Kelly - (860) 774-9600  
Vernon: Mary Collins - (860) 870-6934

Home and Garden Center - UConn Storrs  
1-877-486-6271 (toll-free)

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Email: [sdhwilson1@aol.com](mailto:sdhwilson1@aol.com)
- Membership:** John Carlson  
209 Old Cart Rd.  
Haddam, CT 06438-1247  
(860) 345-8807  
Email: [john.l.carlson@worldnet.att.net](mailto:john.l.carlson@worldnet.att.net)
- Extension Liaison:** Cyndi Wyskiewicz  
(877) 486-6271 (toll free)



## FROM THE PRESIDENT (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

volunteered. Our sincere apologies go out to those of you who were turned down this year. We are working on a plan to accommodate more next year.

The Hartford County MG organization has put together a plan to supplement their Outreach Program. This county task force will assist project leaders and help lighten the load of the staff. This is a great opportunity to get re-involved with your county organization. Our work as Master Gardeners needn't end with graduation. More new projects are being developed all the time, and there is a need for mentors to assist and implement.

Much of the success of the West Hartford office came about as a result of their Open House. MGs eager to get back in the fold signed up for projects, and a steering committee was formed.

We have decided to hold back printing the Master Gardener of the Month column this month. We are renewing the criteria needed to choose our MG of the month.

The Brooklyn office held their Open House on April 7, led by Kim Kelly. Despite its rural nature, 32 MGs appeared and made quick damage to the ham. Dr. Nancy Bull spoke about the importance of our program and the need to volunteer. Local outreach program representatives described their projects and had signups. The camaraderie was warm and wonderful, and there was a lot of catching up to do.

The next Open House will be held in Haddam on Thursday, July 12, at 7:00 pm. I urge all Middlesex folks to attend. If you would like to help out, call or email me.

Our next board meeting will be held Tuesday, May 8 at 11:00 am at Elizabeth Park. Call (see page 2) or email me for directions at [rdrenga@snet.net](mailto:rdrenga@snet.net).

Enough business, I need to get out and deal with those brush piles. I really need to rent a chipper, but those early childhood warnings keep popping up in my head about machinery that would eat you if you got too close (the escalators at G. Fox, snowblowers, elevator doors, lawn mowers, and does anyone remember Pigeon Hole Parking...?) so I'll think about it for a little while. Have a great spring and get your tools muddy. Off to empty a greenhouse...



*Wendy Drenga,*

President

## CMGA COUNTY REPS

### SW District

Diana Ringelheim, 121 Godfrey Road, Fairfield, CT 06432 - telephone: 203-372-8498, email: [diana@ringelheim.com](mailto:diana@ringelheim.com)

### NE District

Tolland County - Lloyd Hinrichs, 62 Church Street, Vernon, CT 06066 - telephone: 860-872-9720, email: [mosflower@msn.com](mailto:mosflower@msn.com)

Reps are still needed for other areas of the state. Volunteer today ... It's really quite painless! Contact Wendy Drenga (see page 2) for more details.

## CMGA BOARD MEETINGS

The next Board meeting will be held on May 8, 2001 at 11 am at Elizabeth Park in Hartford.

The Semi-Annual Membership Meeting will be held at Hillstead Museum on Saturday, June 23, 2001 during "Garden Weekend." Setup will be from 11-11:30 a.m.; luncheon from 11:30-12:30; meeting from 12:30-2:00 p.m.

For The September Board Meeting, the Bethel Extension Office is under consideration.

## THANK YOU!

I would like to send a very special thanks to all my Master Gardener friends who called, sent cards or even flowers during my recent recovery from a heart attack. You can't imagine the lift you gave the new guy in town.

Thanks so much!

Lloyd G. Hinrichs



**CMGA BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Submitted by Susan Hendrick-Wilson, Secretary

March 13, 2001 North Haven Extension Office

Wendy Drenga, President called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Wendy Drenga, President; Bob Sherman and Larry Van der Jagt, Past Presidents; Becky Paul, Vice-president; Susan Hendrick-Wilson, Secretary; John Neff; Paul Grimessen; Mira Schachne, Coordinator, North Haven; Sandy Wilson, Coordinator, Bethel; Rose Van der Jagt, member.

**MINUTES OF JANUARY BOARD MEETING:** Minutes of the January 9, 2001 Board Meeting were read and accepted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** There was no Treasurer's Report.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Wendy Drenga read the membership report in Membership Chairman, John Carlson's absence. There are 614 certified members as of March 12 (plus an additional 238 student Associate members). Membership cards will be distributed at the Symposium or mailed with the new directory. A motion was made and accepted to include a membership letter in the September newsletter.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Newsletter:**

**Costs:** Larry Van der Jagt presented a summary of newsletter costs that concluded that \$1.46 per copy is a reasonable cost per copy.

**Mission Statement:** Suggestions for a mission statement will be solicited in the May newsletter and voted upon at the June semi-annual meeting.

**Laptop:** Mary Collins received a donation of a laptop computer and software for newsletter use. John Neff volunteered to donate a black and white printer and cable.

**Symposium Update:** There are 230+ registrants with 30 applicants turned away. Only 30 of the 230 are not CMGA members. Paul Grimessen is now managing the concession of CMGA items.

**County Taskforce:** Larry presented a flow chart that details the workings of a typical outreach program using Hartford County as a model that could be used by other counties as well. Larry is formulating a mission statement for the Hartford County Task Force Outreach Program.

**Banners, Display Boards, Books:** Banners @ \$120 each have been approved; one for each office and one

for Hillstead. A motion was made and accepted to approve the format of the new banners.

**Scholarship:** Our \$2,000 CMGA Scholarship will be presented on March 27 at UCONN. A scholarship fund for Bob Adams is to be set up.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Newsletter Representative:** Becky Paul will represent the Newsletter at meetings of the Board.

**Putnam H.S. Project:** The Association is not donating to the Project at this time.

**By-Laws:** The By-laws will not be amended at this time.

**Extension Libraries:** We need to develop a basic library list for the extension libraries as well as lists that address the specific needs of each office.

**LOCATIONS FOR MEETINGS:**

The next Board meeting will be held on May 8, 2001 at Elizabeth Park in Hartford.

The **Semi-Annual Membership Meeting** will be held at Hillstead Museum on Saturday, June 23, 2001 during "Garden Weekend." Setup will be from 11-11:30 a.m.; luncheon from 11:30-12:30; meeting from 12:30-2:00 p.m.

For The September Board Meeting, the Bethel Extension Office is under consideration.

**ADJOURN:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

**ADVANCED PROGRAM UPDATE**

Classes are filling up quickly. But we may still have room even though a registration deadline has passed. If you still want to take a class, call the Home and Garden Center (see page 2) and we will try to fit you in.

**JUNIOR PROGRAM UPDATE**

Our plans to run a trial eight-week course at the 4-H farm in Bloomfield this spring have been delayed. We are now going to try Plan B. We will run a few activities at the 4-H camp in Marlborough this July, with more planned for this fall. We will try the full 8-week class next spring. We are still looking for volunteers to help us plan these activities, if anyone is interested, please call Cyndi at the Home & Garden Education Center (see page 2).



## CMGA SEMI-ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

HILL-STEAD MUSEUM  
35 MOUNTAIN ROAD  
FARMINGTON, CT  
POTLUCK LUNCHEON AND MEETING  
In conjunction with the  
Rose and Garden Weekend  
11:00 a.m.

Our semi-annual meeting will be held at the beautiful Hill-Stead Museum set high in the hills of Farmington. Tour the museum and view the extensive Impressionist art collection, and take a stroll through the Sunken Garden, designed by Beatrix Farrand, which has been restored to period and is maintained by a very active Master Gardener Group. Hear talks by these Master Gardeners and observe artists at their easels painting en plein air. We will meet and eat in the Makeshift Theatre. Our meeting agenda will cover activities of the past 6 months and our vision for the future. For further information and a more complete agenda contact Wendy Drenga - (860) 873-8145 or rdrenga@snet.net.



### Directions to the Hill-Stead:

May be reached by I-84 E or W., Exit 39. At end of exit continue straight onto Rte. 4 W. At the first full traffic light turn left onto Rte. 10 S. (Main St.) At next light turn left onto Mountain Rd.. The museum entrance is one mile up on the left. Further information is available at [www.hillstead.org](http://www.hillstead.org).

### MISSION STATEMENT

We are seeking suggestions for a CMGA mission statement – a brief synopsis of the organization's purpose/focus.

In a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) please submit your opinion of what the CMGA's "mission" should be.

Submittals should be mailed or emailed to Wendy Drenga by June 15th (see page 2). Thank you!

## CMGA The Laurel 5



### NOMENCLATURE

Submitted by Sarael Sargent - '97

Attention MGs who are looking for correct pronunciations of plant names and especially those who took Thomas Sievel's class on Nomenclature, ED103. There is a small book, 5"x3", called The New Pronouncing Dictionary of Plant Names. This book is excellent. It can be ordered through The American Nurserymen Publishing Co. at 1-800-621-5727.

Thanks Sarael!

### ON THE ROAD AGAIN!



CMGA is on the road again! Mark your calendars! Here is the schedule for the summer trips:

**Boscobel Mansion & Gardens/Stonecrop** – New York, Wednesday, June 13th – Cost \$46.00 CMGA members, \$51.00 non-members.

**Blithewold Mansion/Green Animal Topiary Gardens** – Rhode Island, Tuesday, July 17th – Cost \$57.00 CMGA members, \$62.00 non-members – includes lunch.

**Berkshire Botanical Gardens/Naumkeag** – Mass., Tuesday, August 14th – cost \$45.00 CMGA members, \$50.00 non-members.

More trips to follow!

Also, we have had requests to try the Brandywine Valley trip again for the fall. If anyone is interested in this great trip, we will try again. However, we will need at least 40 people to confirm this trip. The cost will be around \$320.00 a person for the three days. Call Cyndi Wyskiewicz for details at the Home & Garden Center.

All trips include your admission, round trip bus transportation via Deluxe Motorcoach and driver gratuities. For more information, registration deadlines and trip flyers, call the Home & Garden Education Center, toll-free at 1-877-486-6271.





## SEEING THE TREES (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

redwood's relative, the Giant Sequoia, (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*). These trees grow in the drier location of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. One sequoia stump was confirmed to be over 3,000 years of age. Thought to be the oldest living plants on earth, the Bristlecone Pine, (*Pinus aristata*) can be found at the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest in California. Estimated to between 4,000 to 7,000 years old, these ancient pines have survived as long as recorded history!

How do some trees survive for hundreds, sometimes thousands of years? Trees have an amazing ability to wall off pathogens and insect invaders from the rest of the tree. They form chemical boundaries that help resist these unwanted invaders from spreading. Alex Shigo in his book, *A New Tree Biology*, uses the acronym CODIT - Compartmentalizing of Disease In Trees. When a tree is damaged and insects and disease attack, a reaction zone is formed that helps stall vertical, lateral and inward spread of the pathogen. If the tree was to be dissected, the reaction zone would show as discolored wood. These boundaries buy the tree time, to generate new wood in the cambium. Trees don't regenerate old cells, but they can form new ones in new locations. The new wood is walled off from the damaged wood by a barrier zone. If the pathogen is stronger than the barrier zone, it can penetrate the new wood and might even kill the tree. But if the tree has enough energy to generate new cells and wall off the invader then it will survive. Trees are able to form these boundaries in trunks, roots and branches.

Branches are another fascinating aspect of trees. Branches are attached to trees in such a way that they are part of the tree, yet remain separate from it. Branch tissue grows first and turns downward where it meets the trunk and forms a branch collar. Trunk tissue forms later over the branch tissue forming a trunk collar. In this way, like a ball and socket the branch fits into the trunk, but yet is still separate from it. If a pathogen strikes a branch, a barrier zone at the base of the branch releases anti-microbial substances that can resist the spread of the pathogen into the trunk of the tree. Because this crucial barrier zone is located at the base of the branch, it is imperative to remember to never remove or injure the branch collar when pruning.

Roots are also able to wall off pathogens when they are severed or damaged. They cannot regenerate themselves, but new roots can form in new locations. Most roots are found in the top 12 to 18 inches of soil and spread out much further than the width of the tree's

crown. Some tree roots have symbiotic relationships with fungi found in the soil. These beneficial fungi known as mycorrhizae help with nutrient absorption (primarily phosphorus) in the roots, while obtaining carbohydrates, and other organic compounds from the tree. The mycorrhizae are also believed to enhance the tree's tolerance to environmental stresses while increasing its resistance to pathogens.

As Master Gardeners, we see so many plant diseases and insect pests and wonder how anything grows. Trees can be battling multiple pathogens at the same time but due to their powerful genetic makeup and the wonder of nature, they survive. They survive and provide us with so many important things like food and shelter and beauty. Yes, trees are amazing things and I'm so glad I see them now!

### References:

Dirr, Michael, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. Champaign, Illinois: Stripes Publishing, L.L.C., 1998.

Green, Martha Hodgkins, "Giants In The Earth." *Nature Conservancy*, Nov./Dec., 2000, p.6.

National Geographic Society. *American's Wild Woodlands*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1985.

Shigo, Alex. *A New Tree Biology*. Durham, NH: Sigo and Trees, Associates, 1986.

## 2001 INT'L CONFERENCE

### "The Magic of Gardening"

**WHEN:** May 28th - June 1st, 2001

**LOCATION:** Hilton in the Walt Disney World Resort (1751 Hotel Plaza Blvd., Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact:**

Tom Wichman, M.G. Coordinator  
(352) 392-8836  
twichman@ufl.edu

**or visit their website at:**

<http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~conferweb/mg/>

**WANTED:** An article on this event from someone attending, for a future issue of *The Laurel* - please!



## PLANT BY THE MOON

Everything in nature has a relationship with everything else. When daylight hours start to dwindle, leaves know that it's time to fall off trees. When the days are no longer cold, the warmth in the soil tells bulbs to send up their shoots. Birds know when to build their nests and when to push their ready-to-fly babies out of them. When you look at a bowl of ice-cream, your brain prepares you to eat it by making your mouth water.

Many people find that paying attention to these relationships and rhythms is helpful to them, but sometimes they don't know why. Some people, for example, plant according to the which phase the moon is in, without knowing what the facts are behind this centuries-old tradition.

The phases of the moon occur in a 28-day cycle. Technically, the air is coolest and the soil is warmest when the moon is approaching its fullest stage. Because cool air is denser than warm air, it holds more minerals. Soil that has fewer minerals in it tends to be lighter around a full moon, which makes it easier for the tiny roots of new plants to establish themselves.

During other phases of the moon, the soil is heavy, and there are fewer nutrients and less moisture available to young plants.

If you'd like to try gardening by the phases of the moon, use these guidelines:

### Waxing Moon (1st & 2nd Quarters)

- Prepare your soil while it's light and fluffy.
- Digging up the soil during the 3rd and 4th quarters, when it's heavier, may feel like more work.
- Plant crops that grow above ground.

### Waning Moon (3rd Quarter)

- Plant crops that grow below ground.
- Hoe and weed.
- Fertilize your plants.

### Waning Moon (4th Quarter)

- Hoe and weed.
- Fertilize your plants.

### Any Quarter

- Water your plants.

(Article adapted from the book Garden Crafts for Kids by Diane Rhoades, Sterling Publishing, 1998, p. 38)

## A BIT OF HISTORY

This column features historical gardening and plant information and is also an excellent location to highlight and feature historical projects and gardens in and around Connecticut. So if your particular interest is in historical gardens and plantings, please share your knowledge!

.....  
**WANTED:** The Nathan Hale Homestead in Coventry has able bodies, but is looking for a MG to oversee the creation of historic period gardens at the Homestead. Contact Desiree Moberd at 860-742-6917 (W) or 860-974-1405 (H).

.....  
 An extensive assortment of plants were used in the depiction of a typical 18th century kitchen garden at the Benton Homestead in Tolland ... and the following are just a few of those plants.

**Columbine, Wild** (*Aquilegia canadensis*) - Related to buttercups, the nodding red and yellow flowers, which bloom in spring, are attractive to humans and hummingbirds alike. Columbine was believed to have been used to help relieve jaundice, kidney stones, fainting spells and "women in travail".

**Houseleek** (*Sempervivum tectorum*) - During colonial times, the succulent leaves of this herb, also known as "hens-and-chicks", were used as an astringent to stop the flow of blood from cuts and wounds; it was also used to treat bums and shingles.

**Jacob's Ladder** (*Polemonium caeruleum*) - Ancient times believed this plant led to war. Its botanical name is derived from the Greek term *Palemos* which means war. Although it had no medicinal or culinary uses, its spring flowers made it very popular in colonial gardens.

**Violets** (*Viola odorata*) - This flower, through the ages, was considered both a culinary and a medicinal herb. During medieval times, it was used in salads and omelets, and when seethed in water, it was used as a topical sedative during sickness. In 1597, John Gerard, a noted physician and avid gardener, wrote "The gallant grace of violets bring to a liberal and gentlemanly mind, the remembrance of honesty, comeliness, and all kinds of virtues."

**Yarrow, White** (*Achillea millefolium*) - Today, this common white flowering 'weed' can be seen growing wild in fields and along side our roadways during May and June. Probably ignored more than looked at, it should not be overlooked for its medicinal values as a blood agglutinate (since 1000 B.C.). Colonists stored yarrow along with carefully distilled oils to ward off disease.



## HOSTA

*Hosta* are shade tolerant, hardy perennial plants grown principally for their foliage. These plants are native to Japan, Korea, and China. In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the popularity of *Hosta* in the United States. They are grown throughout the country, except in tropical areas. Why have hostas become the most widely used shade perennial? First, many exciting new cultivars of hostas have been developed in the past two decades, mainly due to hybridizing efforts in this country. Second, the availability of new and unusual cultivars has increased because of the extensive use of tissue culture propagation in *Hosta*.

Hosta leaves are green, blue, gold, or white, and may have single, solid color (except white), or have the colors mixed with center or edged variegation. Leaf sizes can vary from thumbnail size to the size of a serving platter. Individual clumps come in a variety of sizes, from fist-size plants to mounds three feet tall and five feet across. Hosta flowers are borne on spikes and, while less dramatic than many sun-loving plants, add color to a shade garden at a time when few other plants are in bloom. Individual hosta plants bloom for several weeks. The bloom season, however, spans several months. It begins in spring in the South and in early summer in the North, and ends with some cultivars blooming as late as October. As a bonus, many hostas show outstanding color changes in their foliage with the approach of autumn.

The culture of *Hosta* is very easy. The plants are grown from divisions and can be planted any time that the ground is not frozen. It is best to avoid planting hostas when the weather is very hot because there will be poor root growth; if summer planting cannot be avoided, then regular watering is essential. The soil can vary from sand to clay loam, but is best supplemented with organic material. While hostas are regarded as shade plants, they will, even in the South, take some morning sun. In the North, they tolerate considerable sun, but it is best to avoid locations with mid-afternoon sun. Hostas can be divided for purposes of propagation, but unlike sun perennials, do not require regular dividing.

*Hosta* have few diseases or pests. Slugs, although they will not destroy the plants, often make hostas appear unsightly. Fortunately, slugs can be fairly easily controlled by baiting. Deer will eat hosta (along with practically everything else); a number of products are available to discourage them.

**Using Hosta in the Landscape:** Hostas can be utilized in many ways in the landscape. Large and medium clumps can be used as a single or specimen planting. Several

different cultivars can be planted together for a variety of leaf color, size, texture, flower color, and bloom time. Hostas grown in high shade can be even more effective when inter-planted with spring bulbs, broad leaf evergreens, primroses, woodland plants, ferns, astilbes, and dwarf conifers. Plants thus combined can have changing interest throughout the gardening season. Hostas can be mass planted as a ground cover or as a surround, particularly under trees whose shade and roots make grass difficult to grow. Hostas are often used as edging plants to soften the line between the garden and a yard or paved area.

Adding hostas to your garden will add texture, color, and structure to your shady areas. New cultures are becoming more and more sun acceptable. Because there are numerous hosta cultivars available with magnificent colors and sizes, you may want to collect different hostas for different parts of your garden: small hostas for tight places or edging, large hostas for background and structure. They add light to shady corners; blue leaves give a cooling effect

while gold leaves tend to glow in the shade.

Hostas are hardy in Zones 3-10. Plants tend to grow larger and produce more intense, bluer and greener coloration in colder climates. Pick your planting site carefully. Young hostas need a minimum of two seasons in one location to mature and show their adult potential. Mulching the first winter is a good idea.

Soil that retains both air and moisture is ideal for hostas. Organic matter such as peat moss, manure or compost should be worked into the soil before planting. A shady or partially sandy location will yield the best results. Each variety of hosta has a different light requirement, so you can plant them in almost any light situation. Blues prefer more shade, while gold will tolerate sun quite well. Hostas love water in the hot summer months.

Permission was given to reprint this information from the Tri-State Hosta Society brochure. Formed in 1993 (comprised of three regions: NJ, Southern CT and Southern NY), Tri-State is a non-profit educational society formed to foster interest in hosta, to encourage the development of new and improved varieties and to promote its cultivation and usefulness in the landscape. For more information regarding this organization, contact:

Alex G. Malloy  
P.O. Box 38  
South Salem, NY 10590  
(203) 438-0396 (work)  
(914) 533-2661 (home)  
email: AGMGARDEN@aol.com

(See pg. 11 for the upcoming **A First Look At Hostas**)



**“... combined  
[plants] can have  
changing interest  
throughout  
the gardening  
season.”**



## PRESSURE-TREATED WOOD

By Kate Cheromcha

(This article originally printed on April 15, 2001, in the Spring Home & Garden issue of The New London Day.)

The town was widening our street and my neighbor's fence would have to go. It had been built from pressure-treated wood and was only about one year old. By salvaging the wood, I could build a raised-bed vegetable garden, fence and compost bin. Three years later, the post and rails remain where I stacked them. It wasn't just procrastination - was this wood really safe to use for these projects?

Pressure-treated wood, or CCA wood, is lumber that has been subjected to a process that brings the chemicals chromium, copper and arsenic deep into the wood. Chromium is a bactericide; copper, a fungicide and arsenic, an insecticide and all three help arrest decay. When this treated wood first became available, it seemed to be the answer to a gardener's prayer. It lasted longer than the wood from naturally rot-resistant species such as cedar and cypress, it was readily available and cheaper. Manufacturers of this wood claimed that the treatment chemicals, though toxic, were safely locked into the wood. Here finally was a product that could be used to build long lasting garden features such as raised beds, fences and compost bins without the harm that other wood preservatives, such as creosote, did to plants.

But then questions began to arise about those chemicals and just how securely they remained bound up within the wood. Studies and soil tests over the last decade indicated that some of these chemicals do indeed leach out of the wood and into the nearby soil.

While all three chemicals used in treating wood are toxic, it is the arsenic that causes the most concern. Arsenic is a naturally occurring chemical element that is present in soil, water and food. However, it readily combines with oxygen, chlorine, sulfur and carbon to form organic arsenic which is eliminated before it can do any harm. Without carbon, the arsenic is in an inorganic form. This is the form of arsenic used to treat wood; this is also the form of arsenic that is more likely to accumulate in living tissue where it can interact with cell enzymes and impair metabolism. Ingested in large doses, it is a strong poison. What concerns us, however, is chronic exposure and ingestion which can lead to adverse effects on health.

So, does pressure treated wood have a place in the garden? That seems to depend largely upon the project. Studies have shown that CCA-treated boards can be expected to leach the chemicals, including arsenic, into the soil that is in contact with the boards. However, once in the soil, the arsenic doesn't migrate more than a few inches from the wood's surface. If you constructed a raised-bed

garden, avoid tilling the soil right along the perimeter and plant your vegetables about four inches away from the wood. Consider planting a row of flowers along the edge for a border. Plants take up minerals from the soil, including naturally-occurring organic arsenic, but it generally accumulates in the parts we don't eat. Long before a plant can take up enough inorganic arsenic to be considered unsafe to eat, it would have died. Compost bins are another matter. The organic acids formed during the composting process cause more leaching of the wood's chemicals than other uses. Not only does this bring more chemicals into the compost - and ultimately the soil - but it also lessens the longevity of the lumber. Since neither result is desirable, pressure-treated wood isn't recommended for making compost bins. However, finished compost, which has a neutral pH, can be safely added to garden beds framed with pressure-treated wood.

Therefore, what should concern us primarily is our own contact with the surfaces of this wood. There are many other garden projects that we would prefer to construct from wood that can be depended upon to last: fences, trellises and benches for example; and pressure-treated wood fits that requirement. Arsenic can be taken up onto our hands from simple contact with the wood's surfaces. Sanding and drilling creates dust which can be inhaled, along with the chemicals, into our mouths and lungs. By taking simple precautions, we can minimize our exposure and still be able to use this wood for our projects.

If it is possible, purchase the wood, cut and drill it and then allow it to weather outside for a year before assembling. This will significantly reduce the amount of arsenic on the wood's surface. If that isn't possible or practical, scrub it with a detergent or power wash the wood. When sawing or sanding, wear eye protection, gloves and a dust mask. Avoid splinters - if you get one, remove it immediately. Perform the work outdoors on a drop cloth so that the scraps and sawdust can be collected and discarded. Never burn CCA-treated wood or sawdust; dispose of it in the trash. Do not use scraps or sawdust from pressure-treated wood for wood chips, mulch or compost. Wash your hands, face and clothing immediately after completing the work. Seal the wood with an oil-based, water repellent stain or paint and renew it every two years. If you are constructing a new raised bed, line the inside surface of the boards with plastic.

For additional information about working with and sealing pressure-treated wood, as well as alternative materials and sources, contact the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station at Box 1106, New Haven, CT 06504. The toll-free number is 877/855-2237 and they are on the web at [www.state.ct.us/caes](http://www.state.ct.us/caes).

As for my projects? Raised bed and fence - yes; compost bin - no. That is unless procrastination wins again.



## MEADOWS AT THE BARTLETT ARBORETUM

By Diana Ringelheim

Meadows of grasses and wildflowers are supposed to be the least labor-intensive garden you can have. After all, they are simply places where trees have fortuitously not grown. They are devoid of weeds and pesty insects. Only butterflies and bees feast on sequences of flowers that defy the vagaries of New England weather. Birds dart about, eating the less photogenic insects and later, the ripe seed heads and berries of the plants. The meadow re-seeds itself annually or its perennial components reappear predictably. Or not.

The focus of Master Gardener activity in the south-western corner of the state is directed toward two meadow projects at the Bartlett Arboretum. When the Bartlett family lived on the property, a four acre meadow luxuriated in the sun along High Ridge Road (Conn. Route 137). After the site became a public garden, the area was allowed to "return to nature" which meant invasion by short-lived or weed trees such as wild cherry that began the re-forestation process. This four acre meadow is the dream of the future. The present project is a hillside meadow adjacent to the wildflower garden. It is providing inspiration for Master Gardener activity, and outreach opportunities for interns in the M.G. Class of 2001.

Most of the plants going into the hillside will be grasses, some started in the greenhouse this winter and spring and some to directly sown on site. It is hoped that the transplants will provide enough stability on the slope to permit the seed to take hold before being washed away by heavy rain. Native wildflowers have also been included in the mix and they have also been started early in the greenhouse. There is enough variety of seed types to give us experience with almost all the techniques of seed handling. Stratifying, scarifying, sowing, pricking-out, up-potting, hardening-off, heeling-in, and finally planting-out are some of the activities involved in creating this least labor-intensive type of garden!

Of the grasses, the greatest success to date is *Hystrix patula* (Bottlebrush Grass). Other native grasses sown are *Panicum virgatum* (Shelter Switchgrass) and *Schizachurium scoparium* (Little Bluestem). These grasses did not require stratification or any other type of special handling but the germination rate has not been great. The Little Bluestem is particularly shy but this may just be its way. Plans are to heavily direct sow the grass seeds to make up for the low viability.

Wildflowers provided the greater challenge with their variety of needs. *Asclepias tuberosa* needed 10 days of moist stratification; *Aster pilosus* required 30 days, as did *Liatris spicata* and *Solidago speciosa*. *Baptisia australis* had some seed stratified and some not, with no difference in germination rate! These plants will be ready to go into the hillside meadow in late spring. Other

plants will be grown in a nursery bed and planted later in the season.

The four acre meadow site will be the next project. It has been estimated that one plant per square foot will be the minimum needed to establish a meadow. That's 160,000 plants to scarify, stratify, sow, prick-out, up-pot, harden-off, heel-in, and plant-out. Volunteers?

**"The four acre meadow site ... that's 160,000 plants ... [any] volunteers?"**

### Peanuts By Charles Schulz





## UPCOMING EVENTS, LECTURES & CLASSES

### NE District

Len Giddix, associate editor, of the magazine People, Places and Plants will speak to the Gardeners Roundtable, Douglas Library, **Hebron**, on Wed., May 16, 7pm, Topic: **Notable Area Trees and Shade Gardening**.

Tune in to **GARDEN TALK** on WTIC-AM Saturdays from 12-2pm to hear Len and Certified Nurseryman Lisa Napolitano.

**Plainfield Garden Club Plant Sale** - Sat., May 19, 9am-1pm; rain date Sun. May 20. Central Village across from the flea market on Rte. 12.

#### **Gazebo Garden Series**

Instructor: Astrid Belanger, MG

Gazebo Gardens, 54 Hennequin Rd., **Columbia**

Sat. May 19, 2 - 5 pm - **Designing a Rock Garden**

Tues. May 22, 6 - 8 pm - **Propagation by Cuttings**

Sat. May 26, 2 - 4 pm - **Garden Tour**

Fee: \$24 each - for further information, contact **EASTCONN** -

Windham - 860-423-2591;

Danielson - 860-779-3770

Also through EASTCONN ... an **Historical Plant Walk**, Wed., May 30, 5 - 6:30 pm - to be held in **Pomfret**, rain-or-shine. Pre-registration required by May 23rd. Fee: \$24 - contact the EASTCONN number above. For directions, call Pam Brundage at 869-974-1633.

**HerbFest of Connecticut**, sponsored by **CT Herb Assoc.**, at Topmost Herb Farm, **Coventry**, CT - Sat., June 2. Workshops, weed walks, vendors, refreshments and children's programs. Contact Carole Miller at 860-742-8239 or email [chaherbfest@hotmail.com](mailto:chaherbfest@hotmail.com)

**Gardeners' Roundtable Plant Sale**, Sat., June 9, 10 am - 3 pm, Douglas Library Comm. Room, **Hebron**. Perennials, small shrubs and trees, hanging baskets, used garden-related items and more at VERY reasonable prices.

### SE District

#### **East Lyme Public Library - Garden Program**

Wed., May 16, 7 pm - **Gardening with Wildflowers** - Master Gardener Florence Marrone will present a slide program on wild flower varieties best suited for CT. Registration required - call 860-739-6926.

**Haddam Land Trust Plant Sale** - 2 Sats. May 5 & 12, 9 am - 4 pm - Rain or Shine ... at the Town Green, **Higganum**, intersection of Rtes. 154 & 81 - featuring native plants, unusual perennials, shade plants, wide variety of ferns.

### SW District

#### **Spring Garden Fair - Bartlett Arboretum Association**

Sat., May 12, 10 am - 4 pm - Rain or Shine - 151 Brookdale Rd., **Stamford**, CT - Members Preview 8:30 -10 am.

## CMGA The Laurel 11

### SW District (cont.)

**Kellogg Estate Native Plant Sale** - Sat., May 19, 8:30 am - 4 pm, 500 Hawthorn Ave., **Derby**, featuring a variety of native wildflowers, shrubs and ferns.

**A First Look at New Hostas** - Tri-State Hosta Society is hosting a brand new event called First Look at the Holiday Inn Select, **Stamford**, CT, Saturday June 9. Hybridizers will enter potted seedlings and sports (divisions of registered plants with new characteristics) for competition. Categories including green, gold, blue, dark margined, light margined and streaked may surprise gardeners unfamiliar with hosta development in recent years. There will be nursery sales from national nurseries, plant trade booths and an afternoon auction of rare and unusual hosta plants. Pre-registration is required. For further information contact Alex G. Malloy (Home) 914-533-2661; (Work) 203-438-0396, or email [AGMgarden@aol.com](mailto:AGMgarden@aol.com).

Courses offered at the **New Canaan Nature Center**:

**The Art of Cottage Gardening** - Fri. June 1, 9 am - 4 pm; SP-GAR167; \$69 non-members; \$62 members.

**Ornamental Herbaceous Plants: Perennials -4 Fridays, June 8-29, 10 am - 1 pm** SP-HRT343C - call for details.

**Containers in the Border** - Wed., June 20, 10 am - noon; SP-GAR261; \$23 non-members; \$21 members.

For further information, call 718-817-8747.

**GARDEN FAIR 2001** - at the New Canaan Nature Ctr., 144 Oenoke Ridge, **New Canaan** - Sat., May 19, 10am - 4pm; & Sun., May 20, 1pm - 4pm. Plants, arts/crafts, seminars & more! Call 203-966-9577 for details.

### NW District

**Down to Earth Garden Club - Social Night** - Wed., May 9, 7 pm, Community Ctr., 150 Nevers Rd., **South Windsor**. All welcome! RSVP: Jo 860-644-8165 or Phyllis 644-0147.

**Gardeners of Simsbury Plant Sale** - Sat., May 12, 9 am - noon; Boy Scout Hall, Hopmeadow St. at the corner of Rtes. 10 & 167, next to the First Church in Simsbury. Interesting annuals, perennials, hanging baskets and much more.

**Plant Sale & Boutique** - Simsbury Garden Club - May 19, 9 am - 2 pm; at the Apple Barn, Old Farms Rd., **Simsbury**. Annuals, perennials, hanging baskets, herbs and handmade garden boutique items.

**CT Daylily Society Annual Daylily Sale** - Sat., May 19, 9 am, Senior Center, W. Avon Rd., **Avon**. Email [misley@ct2.nai.net](mailto:misley@ct2.nai.net) for more information.

Let us know what's happening in your area!



## NEW LIFE FOR THE SCOTT-FANTON GARDENS

By Lynn Barry Hyson, MG Class of 2000

As gardeners we become attuned to the ever-cycling seasons of nature—birth, growth, decay and death. Our team's outreach project—the recreation of a 19th Century garden at Danbury's Scott-Fanton Museum and historical society—illustrates this well.

A core group of ten under the guidance of MG Mentor Bob Adams began last spring with a strenuous clean-up of the grounds around the 1785 Rider house and 1790 Dodd Hat Shop in downtown Danbury. The garden itself has seen many cycles. It was rejuvenated in the 1940s and again in the 70s, only to decline again till we arrived. Everyone pitched in to cut and clear weeds and vines run amok, to thin choking perennials, to prune scraggly shrubs.

Only after carting away tons of debris in the museum's rusted, wobbly wheelbarrow could we appreciate the good bones of symmetrical flower beds and intersecting paths below the stone wall that divides the formal garden from the lawn. As we worked we delighted in our discoveries: roses begging for attention, a patch of *Chelone* overwhelmed by Phlox, a stone trough buried among the ferns. We reveled in the rich, friable soil, dark and crumbly as brownies. Its rocklessness after centuries of cultivation was a revelation to those of us used to hacking at glacial remains.

Bob Adams brought enthusiasm and a plan. He got us started with a sketch that made traditional use of boxwoods to accent the lines of the beds and rows of lavender ready to release its aroma as visitors brush past. Through all the hard work and fun of planning, our group proved wonderfully compatible — warm friendships flourished all spring with much chatter and laughter as we worked and learned from one another. Everyone was genuinely dismayed at the news that Bob Adams would drop out for health reasons.

Luckily, our other Mentor from the Bethel office, Ingrid McCauley, stepped in with equal enthusiasm to keep the project blooming. Bob's wife, Carol Adams, a member of our MG class, pruned, weeded and transplanted until she had to stop to care for Bob. Roxanne Correa and I researched plants for period gardens; Jill Kotch shared her knowledge as she hacked her way through an impenetrable mass of shrubs and vines. Laurie Gavel kept tabs on Bob for us and continued to weed with her little helper Thomas, though her pregnancy made it harder each week. And on sun-warmed summer days, several neighborhood women brought their own chairs to sit and chat under the trees.

After one carefully cleared bed disappeared under new weeds, Nancy King arranged for a delivery of mulch. When she saw the towering mound behind the garden, she

cringed at her miscalculation. What would we ever do with all that mulch?

By August, the plot was finally ready for some planting. Ingrid shopped and we all dug holes to insert English boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens*) at each corner of the inner grass plots and True Boxwood (*B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa') around the central sundial. Next we lined the top of the stone wall with Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*) punctuated by a pair of *Juniperus communis* at the entry steps. The blue tone of the juniper leads you down the midway path toward the silver foliage of the lavender. After running a hose from the museum's utility sink to water, we all viewed with satisfaction the structural basis of our developing garden. Also gratifying was the response of the plants we had moved and tended — the roses glowed against the gray stone walls.

Our final fall tasks were to clear two last beds of corrupted grass and cover them for winter. When all the garden had been protected, Nancy's mulch mountain was gone — her calculations were exactly right after all.

By now, Laurie was ripe and ready to harvest her second child — but only after we all received our Master Gardener certificates on November 2nd! Laurie's beautiful daughter Rebecca considerably arrived on the 6th.

Winter brought darker news when we learned that Bob Adams had lost his battle against a brain tumor. Every one of us laments Carol's loss and regrets that our leader will not see the renaissance he envisioned.

But, as gardeners we know that however harsh the winter, there is always the promise of spring. As we prepare for another season at the Scott-Fanton garden, our plans include a memorial to Bob and an invitation to Carol to return.

The Scott-Fanton crew is ready to resume its efforts with the planting of perennials this season—and, yes, more clean-up. We welcome the help of other Master Gardeners; if you are interested, leave a message for Ingrid McCauley at the Bethel Cooperative Extension Office. Restoration of the Dodd Hat Shop is underway and there are big plans for the rest of the site. Let our garden lead the way.

## A TIP FOR A RAINY DAY

To make it easier to read your rain gauge, put a few drops of food coloring in the tube. Even if the coloring dries up, there is enough residue to help read the next rainfall.





## TOWN MEETINGS

By Lloyd Hinrichs

The Town Meetings in Tolland County are over. As the name implies, one meeting for each town in the county, except those couple of towns where our records indicated only one or two Master Gardeners resided ( ...are there ANY MGs in Union?).

Just what in the world is a town meeting? For one steeped in American history, the concept conjures up memories akin to the aroma of bread baking in your own kitchen. Certainly in New England and rural America from shore to shore, the notion of the local folks getting together to right the wrongs, settling disputes (before they occur, if possible), establish meets and bounds and above all, just to jawbone a bit with friends and neighbors who might live miles away and be infrequently seen, was in many areas, and still in some, a solid American institution. Government from the grass-roots up.

From the very rural section of the N.W. Catskill Mountains from where my wife Patricia and I recently moved, the local government is still to this day managed through town meetings. Now only does it work beautifully, it's great fun!

It's obvious to me that a significant part of the success of the "old time" town meetings was the getting together-ness of the session. Which brings us back to Tolland County, 2001.

In discussions with Mary Collins and Larry Van Der Jagt late in December, 2000, a common thought seemed to emerge with Larry's comment, "What we've been doing in the past hasn't worked. We know there are (Master) Gardeners out there, we know they want to be involved, again and still, but we haven't been able to reach them." The desire on the part of the CMGA to reach out and bring together all those lost Master Gardeners from the *diaspora* (Greek, meaning far-flung) was thus born, and the procedures for accomplishing this goal are a significant work in progress.

Each county, indeed each town, therein may try anything. There are few rules to guide. And as usual, guidance and direction are the keys to success. So — we know know what Mary did in Tolland County. She said to herself "Let's work from the ground up, start with what we know and build on it, work it, grow it." How extraordinarily democratic. "What we've done in the past hasn't worked." The only logical step for Mary and Tolland County and all of us out there was, ta-daa, Town Meetings.

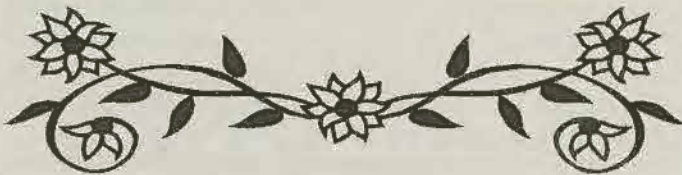
Having attended the first four or five of these get-togethers (An imposed visit to the hospital and subsequent recuperation prevented attendance to the rest.), this scribbler has to say, the idea is good, the meetings worked, and there are a bunch of lingering smiles about the county. Just think of it. Folks who in many cases never met before, enthusing in their own lingo about birding, perennials, landscaping, butterflies,

## CMGA The Laurel 13

vegetable growing, woodworking, honey bee forage, green houses, pruning, heirloom flowers, you name it. It was like the Tower of Babel. All these languages, different in their own way, but understood by all. The roots the same. Ideas shared, the seeds of plans planted, waiting for nourishment and warmth, the very essence of gardening. Just beautiful!

But that is not to say, imply or suggest that this course is trouble-free or a done deal, but any means. We're just getting started. Whenever new ground is broken, the plow finds all the obstacles in the furrow. Like buried stones or bogs or clay — or, where do we hold these meetings? How often? Who hosts? In fact, do we even know how to find all the MG alumni? Who's out there? How do we make contact? What do we do next? How do we do it?

The answer is simple. Keep talking. Keep in touch. Keep listening, be involved. Help Mary and the others help you. It will work!



## TOLLAND COUNTY THANKS!

I would like to thank all the hosts of the MG Town Meetings recently held in Tolland County. You know who you are! Your help and support was a key component to the success of these meetings, and your willingness to initiate these opportunities to gather is greatly appreciated.

Resulting plans varied from town to town, but I'm pleased with the county-wide plan for an Annual Meeting in each town next year. Notices will go out later in the fall/winter to host, organize and participate in these meetings for early 2002. I promise there will NOT be a lengthy agenda at these future meetings! There was just so much to share this time, to bring you all up to date with the MG Program and CMGA ... I appreciated your courtesy and patience!

Thank you again, and to all the MGs who took the time to share their ideas, interests and enthusiasm. I look forward to seeing you at the Tolland County Extension Open House later this fall!

~ Mary Collins  
MG Program Coordinator  
Tolland County



## NE DISTRICT NEWS

The Windham County Open House was held on April 7th and it was wonderful to see friendly, familiar faces and some welcome new faces too. While enjoying food and good conversation, the MGs viewed a variety of outreach projects and were updated on all the exciting changes in the program. We were delighted to have Dr. Nancy Bull, Cyndi Wyskiewicz and Wendy Drenga as guest speakers. As the Open Houses are held across the state, I encourage you to attend and share some time with your fellow MG's. I also wish to extend a big thank-you to all of you who attended the Windham Open House. ~ Kim Kelly, MG Program Coordinator

In Willimantic there are great plans in progress ... the Windham/Willimantic Parks & Rec. is, with cooperation from the Windham Mills Corp., creating a walking bridge with flowers on the old Jillson Hill Bridge located across from the Textile Museum. Plans include raised planters/beds with UConn supplying landscape architectural and irrigation design and support. An outstanding outreach opportunity, watch future issues of The Laurel for further information. Call Kim Kelly at the Brooklyn Ext. Center to volunteer (see page 2).

**HELP IS NEEDED!!!** Due to the majority of the Tolland/Windham Counties' current MG class being located in the Windham County (Brooklyn office) area, the Vernon Extension Center is in dire need of certified MGs to help cover the phones during the summer months. If you have a few hours you can spare to volunteer, it would be GREATLY appreciated! MG office hours are 9am-4pm, but **ANY** help would be great! Call the Vernon Ext. Center at 860-875-3331 to schedule. Remember, office hours count towards advanced outreach requirements!

**TAG SALE PLANNED!!!** Sat., May 12th 9am-3pm – in the green barn behind the Vernon Ext. Center, 24 Hyde Ave., Vernon. **DONATIONS ARE NEEDED!!** Anyone with clean/useable items (please no clothing...) PLEASE give Mary Collins a call, either at home at (860) 228-9436, or at the Vernon Ext. Center, (see pg. 2) as soon as possible, to arrange pick-up/drop-off of your items. THANKS!

Tolland County Cook Book ... Those of you in Tolland County who have not yet submitted your recipes for the cook book project, PLEASE mail or email (Cooknwme@aol.com) them to Mary Collins ASAP! Thank you!

Bees in Homes & Buildings — The average homeowner/ businessman is not equipped to eliminate



several of the types of bees which can cause structural damage. If you live in Tolland County and come across a problem of this type, please contact MG John B. Hutt at (860) 742-5197. There are still swarms around, but far fewer because of the wide use of pesticides and the number of diseases which wipe out colonies. The African scare is diminishing partly because it is too cold for them to survive in the northeast. John makes no claims that he can solve every type of situation, but is successful in many.

## SE DISTRICT NEWS

The next **OPEN HOUSE** will be held at the Middlesex Cooperative Extension Center in Haddam, on Thursday, July 12th at 7:00 pm. Mark your calendar and come enjoy a pleasant and informative evening!

The accessible greenhouse at Camp Harkness is complete, thanks to volunteers and friends. It is BEAUTIFUL and we look forward to our first program in 2001. Anyone wishing to volunteer with this project, or other areas opportunities, please contact Julia Griswold (see pg. 2).

## SW DISTRICT NEWS

A group of more than a dozen members of the 2001 MG class and affiliated Mentors of New Haven County gave up part of their Saturday recently to brainstorm ideas about community gardening. Some members of the class are already involved in local projects and shared their expertise. Committees were formed to research further information. We will be establishing a master list of community garden outreach opportunities as well as other areas for outreach. Contact Mira Schachne, MG Program Coordinator for further details (see pg. 2).

Any New Haven County Certified MG who wants to contribute time and rejoin our active group – or who needs outreach for Advanced Certification, please contact MG Program Coordinator, Mira Schachne (see page 2). Mira may also be reached by email at mschachn@canr.uconn.edu.

## NW DISTRICT NEWS

Karen Anderson is our featured Coordinator this month (see page 15).

What's happening in your area?





## MEET THE COORDINATOR

By Kate Cheromcha

How does a UConn graduate with a degree in economics end up as an Extension Office Master Gardener Coordinator. As Karen Anderson, Coordinator at the Torrington office put it, "When I decided to return to work after staying home to raise my children, I looked into pursuing a Master's degree in Economics. But when I thought about working indoors at a desk all day - UGH!"

While staying at home, Karen began gardening for her own enjoyment. Since she was living in New Jersey, she was also able to attend the School of Horticulture at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. She completed three certificate programs: Gardening; Commercial Horticulture and Landscape Design. While she found landscape design interesting, and even for a time worked as a consultant for a business in Connecticut, she prefers working with and caring for the plants themselves to be more appealing. "I'm a hands-on gardener. I like to do the planting and caring for the plants themselves - I'd rather be outside."

Karen moved back to Connecticut about six years ago. Once here, she realized that gardening here would be very different from what she was used to in New Jersey. "I needed to learn what I could grow up here in Zone 5. I also wanted to connect with other gardeners in my area, so I applied to and was accepted for the 1998 Master Gardener class."

As a gardener, Karen is an advocate for the use of native plants as much as possible in a garden. "Not only can they be equally attractive, but they demand far less of the gardener's time and attention. Another interest is the problem of invasive plants and the tremendous toll that they can take on a landscape. We are all familiar with the disastrous effects that the Oriental bittersweet is having on our trees. Native plants don't create those problems."

Karen incorporates this philosophy in her own garden. "I am primarily interested in vegetable gardening; so my decorative gardens are strictly low- to no-maintenance. Native plants and shrubs are perfect for that. I also use organic gardening methods, so I prefer not having to coddle a demanding specimen plant with chemical aids."

As a Master Gardener Coordinator, Karen works with both Master Gardeners and students, overseeing both the outreach projects and the office work.

"As much as I love the hands-on aspects of gardening, I have found that I really enjoy the office work as well — answering people's questions and assisting them with their garden problems. I like reading mysteries and to me these questions are like a mystery novel. You won't know the answer immediately but you quickly learn what questions to ask in order to arrive at a solution. I have learned so much from answering these questions - it has really broadened my knowledge.

"I also welcome the chance to educate people about pesticide use. I follow organic and IPM methods in my own garden and enjoy talking about them, but there are gardeners who prefer to use commercial pesticides. Although we don't recommend specific pesticides, we can talk to people about their proper use including dosage, timing and application methods. By reinforcing the importance of following label directions, we can help reduce the amount of pesticide being released into the environment."

Karen is looking forward to working with the new group of students this season. She encourages them to spend as much time as possible in the office. "By the end of the season, you will be amazed at how much you have learned and that knowledge will really be your own."





## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

If there isn't a telephone number listed by the project, contact the local Cooperative Extension MG Program Coordinator for that area (see page 2).

### SW District

The **Scott Fanton Museum** in **Danbury**. Volunteers needed to help restore and maintain lovely historic gardens.

**CSI - Norwalk** - Young girls' short-term detention center. Lovely greenhouse on site. Volunteers needed to work with young girls approx. 10-14 years old. Gardening, greenhouse work and nature craft projects.

**Southbury Training School**, Dept. of Mental Retardation - Need help with many gardens. Call Volunteer Services - (203) 586-2485.

**New Canaan Nature Center** - Call Gail Egol (203) 966-9577.

**So. Stamford Community Garden** - call Chris Hadin (203) 323-1978.

### NE District

**Nature Trail** - located at the **Tolland Cty. Ext. Center** in **Vernon**. Help is needed in all aspects including trailwork, field trip curriculum and promotion/marketing.

**Tolland Cty. Ext. Center - Vernon** - Opportunity to design and plant gardens around the center.

See "A Bit of History" on page 7 for a period garden opportunity.

The sale of CMGA merchandise has been very successful at the Symposium and Open Houses held to date. We raised over \$400 for the scholarship fund! Presently we are sold out of most stock, but will be reordering golf shirts, hats, t-shirts and (possibly) sweatshirts, with the hope that they will be available at the semi-annual meeting to be held at the Hillstead in June. See you there! If you have questions regarding CMGA merchandise, call John Neff at (860) 673-5018.

## Tulip Tip!

To prevent cut tulip blooms from drooping over, take a very sharp needle and pierce the stem all the way through near the flower head. This releases any air trapped in the stem from handling and transport. To help them last longer, keep the cut flowers out of direct sunlight and in cool temperatures.

~ submitted by Carole Williamson

### NE District (cont.)

**Willimantic - Bridge conversion** - get involved with converting the old Jillson Hill bridge into a walking bridge/park with flowers, trees and more! Contact the Windham Cty. Ext. office in Brooklyn.

**Immaculata Retreat House - Willimantic**. Contact Marie Kuchy at 860-537-5556 or email kuchiman@snet.net

### SE District

#### Community Gardening

Town of Groton — Town of Waterford

#### Gardening with Disabled

Camp Harkness, Waterford — Byran House, Haddam  
DMR Group Homes - Alliance for Living,  
New London

#### Correctional Facilities

York C.I., East Lyme  
Montville Expansion Minimum Security Facility

#### Historic Gardens

Florence Griswold, Old Lyme  
Hart House, Old Saybrook  
Shaw Mansion, New London

### NW District

The Friends of Elizabeth Park are looking for volunteers. Help is needed to maintain gardens in the park, and also to staff the Park Information Center. If interested, write to: Friends of Elizabeth Park, P.O. Box 370361, W. Hartford, CT 06137-0361

**Jubilee House**, a community center located in **Hartford**, needs help with maintaining their garden. There is also a need to develop urban gardening classes.

(Continued on page 17)



## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES (cont.)

(Continued from page 16)

### NW District (cont.)

We want to build a sustainable/butterfly garden on the **W. Hartford campus**. This would be a joint 4-H, MG project. We are in the early stages, but need names of people that will be willing to help.

**Elizabeth Park** will be opening a visitor's center in the spring of 2001 and would like MGs to volunteer to man it on the weekends. Our job will be to answer questions about horticulture and the park. Would you be willing to volunteer for a Saturday or Sunday afternoon this summer?

There will be a **Community Gardening Conference** in Sept., more info soon. Any interest in helping plan the conference or create test plots in an existing community garden? Contact the Ext. office in W. Hartford.

The **Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington** needs volunteers for the spring and summer to help maintain the sunken garden.

**Auer Farm in Bloomfield** always needs loads of help!

**Hungerford Nature Center, Kensington** - creating new gardens & working with children. Call Bob Levitt at (860) 827-9064.

**Plymouth Historical Society** - historic gardens

**Prime Time House, Torrington** - disabled clients.

**Community Gardens, Torrington**

**Please! Tell us of outreach opportunities in your area!**

### Your Support is Greatly Appreciated!!!

Please consider an individual tax-deductible contribution to the UConn Foundation - Master Gardener Account, to help augment the federal and state funds provided for these programs. There are no forms, no limits or recommendations on the amount of your contribution. Just please be sensitive to the need for your support and give generously. Your contribution may be sent to: Roy Jeffrey, c/o UConn Cooperative Extension System, 1376 Storrs Road, U4143, Storrs, CT 06269-4143. Checks should be made payable to **UConn Foundation**; please make sure to note "**Master Gardener Account**" in the memo space. Thank you for your support.

## THE ROADSIDE FARM STAND

The purpose of this column is for listing any gardening or other miscellaneous items, tools, information or plants that you may wish to find, sell, buy, barter, trade or just plain get rid of! If you would like to list in this section, please leave your name, number and a detailed message at (860) 228-9436, or contact one of the co-editors (see page 2). Your free "ad" will be run for two (2) consecutive issues, unless notified otherwise.

.....  
Wanted: Donation of a laptop computer briefcase, used, in good condition. Call Mary at 860-228-8230, or email Cooknwme@aol.com

.....  
For Sale - Consolidated Dutch West Wood Stove - \$450. Right-hand load. Has glass doors, screen, new blower, catalytic converter, brass trim & chimney insert. Call Linda Gardiner at (860) 742-0865.

.....  
Wanted - In Tolland County area - storage space for tag sale donations. Planning for a Master Gardener tag sale to be held in the spring of 2001. Please contact Mary Collins at the Vernon office - (860) 875-3331, or at home at 860-228-8230

.....  
For Sale: ComposTumber, large size, on legs, good condition. Paid \$450, asking \$175. Call 860-583-9553, or email TBB910@Gateway.net

.....  
LAST CHANCE - MOVING SALE! Large/small house plants, perennials, annuals, tomato plants, herbs - also many pots (plastic & clay), trays & flats. Sale date: Wed. through Sun., May 16-20. Call Joan at 203-938-2489.







## LANDSCAPING EDUCATION ADDED IN SPANISH

By Chris Reid

On Wednesday evening, March 28th, the Bartlett Arboretum offered a one-evening class on turfgrass management. It was unlike any previous courses at the Arboretum. What was the new twist? The presentations and all instructional materials were in Spanish. Pedro Perdomo, a county extension agent from the Rutgers Extension Service, presented an evening on turfgrass management with David Tovar, a CT licensed arborist, who spoke on lawn maintenance practices and their effect on tree health.

For Michael Harvey, Director of the Bartlett Arboretum, the course was the first step in expanding the cultural reach of the Bartlett's educational program, a dream the director has had since he arrived at the Bartlett two years ago. According to Michael, "This class is both the culmination of a great deal of work by Master Gardener interns, and the first step in creating a curriculum in Spanish. Without a doubt, the efforts of our Master Gardener volunteer interns made it possible."

The project began when MG intern Chris Reid, who speaks Spanish and has made several long visits to Mexico, decided to pursue a project to help provide accurate, authoritative information to the many Spanish-speaking people working in the landscaping industry in Fairfield County. After speaking with Michael Harvey and Master Gardener Coordinator Cheron Barton, Chris obtained the go-ahead to pursue the creation of a landscaping class in Spanish.

The first step was to develop a potential instructor list and identify existing teaching materials. It was not a small job to contact extension services, arboreta and other institutions in a number of states. Over a month's time, Chris began making phone calls, sending e-mails and scanning the web for instructors and instructional materials. "The more I searched for other classes and materials, the more I realized how many wonderful resources there are for those who speak English, and how precious few sources of authoritative information are available in Spanish. I could see that we had the opportunity to make a valuable contribution here."

**"I realized ... how precious few sources of authoritative information are available in Spanish. I could see that we had the opportunity to make a valuable contribution here."**

When Pedro Perdomo agreed to present the first class, the work was only beginning. "Next, we worked on the flyer, the driving directions, a course evaluation and an interest survey - all in Spanish," said Chris Reid. "David Tovar, a native Spanish speaker from Columbia, helped us by checking the grammar and providing a list of businesses that local landscapers frequent." MG students Jeff Negron and Luis Castaneda also recommended distribution spots, and MG students in the class helped to distribute flyers around the community.

The effort won't stop with the first course. Using a number of instructors identified in the MG project, Michael Harvey is planning an Arboriculture class in Spanish to be offered at the Bartlett in Winter 2002, and is creating a space on the Bartlett's website so that people can share information on courses and instructional materials. (Currently under construction; please visit the Bartlett Arboretum site in May at <http://vm.uconn.edu/~wwwbarad>)

**Master Gardeners Welcome to Participate:** If you are, or know of, a Spanish speaking instructor or can recommend some useful instructional materials in Spanish, Michael Harvey welcomes your call or email: 203.322.6971 or [michael.harvey@uconn.edu](mailto:michael.harvey@uconn.edu).

### UConn Plant DataBase

Thanks to Dr. Mark Brand and colleagues in the Plant Science Department, the UConn Plant DataBase has a new web address and look. Using the search feature, you can now look for deer-resistant shrubs that grow in the shade and in wet soil, or maybe you'd prefer to take virtual plant walks in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont! Just go to <http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants>. The site is well designed with a wealth of valuable information for homeowners (Watch for a detailed article on this site in the next issue of *The Laurel*).





## REAPING THE HARVEST!

Welcome to our corner, for a recipe (or more), and tips for storing, growing, and preserving the season's harvest. Submittals may be sent to the co-editors (see pg. 2). Come and share "the harvest!"

### Candied Violets

Not necessarily thought of as a "harvest" crop, violets bloom in the early spring, heralding the end of winter. Violets come in a variety of colors – white, yellow, pale lavender, and the obvious 'violet.' They'll grow just about anywhere ... moist shade, dry sun ... they're definitely not picky, and many consider them downright invasive! So why not take advantage of this early spring "crop" and make your cakes, desserts or ice cream "special" ...

#### Ingredients:

- powdered egg white  
– reconstituted to equal one egg white.
- fine white sugar
- fresh violet flowers
- brushes – new small paint brushes work well

Wash the flowers and dry thoroughly. Brush all sides of the flowers with egg white, then sprinkle with sugar, covering completely. Place on waxed paper to dry. Leaves can be prepared the same way, however they are only used for decoration, whereas the candied flowers are edible.

Violets also make a beautiful garnish to salads, appetizers, and also floated in a punch bowl.



## Fireflies

With the weather warming up, it'll soon be time to start seeing fireflies about in our gardens at night. Many a fond childhood memory has been created by chasing and catching these insects for closer inspection and rustic nightlights. Also called lightning bugs or lampyrid beetles, these magical flyers can easily cause the imagination to believe in fairies and garden sprites. The flat, long-jawed larvae have great appetites for slugs and snails, but the adults eat nothing at all. So not only are they "magical", but they're one of the "beneficials" of the garden ... no wicked witches here! Fairy tales are always best with a happy ending!

## CMGA The Laurel 19



## SPRING

New England – What a beautiful place to be in spring!  
The performance that awaits your applause is like no other.

Look close, for obscured by winter grey skies and naked trees is  
the beginning of nature's marvelous display of color and fragrance.

Quietly dotting the grounds of our quaint common are  
patches of purple and pale blue crocuses,

The bees know.

Patience, like the stars of great performances, the varieties  
of forsythia cascade in swollen flower buds waiting  
to burst their vivid yellow announcement of spring.

Winged seed pods drifting on gentle breezes blanket  
the ground with a potential forest of new trees.

The pungent aroma of wild onion cuts the air.

Daffodils, so hardy and dependable, stand their trumpets up  
to hail the upcoming season.

The azaleas mass and depth of color is matched  
only by those pampered species in botanical gardens.

Take time to enjoy it.

Shrubs of lilac are topped with clusters of ever so fragrant spikes of  
purple and white.

Stately magnolias supporting huge cups and saucer shaped blossoms  
upstage all other.

Walls of green privet are hiding their tiny but  
hardly insignificant fragrant white flowers.

The cast is assembled on a stage of lush green  
carpet of innumerable blades of grass  
awaiting your sensual review.

~ Shirley Mitsko, MG ~ March 2001



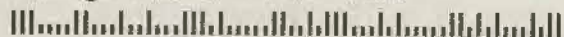
## The Laurel

CT Master Gardeners' Assoc.  
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Quaker Hill, CT 06375

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## CHILDREN'S GARDEN

By Rob Durgy

This summer the Tolland County Cooperative Extension Center will be the host for an exciting new program that will teach children about gardening using sound environmental methods. In a cooperative effort between the University of Connecticut Integrated Pest Management Program and 4-H, we will be involving a number of different youth groups including the Tolland and Windham County vocational agriculture programs, youth service agencies and school classes. The theme will be an alphabet garden, using vegetables and flowers from A to Z. We will have many fun programs throughout the spring and summer including learning how to compost, soil fertility and plant health, attracting beneficial insects and weed identification. All these gardening techniques have a direct impact on our environment. By teaching children the value of land stewardship they will have the knowledge to improve their own future.

Of course this project will not be possible without many helping hands. The Master Gardeners of Tolland and Windham Counties have volunteered to help in any way they can. Thanks to the new MGs choosing to use this as their outreach opportunity, we hope to have plenty of help this spring and summer. That's not to say that we have enough help though. If anyone would like to help with this project, please contact Mary Collins or Rob Durgy at the Tolland Ext. Center, (860) 875-3331.

## CMGA The Laurel 20

### HOMEMADE BUG SPRAY

This recipe was found in the book Garden Crafts for Kids – 50 Great Reasons To Get Your Hands Dirty, by Diane Rhoades; Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1995.

This recipe is not being endorsed, but if anyone would like to try it and report back to the rest of us how it works, The Laurel would love to know!

1 gal. hot water  
8 cloves garlic – peeled and crushed  
1 Tblsp. dried hot pepper (cayenne)  
1 tsp. pure soap  
– **NOT** detergent or dish-washing liquids  
Cheesecloth



Mix water, garlic, pepper and soap in large container. Some people encourage adding mashed bugs, as they feel the scent will deter other insects. Allow to sit 1-2 days. Strain mixture through a cheesecloth, then dispose of residue through your compost. Pour strained liquid into a spray bottle, **CLEARLY MARKED**, and spray any garden plants that show evidence of bug damage. Re-spray periodically.



# The Laurel



Connecticut Master Gardeners' Association

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

This gardening season truly has been a challenge—a three-day heat wave in May followed by a killing frost, a drought followed by torrential rains followed by a drought. New England weather certainly provides us with any number of challenges!

It is with great sadness that I announce the resignation of Mary Collins as our newsletter editor. Mary has worked tirelessly to make this newsletter the extraordinary publication that it is. We are grateful for her efforts. Mary wears several hats and needed to throw this one in the ring, so that she could put more energy into her other efforts. Our newsletter is unparalleled by none. We are going to miss Mary.

Kate Cheromcha will still assist in the newsletter effort, by handling the printing and mailing details. Please direct any mailing concerns to her at the address in the front of this newsletter.

Let's all help in the newsletter effort. We all have information, tips, stories, etc., that can be useful to another gardener. Let's pass it on....

*(Continued on page 3)*

July/August, 2001

Volume 14, Issue 4

## PEACE IN THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Upon entering a garden one immediately feels a weight lifted. Where else in the world do all colors live so closely together in unity? Where else do all parts combine to create a beautiful whole that delights the senses and calms the spirit? Perhaps one of the most beautiful features of a garden is its ability to fit so perfectly in its surroundings yet make the visitor feel separated from the everyday world. This is a feature that unites all gardens all over the world and therefore unites all garden dwellers.

A Garden for Peace simply gives a name and title to that wondrous feeling experienced by anybody who has ever crossed the boundary from reality to tranquility as they stepped into a garden. Gardens are important in every country and every type of environment but they are especially important in areas of high stress; i.e. college campuses and corporate environments. By designing a Garden for Peace in such an area, it will likely bring more awareness to the people of the environment and draw them to the sanctuary. In doing so it is hoped that peace and serenity will spread among the community.

Garden enthusiasts are connected not only in their community but worldwide as well. Gardens also connect us to our environment, making us more aware of our place in the world and teaching us valuable lessons of unity and beauty. Additionally, a garden allows one to connect back to his or her self. Time in a garden can be a very focusing and centering experience, bringing to light those things in life that really matter.

A garden in itself is a breath of fresh air. It can be a source of inspiration and rejoice or a place of repose and tranquility. The composure that a garden offers is indisputable. If one were to consider all of the things that flowers are used for and represent in a lifetime then the wholeness and the relevance of flowers in our lives becomes appreciable. Flowers tie us to birth and new life in the spring, offering a sense of renewal and hope. For marked occasions throughout life flowers are received often as congratulatory symbols. A rose's representation of love and

*(Continued on page 6)*

### Inside This Issue

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The Laurel is published by the CMGA six times a year; January, March, May, July, September and November.



Please submit any articles, suggestions or inquiries by the 10th of the month prior to The Laurel's release to:

Becky Raiola-Paul  
(see 2001 CMGA Officers)

Please include your phone number. Space availability is on a first-received, first-printed basis. Thank you!

Any concerns or problems regarding your newsletter mailings should be brought to the attention of:

Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
Quaker Hill, CT 06375  
(860) 439-0099  
email: dkak1@home.com

(Please contact the Membership chairman for any other membership concerns – see 2001 CMGA Officers list on this page.)

**NOTICE!!!**

Please remember, when sending emails to note the subject as being for the CMGA newsletter. Any emails received from an unfamiliar address without a subject noted will NOT be opened. Thank you for your cooperation!



## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MG COORDINATORS

### North-West District

West Hartford: Katie Melvin - (860) 570-9010  
Torrington: Karen Anderson - (860) 626-6240

### South-West District

Bethel: Sandi Wilson - (203) 207-8440  
No. Haven: Mira Schachne - (203) 407-3161  
Stamford - Bartlett Arboretum: Cheron Barton  
(203) 321-2826

### South-East District

Haddam: John Castagno - (860) 345-4511  
Norwich: Julia Griswold - (860) 887-1608

### North-East District

Brooklyn: Kim Kelly - (860) 774-9600  
Vernon: Mary Collins - (860) 870-6934

Home and Garden Center - UConn Storrs  
1-877-486-6271 (toll-free)

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(877) 486-6271 (toll free)





FROM THE PRESIDENT (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

I recently attended a reception honoring scholarship recipients at UConn. My congratulations go out to Jody Foley, a Master Gardener from Norwich who had the courage to return to school to pursue a degree in Landscape Architecture. Kudos to Jody who received the \$2000 scholarship offered by the CMGA.

Kudos also go out to Daniel Belonick who is our 2001-2002 recipient. Daniel is an Honors student in the Department of Plant Science, and is following the turf grass curriculum.

My congrats also go out to Kim Kelly and the Brooklyn Extension office for their very successful open house. Master Gardeners from the past (I was instructed NOT to say "OLD Master Gardeners") came and signed up for the various outreach projects in the area that were presented. The food was incredible and the camaraderie was enjoyable. I have to say, I have never met a Master Gardener that I didn't like.

Which brings me to my next topic...I am lucky in life as I have a job that I love, and that is working in a garden center. For those of us who have "real" jobs in the real world (I consider the garden center "other-worldly") it is wonderful to think that we can make a difference in other people's lives by sharing our hobby/obsession with them. We need volunteers in all areas of our organization. Our county task forces are being formed and your help is greatly appreciated. If you would like to mentor in your Extension office or help with an outreach program, please call your county coordinator, or call or email me. My phone number is (860) 873-8145; email is: rdrenga@snet.net.

I was also lucky to grow up on a farm in West Granby, and collect some Yankee wisdom about gardening. I would like to share some of those tidbits with you in these newsletters, so that we don't forget them:

Plant turnips 25th of July, wet or dry.

Hollyhocks: Up against the outhouse or the pigpen.

Happy 4th of July to all of you,

Wendy Drenga,
President

CMGA COUNTY REPS

SW District

Diana Ringelheim, 121 Godfrey Road, Fairfield, CT 06432 - telephone: 203-372-8498, email: diana@ringelheim.com

NE District

Tolland County - Lloyd Hinrichs, 62 Church Street, Vernon, CT 06066 - telephone: 860-872-9720, email: mosflower@msn.com

Reps are still needed for other areas of the state. Volunteer today ... It's very rewarding! Contact Wendy Drenga (see page 2) for more details.

CMGA BOARD MEETINGS

For The September Board Meeting, the Bethel Extension Office is under consideration.

Any and all CMGA members are welcome to attend.

UConn Holds ANNUAL SUMMER TOUR

UConn's Plant Science Dept. will host its annual summer tour for the Master Gardeners on Thursday, July 12th, starting at 9:00 am at the Research Farm on Rte. 195 in Storrs. The tour will highlight the recent research being conducted by the professors in the department. The tour is open to this year's interns as well as all certified Master Gardeners. Please call your local Master Gardener Coordinator or the Home & Garden Education Center for registration information (see pg. 2).





## UConn Plant Selector: A NEW ON LINE TOOL

By Jonathan M. Lehrer  
Graduate Student, Dept. of Plant Science, UConn-Storrs

The selection of woody ornamental plants that are both visually pleasing and well suited to perform in specific landscape situations can be a challenge. Traditionally, amateur horticulturists have been forced to consult reference books, magazines and nursery personnel when searching for that "perfect plant." While these sources often yield quality information, they can be cumbersome and time-consuming to use. The power and flexibility of the Internet and database technology can greatly simplify this process, turning plant selection into a quick and satisfying experience. Dr. Mark Brand and a team of graduate students at the University of Connecticut-Storrs have created the UConn Plant Database to assist residents of Connecticut and similar climates with the selection of trees, shrubs and vines hardy in USDA Zones 3-6. The Plant Pages feature of this website (accessible by typing in the URL [www.hort.uconn.edu/plants](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants)) has already been widely accepted as a reliable online encyclopedia of woody ornamentals. The Dept. of Plant Science team has gone further with the recent release of the Plant Selector, a dynamic interactive database allowing pinpoint selection of species with specialized characteristics in only a few seconds.

The Plant Selector, which may be accessed from the menu bar on the left side of the UConn Plant Database homepage, has been engineered for users of any horticultural and computer background. The tool is organized using a form that lists the searchable traits in organized groupings. Simply use your mouse to click the ornamental, cultural and miscellaneous traits in which you are interested. If you are unsure of the meaning of any trait used on the forms, simply click "More Info ..." and you will be brought to a help sheet that describes each characteristic in detail. Comprehensive



general instructions and search tips are also available for new users. Once you have selected the traits you want, click the "Start Search" button. At this point, the powerful database springs into action and locates plants and express all the traits you stipulated. These matching plants are displayed on a new page and you are given the option of reviewing additional information about each candidate in the Plant Pages encyclopedia.

When using the Plant Selector, it is best to employ a strategy involving a series of searches that at first utilize only a few characteristics and then become progressively more complex. The more traits you select on the form, the smaller the odds of finding plants that express all these qualities. Your searches will be much more revealing if you start small and work your way up to that "magic bullet" search. Dr. Brand and his graduate students encourage you and your horticulturally-minded friends to try the Plant Selector. This is a new project and it is anticipated that modifications may be needed to make this resource more useful to users. To aid in this improvement process the UConn team has released an online survey to collect feedback about the Plant Selector and website in general. This questionnaire can be accessed from the homepage and search form. All answers are completely anonymous and the survey may be completed very quickly and simply. There is no substitute for constructive criticism submitted by the target audience of a web site, so the folks in the UConn Dept. of Plant Science hope you will take a few moments and complete this survey. Your answers will be used to improve the Plant Selector and continue the process of adding new features to the UConn Plant Database. With your help, the website will remain an important fixture of New England horticulture for years to come!

## ADVANCED PROGRAM UPDATE

Classes are filling up quickly. But we may still have room even though a registration deadline has passed. If you still want to take a class, call the Home and Garden Center (see page 2) and we will try to fit you in.

Watch your mail for the new Fall Advanced Flyer later this summer!

## JUNIOR PROGRAM UPDATE

The Jr. Master Gardener team will hold some classes for the campers Thursday mornings in July at the Hartford County 4-H Camp. We are still looking for volunteers to help assist in this program. If anyone is interested, please call Cyndi at the Home & Garden Education Center - toll-free 1-877-486-6271.



## RAIN FACTS

It takes about nine days for water to evaporate from the oceans or the surface of the earth, condense as part of a cloud, and fall to earth again as rain or snow.

There are about one million cloud droplets in one raindrop.

The biggest raindrops measure about 1/4 of an inch across.

One inch of rain over one square mile weights about 72,000 tons.

Scientists estimate that 40 million gallons of water in the form of rain, snow, or freezing rain fall on the earth every second.

The wettest place in the world is Mount Waialeale, on the island of Kauai, Hawaii. It rains there an average of 335 days a year, and sometimes as often as 350 days. The total amount of rain each year averages 460 inches, or more than 38 feet!

The driest places in the world are in Chile, South America. In Desierto de Atacama, virtually no rain fell for more than 400 years. In 1972, though, a downpour swept through and caused heavy flooding and mud slides. The village of Arica, in northern Chile, is almost always rainless. It gets an average of 3/100 of an inch of rain a year.

The greatest rainfall in one day (24 hours): 73 inches (that's over 6 feet!), in Cilaos, La Reunion, an island in the Indian Ocean.

The greatest rainfall in one year: 1,042 inches, at Cherrapunji, Meghalaya, India, between August 1, 1860 and July 31, 1861. Cherrapunji also holds the record for the most rain in one month: 366 inches, in July, 1861. Most years, though, the village gets "only" about 425 inches of rain all together.

Facts taken from the book Nature Crafts for Kids - 50 Fantastic Things to Make with Mother Nature's Help, by Gwen Diehn & Terry Krautwurst, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1992.

### NEW CMGA MERCHANDISE NOW AVAILABLE!!!

New logo items now  
available for purchase!

For more details, contact  
**John Neff, 18 Knollwood Rd.,  
Farmington, CT 06032**

## CMGA The Laurel 5

MY FACE IN THE MIRROR  
ISN'T WRINKLED OR DRAWN  
MY HOUSE ISN'T DIRTY  
THE COBWEBS ARE GONE.  
MY GARDEN LOOKS LOVELY,  
AND SO DOES MY LAWN.  
I THINK I MIGHT NEVER  
PUT MY GLASSES BACK ON!

Author unknown - Submitted by Marjorie R. Reid - Class of 2001/Haddam

## ON THE ROAD AGAIN!



The registrations for the summer trips have been very low. We need 40 people to fill each trip or else we will have to cancel them. As a result of low numbers, we were forced to cancel our trip to the Boscobel Mansions and Stonecrop. I would still like to run the other trips, however, we need more participation! Please tell your friends and neighbors, as these trips are not limited to just Master Gardeners! The following trips are still planned:

### Blithewold/Green Animals Topiaries -

July 17 - Register by 7/3 - \$57/mem.-\$62/non.  
Includes lunch.

### Berkshires/Naumkeag -

Aug. 14 - Register by 8/1 - \$45/mem.-\$50/non.

### Kykuit Rockefeller Estate -

Sept. 20 - Register by 9/6.

Also, we have had requests to try the Brandywine Valley trip again for the fall. If anyone is interested in this great trip, we will try again. However, we will need at least 40 people to confirm this trip. The cost will be around \$320.00 a person for the three days.

All trips include your admission, round-trip bus transportation via Deluxe Motorcoach and driver gratuities. For more information, registration deadlines and trip flyers, call the Home & Garden Education Center, toll-free at 1-877-486-6271.



## CIRCLE OF LIFE (CONT.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

friendship is known the world over. A tree is often used as a symbol of growth and strength. When all of these elements are combined in a garden a whole story is told and life is captured. The associations that one makes in a lifetime with certain flowers cannot be escaped in a garden. It is a uniting place symbolized in not only the different types of flowers by also all of the textures and colors of the garden as a whole.

As other elements are brought into the garden its complexity increases and its power to delight grows proportionately. The sound of running water has been used for centuries to calm and relieve stress. There must be thousands of recordings of ocean and river noises. The sound of water in a garden offers a sense of tropical mystery, yet it is such a soothing voice. Statuary can also bring a lot to a garden. It can remind us that angels are present in everyday life, or it can bring to mind the curiosity of a child.

Nobody could ever feel out of place in a garden. It is a welcoming and comforting place to be. The uniqueness of the individual only adds to the beauty of the whole garden just as a unique plant adds to its surroundings. There is no flower, or person who does not belong in a garden. Regardless of race, belief, sexuality, and other differences that are discriminated against, one can always fit perfectly in a garden setting. Everybody brings their own color and life that is a valuable part of the whole; in the sense of a complete individual, a community, and worldwide.

Written by Emily Fagan '03 — First place entry of the Gardens for Peace Arboretum Essay Contest. Reprinted with permission. See Kate Cheromcha's article on this page for more on Gardens for Peace.



## M. G. WEBSITE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Master Gardener Coordinators are busy developing a website for the program. He hope to have it up and running by the fall, but we need your help. We would like some volunteers with web hosting experience to help us out with the technical set up of the site. Any one wishing to earn outreach hours or advanced hours, please call John Castagno, Middlesex Cty. MG Coordinator at 1-860-345-4511.

## GARDENS FOR PEACE

By Kate Cheromcha

Dear Fellow Master Gardeners,

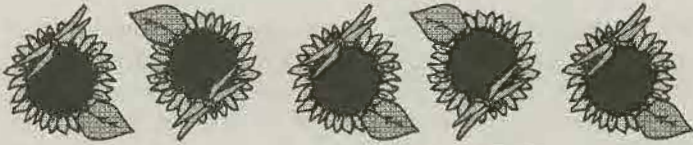
On Friday, May 4th, 2001, I attended a dedication ceremony at Connecticut College, during which the Caroline Black Garden was recognized and named as a Garden for Peace.

Founded in 1984, Gardens for Peace is a non-profit organization that promotes the concept of the garden as a place of meditation and peace. Using criteria developed at the University of Georgia's School of Environmental Design, Gardens for Peace identifies gardens around the world that best exemplify and encourage harmony between humankind and nature. These gardens contribute to the general social welfare and symbolize the tranquility created by the elimination of harmful tensions, discrimination and prejudice. The Caroline Black Garden at Connecticut College is the tenth site designated as a Garden of Peace and the third at an institution of higher education. Other Gardens for Peace are situated at Duke University and Agnes Scott College. The Caroline Black Garden at Connecticut College was nominated for this honor by Janet Brooks '44.

Attending this ceremony, I can vouch for what a beautiful garden this is. It is located on Rte. 32 in New London, CT, on the same side as the college Athletic Center. Visitors can park on the main campus — easily, now that the term has ended — and cross over to the garden via the main entry crosswalk. It is well worth a visit, alone or in conjunction with a visit to the Arboretum on Williams Street.

The first place winner of the Gardens for Peace Arboretum Essay contest, Emily Fagan, '03, has graciously permitted us to reprint her essay (our cover article, see page 1), which was part of the dedication ceremony that day.





## A BIT OF HISTORY

This column features historical gardening and plant information and is also an excellent location to highlight and feature historical projects and gardens in and around Connecticut. So if your particular interest is in historical gardens and plantings, please share your knowledge!

.....

An extensive assortment of plants were used in the depiction of a typical 18th century kitchen garden at the Benton Homestead in Tolland ... and the following are just a few of those plants.

**Horehound** (*Marrubium vulgare*) - Horehound has been recorded for its medicinal benefits back to ancient Greece. It is also one of the ritual bitter herbs of Passover. The menthol-like quality has made it an herb of value for treating respiratory ailments including coughs, scratchy throats and bronchitis during early New England times and even today.

**Johnny-Jump-Ups** (*Viola tricolor*) - Violets of all types are important plants in the herb garden. Johnny-Jump-Ups or "heart's ease" violas were used as a love-charm in Shakespeare's day, as a symbol of the Trinity in monastery gardens, as a medicine for eczema and the flowers were cordials for the heart. The roots and seeds were used as purgatives.

**Lavender** (*Lavandula officinalis*) - Well known for its fragrance, this herb has been used since the times of the Greeks and Romans and still today, in soaps, perfumes, sachets and potpourri. Some of the physical uses include the treatment of migraines, fainting, dizziness and flatulence.

**Wormwood** (*Artemisia absinthium*) - Artemisia was the sister and wife of the Greek/Persian King Mausolus. She was also a famous botanist and medical researcher, and this genus of 200 mostly aromatic plants was named in her honor. The medicinal values of artemesias were discovered by people living in semi-arid and temperate regions where the plants were found. In ancient Greece, Wormwood is mentioned for its worm-expelling property. Indians from New Mexico and British Columbia use similar varieties to treat bronchitis and colds. The Chinese still use it to stop nosebleeds. Many of the artemesias are visually appealing. Their silver leaves are stunning in the moonlight and are popular in dried arrangements. today, artemesias are used for decorative, culinary, household and medicinal purposes.

## THE ROAD SIDE FARM STAND

The purpose of this column is for listing any gardening or other miscellaneous items, tools, information or plants that you may wish to find, sell, buy, barter, trade or just plain get rid of! If you would like to list in this section, please leave your name, number and a detailed message at (860) 228-9436, or contact one of the co-editors (see page 2). Your free "ad" will be run for two (2) consecutive issues, unless notified otherwise.



.....

Wanted: Donation of a laptop computer briefcase, used, in good condition, for the newsletter laptop. Contact Wendy Drenga (see page 2).

.....

For Sale - Consolidated Dutch West Wood Stove - \$450. Right-hand load. Has glass doors, screen, new blower, catalytic converter, brass trim & chimney insert. Call Linda Gardiner at (860) 742-0865.

.....

Wanted: Mantis ComposTwin (a backyard composter with 2 separate 10 bushel bins) - please contact Leslie Stophel - 860-667-3809; email [imstoph@aol.com](mailto:imstoph@aol.com)

.....

For Sale: ComposTumber, large size, on legs, good condition. Paid \$450, asking \$175. Call 860-583-9553, or email [TBB910@Gateway.net](mailto:TBB910@Gateway.net)

.....

For Sale: MTD 10 horsepower chipper/shredder/bagger - used one season - exc. condition. \$450. Call Kathy - 860-633-9056

.....

Anyone thinning out white Japanese iris? I would LOVE some, if the drive's not too far ... call Mary at 860-228-8230. Thanks!



## EARTHWORMS

In 1881 Charles Darwin pointed out that without earthworms, vegetation would vanish from our planet. There would be no trees, grains, grasses, flowers, or vegetables — nothing! Worms are as essential to life as air.

Worms affect the food chain in a very basic way. As they eat, they provide nutrients for the plants that we later eat. Earthworms burrow through the soil, munching and making tunnels as they go and leaving behind digested organic matter called castings. Castings are like black gold, containing thousands of useful bacteria and enzymes and are rich with nutrients for your plants, much richer than the soil that the worms eat. And the humic acid in castings serves as a storehouse for plant nutrients.

To make castings, earthworms must have plenty of food to eat. Like microbes, they feed on organic matter in the soil. Compost is one of their favorite menu items. The underground tunnels that worms make are also useful; they improve the soil structure and make it easier for oxygen and nutrients to penetrate to plant roots. Earthworm tunnels improve heavy clay soils. In fact, soils with healthy earthworm populations drain about four to ten times faster than soils where earthworms aren't present.

Earthworms also get food by coming to the surface at night and pulling leaves and other pieces of plants into their burrows. In one study of earthworms in an apple orchard, scientists discovered that, by spring, night crawlers had buried 90% of all the leaves that had fallen the year before — about a ton of leaves per acre!

Worms, in fact, are the reason why Roman ruins and other ancient buildings seem to "sink" into the ground over the centuries. By constantly churning up the dirt beneath the foundations and adding new soil near the surface, worms gradually bury the buildings.

One of the reasons that worms are so productive is that they're so reproductive. When they mate, redworms create cocoons the size of rice grains. Three to four weeks later, two to five baby worms emerge from each cocoon. If this only happened once a year, the worm population would grow pretty slowly, but one worm can make two to three cocoons each week. Eight redworms can produce fifteen hundred more worms in only six months. If you've ever looked closely at worms, you may have noticed that some have yellow bands around them. Once a worm is old enough to have this band, it can produce cocoons.

Researchers have counted as many as two million earthworms per acre in some soils in the United States. That's more than 400 worms in every square yard. In fact, the worms in an acre of rich pasture may weigh more than the cows and horses grazing on it — as much as 12 tons!

The facts about worms are so unusual, they're almost like science fiction.

- Worms aren't male or female; each worm is both.
- Worms attract each other by giving off pheromones, which are glandular secretions that other worms can smell and are attracted by.
- When they are accidentally cut in half by shovels, worms can grow whole new posteriors.
- Each day, one worm excretes the equivalent of its own weight in castings.
- Pound for pound, one worm is one thousand times stronger than one person.
- Night crawlers can live to be 12 years old.
- Every earthworm has about one thousand bristles that serve as feet.
- Earthworms "hear" by sensing vibrations through the soil.
- Earthworms have a strong sense of smell.
- A worm has three hundred kidneys and five sets of double hearts, but no lungs; it breathes through its skin.
- In one year, one acre of worms in a healthy pasture will plow up about 50 tons of soil and contribute on the average, 105,000 pounds of rich castings. (If you've ever shoveled a truck full of manure onto your garden, you'll appreciate how much work worms do!)

FYI — An expert on worms is called oligochaetologist.

The above article was combined, condensed and adapted from the books Garden Crafts for Kids — 50 Great Reasons To Get Your Hands Dirty, by Diane Rhoades, 1995; and Nature Crafts for Kids — 50 Fantastic Things To Make With Mother Nature's Help, by Gwen Diehn & Terry Krautwurst, Discovery Toys, 1992; both books published by Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.

Ms. Rhodes includes a detailed project on creating your own worm condo for vermicomposting (composting with the help of worms). She also encourages readers to reference the following books on the subject:

- Worms Eat My Garbage: How to Set Up and Maintain a Worm Composting System, by Mary Appelhof; Kalamazoo: Flower Press, 1982
- Worms Eat Our Garbage: Classroom Activities for a Better Environment, by Mary Appelhof, Mary Frances Fenton & Barbara Loss Harris; Kalamazoo: Flower Press, 1993.





## A STORY TO WHICH WE CAN ALL RELATE!

by Mary Collins

I so enjoyed reading Ronald Rood's book, Loon in My Bathtub (New England Press), not only for the humorous nature stories he had to share, but as a graduate of the University of Connecticut, he recounted some of the experiences he had while a student at the university. Although the following excerpt occurs during his employment at the Long Island Institute, it hit quite close to home for me, as I'm sure it will for many of you as well, since we have all had to survive "choice moments" during our hours of office outreach service ...

"Long Island's mushrooming suburban growth in the early 1950's led thousands of people into contact with a semblance of the wide open spaces — many of them for the first time. They turned to the Institute for information. And so my natural interest led me to try to help with some of their questions. These ranged all the way from how to care for a sick rosebush to what to do for termites in a honeymoon cottage.

"Some of these requests came in the form of boxes and packages in the morning's mail. Others came as worried homemakers or their spouses, patiently sitting in the outer office with a bundle of something-or-other that whispered or scratched or occasionally moved as they waited. Still other requests arrived by telephone. Sometimes we could make suggestions immediately, but often we had to ferret out all the facts before we made a diagnosis:

"My elm looks all brown, Mr. Rood. What can I do to save it??"

"Well, it's impossible to say over the phone without further information. Does it get plenty of water?"

"Oh, yes. It gets as much water as the other elms, and they're all nice and green."

"Has there been any digging, or road-building, or other work that would damage the roots?"

"No, this is in our back yard. And the street's out front."

"And you say your other elms are all healthy. Do you see any evidence of insect attack on the foliage?"

"Insects? I should say not! How could they live with the incinerator right beneath the tree?"

"We told her it'd help a lot to move her incinerator."

Sound familiar?? As this year's students continue to field similar call at their area Extension Centers, remember how it was for you, and volunteer! Your experiences can prove to be invaluable!

CMGA The Laurel 9

## UPCOMING EVENTS, LECTURES & CLASSES

### NE District

Tune in to GARDEN TALK on WTIC-AM Saturdays from 12-2pm.

### SE District

Let us know what's happening in your area!

### SW District

At the New Canaan Nature Center ...

**Ornamental Herbaceous Plants: Annuals** – 4 Mondays, July 9-30, 5:30-7:30 pm, Members: \$133; Non-\$148 – #SU-HRT- 341A

**Introduction to Plant Propagation** – 6 Wednesdays, July 18-Sept. 6 (no class 8/22 & 8/29), 6:15-9:15pm, Members: \$317; Non-\$350 – #SU-GAR-311B

**Plant Combinations Using Annuals with Perennials** – Sat., July 28, 10am-2:30pm, Members:\$42; Non-\$46 – #SU-GAR-178B

Call 1-718-817-8747 for more information.

### NW District

Let us know what's happening in your area!

## THANK YOU!

Dear Ms. Drenga,

I wish to sincerely thank you and your organization for the \$2000 Connecticut Master Gardener Association Scholarship, of which I am the recipient for Fall 2001. I will be starting my sophomore year at UCONN in the field of Turfgrass Science, and I appreciate this gift which allows me to continue my studies.

Again, my thanks to the Connecticut Master Gardener Association and to the Scholarship Committee of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture for selecting me for this award.

Sincerely,

Daniel Belonick  
Tuckahoe, N.Y.

June 11, 2001





## NE DISTRICT NEWS

The walking bridge project on the old Jillson Hill Bridge located in Willimantic is moving ahead! Plans include raised planters/beds with UConn supplying landscape architectural and irrigation design and support. An outstanding outreach opportunity – Call Kim Kelly at the Brooklyn Ext. Center to volunteer (see page 2).

**HELP IS NEEDED!!!** Due to the majority of the Tolland/Windham Counties' current MG class being located in the Windham County (Brooklyn office) area, the Vernon Extension Center is in dire need of certified MGs to help cover the phones during the summer months. If you have a few hours you can spare to volunteer, it would be GREATLY appreciated! MG office hours are 9am-4pm, but **ANY** help would be great! Call the Vernon Ext. Center at 860-875-3331 to schedule. Remember, office hours count towards advanced outreach requirements!

Tolland County Cook Book ... There's still time for those of you in Tolland County who have not yet submitted your recipes for the cook book project! PLEASE mail or email (Cooknwme@aol.com) them to Mary Collins ASAP! Thank you!

Anyone even **THINKING** they would like to work at the Tolland County 4-H and Hebron Harvest Fairs this year, please contact Mary Collins (see page 2). Due to the limited coverage in the office this year, we want to be confident of adequate coverage for the MG booth **PRIOR** to committing to these two events. What a great opportunity to get together with former classmates! Come join the fun! Remember, fair hours count towards advanced outreach as well!

## SE DISTRICT NEWS

The next **OPEN HOUSE** will be held at the Middlesex Cooperative Extension Center in Haddam, on Thursday, July 12th at 7:00 pm. Mark your calendar and come enjoy a pleasant and informative evening!

The accessible greenhouse at Camp Harkness is complete, thanks to volunteers and friends. It is **BEAUTIFUL** and we look forward to our first program in 2001. Anyone wishing to volunteer with this project, or other areas opportunities, please contact Julia Griswold (see pg. 2).

## SW DISTRICT NEWS

Any New Haven County Certified MG who wants to contribute time and rejoin our active group – or who needs outreach for Advanced Certification, please contact MG Program Coordinator, Mira Schachne (see page 2). Mira may also be reached by email at mschachn@canr.uconn.edu.

## NW DISTRICT NEWS

Mark your calendars! The first Connecticut Community Gardening Conference is planned for Saturday, Sept. 15th! Entitled **Planting Seeds for Tomorrow**, see page 13 for further details.

What's happening in your area?

## THE MEANING OF FLOWERS & HERBS

|                    |   |   |                         |                |   |   |                    |
|--------------------|---|---|-------------------------|----------------|---|---|--------------------|
| Dianthus           | - | - | Affection               | Violet         | - | - | Faith              |
| Rose               | - | - | Love                    | Bee Balm       | - | - | The Enchantress    |
| Myrtle             | - | - | Passion                 | Butterfly Bush | - | - | Refinement         |
| Lavender           | - | - | Devotion                | Cabbage        | - | - | Profit             |
| Thyme              | - | - | Courage & Strength      | Corn           | - | - | Riches             |
| White Alyssum      | - | - | Worth beyond beauty     | Marigold       | - | - | Grief & Despair    |
| Sage               | - | - | Long life & Good health | Potato         | - | - | Benevolence        |
| Lily of the Valley | - | - | Peace                   | Sunflower      | - | - | Haughtiness        |
| Marjoram           | - | - | Joy                     | Zinnia         | - | - | Thoughts of absent |
| Rue                | - | - | Light                   |                |   |   | friends            |
| Daisy              | - | - | Hope                    |                |   |   |                    |

~ Taken from the book *Garden Crafts for Kids – 50 Great Reasons To Get Your Hands Dirty*, by Diane Rhoades, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1995



## REAPING THE HARVEST!

Welcome to our corner, for a recipe (or more), and tips for storing, growing, and preserving the season's harvest. Submittals may be sent to the co-editors (see pg. 2). Come and share "the harvest!"



Submitted by Kim Kelly '99

'Tis the season for fresh berries. Strawberries are a gardener's delight. Easy to grow and pick. I have borrowed this recipe from the Ball Blue Book, so I will not take full credit for this one. However this jam recipe is extremely popular!!!!!! I have been able to barter for cow manure, dahlia tubers and empty mason jars.....all for a small jar of jam. What is especially nice is that there is no pectin to be added. If you should overcook your first batch do not despair, it makes a dynamite strawberry sauce. The sauce has been useful on ice cream, cheesecake, even frozen drinks.

T<sup>o</sup> grow strawberries, I grow a June-bearing strawberry. It produces a heavy June crop. It is susceptible to many diseases. I replant every year. The berries big and plentiful. With ample mulching, and bone meal they have been very reliable.



2 quarts strawberries  
6 cups sugar

Wash and crush strawberries. Combine strawberries and sugar in a large saucepan. Bring slowly to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly to gelling point, about 40 minutes. As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Remove from heat. Skim foam if necessary. Ladle hot jam into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Process 15 minutes in boiling water.

Stay tuned because the vegetable garden is starting to thrive....and it is almost raspberry season! YUMMMMM!

**"Compared to gardeners, I think it is generally agreed that others understand very little about anything of consequence."**

A quote by Henry Mitchell

From the book *A Gardener's Bouquet of Quotations*, edited by Maria Polushkin Robbins, The Ecco Press, 1993

## CMGA The Laurel 11

### Yes, It's True ...

Dear CMGA members,

As you've already read in Wendy's president's letter, I have decided to step down from my position with this newsletter.

The decision did not come easily, for I've thoroughly enjoyed working with this publication, making improvements which I hope the majority of you have approved of (and I feel that has been accomplished, based on the many compliments we have received over the past year and a half ... thank you!).

But, I have found it necessary to "pass the trowel" as it may be, for a number of reasons, but, namely, in order to reclaim my own life, for my husband and family ... and my gardens too!

Working with Kate Cheromcha has been one of the best parts of this undertaking ... she's been patient, creative, supportive and certainly a "friend indeed" as we've brought this newsletter forward and upward ... her humor has helped many a frazzled deadline, and she's been a huge contributor, in the form of the variety of articles she has penned as well. Kate has decided to continue in the capacity of "editorial support," handling the printing and distribution of the newsletter, along with continuing to contribute as she is able, which is a valuable asset to this publication and organization as a whole. She will continue to handle newsletter mailing issues, however, other membership inquiries should be directed to John Carlson (see page 2).

CMGA Vice-President, Becky Raiola-Paul, has agreed to take on creating the newsletter, as of the September/October, 2001 issue ... submittals for this and future issues should be forwarded to Becky (see page 2). Please ... if you've been waiting to be personally asked, then consider this my personal appeal to you ... give your support by sharing your own personal knowledge and experiences in this publication! As I've said many times before, this is a membership newsletter, and without the continued input and active participation of the membership, it cannot continue to be the quality publication you have come to expect these past months. This is a volunteer effort, and it can only be as good as you make it!!!

I won't be disappearing totally ... as I've made many friends, and will also continue to work as the Tolland County MG Program Coordinator, and I look forward to seeing where The Laurel goes from here!

Meanwhile, I'll be "wandering in the weeds" ...

Mary Collins



## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

If there isn't a telephone number listed by the project, contact the local Cooperative Extension MG Program Coordinator for that area (see page 2).

### SW District

The Scott Fanton Museum in Danbury. Historic gardens.

CSI - Norwalk - Young girls' short-term detention center. Lovely greenhouse on site. Work with young girls approx. 10-14 years old. Gardening, greenhouse work and nature craft projects.

Southbury Training School, Dept. of Mental Retardation - Need help with many gardens. Call Volunteer Services - (203) 586-2485.

New Canaan Nature Center - Call Gail Egol (203) 966-9577.

So. Stamford Community Garden - call Chris Hadin (203) 323-1978.

### NE District

Nature Trail - located at the Tolland Cty. Ext. Center in Vernon. Help is needed in all aspects including trailwork, field trip curriculum and promotion/marketing.

Tolland Cty. Ext. Center - Vernon - Opportunity to design and plant gardens around the center.

Willimantic - Bridge conversion - get involved with converting the old Jillson Hill bridge into a walking bridge/park with flowers, trees and more!

Immaculata Retreat House - Willimantic. Contact Marie Kuchy at 860-537-5556 or email kuchiman@snet.net

### SE District

#### Community Gardening

Town of Groton — Town of Waterford

#### Gardening with Disabled

Camp Harkness, Waterford — Byran House, Haddam

### SE District (cont.)

DMR Group Homes - Alliance for Living, New London

#### Correctional Facilities

York C.I., East Lyme

Montville Expansion Minimum Security Facility

#### Historic Gardens

Florence Griswold, Old Lyme

Hart House, Old Saybrook

Shaw Mansion, New London

### NW District

The Friends of Elizabeth Park are looking for volunteers. Staff the Park Information Center. Write to: Friends of Elizabeth Park, P.O. Box 370361, W. Hartford, CT 06137-0361

Jubilee House, Hartford, needs help with maintaining their garden. There is also a need to develop urban gardening classes.

W. Hartford campus. A joint 4<sup>th</sup> grade sustainable/butterfly garden project. <sup>Mira Schachne</sup> be reached by email

Community Gardening Co. <sup>(see page 13)</sup>. Any interest in <sup>conference</sup> or creating test plots?

Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington - sunken garden.

Auer Farm in Bloomfield always needs loads of help!

Hungerford Nature Center, Kensington - creating new gardens & working with children. Call Bob Levitt at (860) 827-9064.

Plymouth Historical Society - historic gardens

Prime Time House, Torrington - disabled clients.

Community Gardens, Torrington

**Please!** Tell us of outreach opportunities in your area!





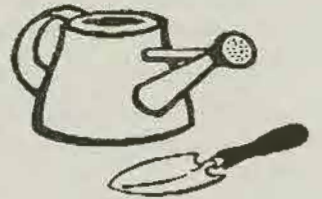
# ***PLANTING SEEDS FOR TOMORROW***

A Connecticut Community Gardening Conference

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2001  
8:00 AM – 4:00 PM  
AT THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF HARTFORD  
50 Bloomfield Avenue  
Hartford, CT**



**Workshops  
Garden Tour  
Demonstrations  
And much, much more!**



**Sponsored by:**

**American Community Gardening Association  
CT Master Gardener Association  
Knox Parks Foundation  
UConn Cooperative Extension System  
USDA, Farm Service Agency  
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**For more information call:**

**Katie (860) 570-9013, Cyndi (877) 486-6271, Jack (860) 951-7694,  
Ross (860) 688-7725 X2 or Carol (203) 787-0390**



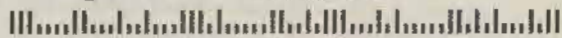
## The Laurel

CT Master Gardeners' Assoc.  
c/o Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
Quaker Hill, CT 06375

Next Newsletter Deadline:  
Friday, August 10, 2001

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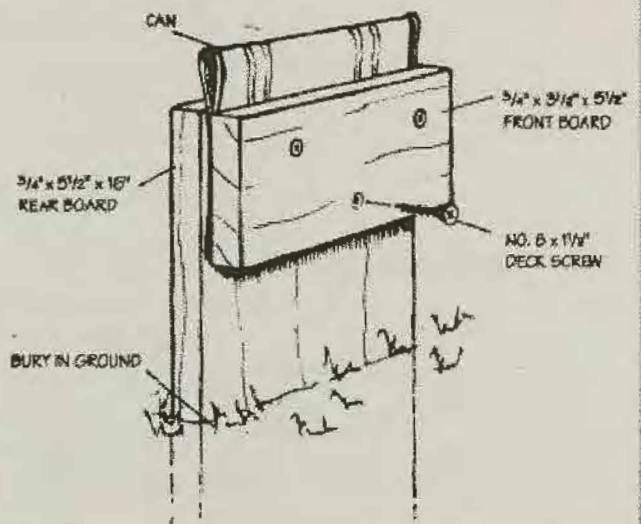
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## SHOE SCRAPER

CMGA The Laurel 14

Gardeners are some of the best recyclers ... composting, creating "unique" garden ornaments, etc. ... and this is one of the best "recycled" ideas to come around in a long time! Give it a try!

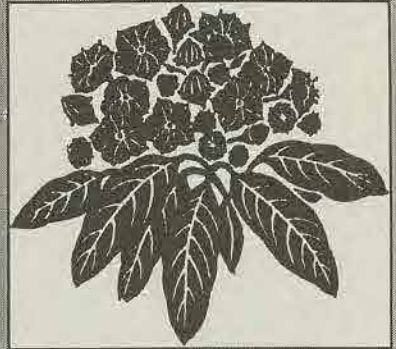
Take a clean, empty can, with both ends cut out of it, and flatten it, either by stepping on it, or pounding it with a hammer. Use scrap lumber - you'll need two pieces of wood, one at least  $\frac{3}{4}$ "x $5\frac{1}{2}$ "x16", the other  $\frac{3}{4}$ "x $3\frac{1}{2}$ "x $5\frac{1}{2}$ ". Following the illustration below, pre-drill three holes and screw the wood pieces together, with the can sandwiched between, the edge of the can extending about 1" above the end of the wood. Firmly bury about 10" of the post into the ground at the edge of your garden or by the door to your house. Run the soles of your shoes or boots across the can to scrape off the dirt.



Information taken from the book Garden Crafts for Kids - 50 Great Reasons To Get Your Hands Dirty, by Diane Rhoades, Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1995



# The Laurel



Connecticut Master Gardeners Association

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

September/October, 2001

Volume 14, Issue 5

## A RENEWAL OF FAITH

At this writing we are in the midst of a week-long heat wave. At the garden center some of the plants have shut down and stopped drinking all together. We look forward to fall pumpkins, mums, and transplanting. We look longingly at the weeds, as they are winning in this heat. I am reminded of the expression: "One year's seed is seven year's weed." New weeds are popping up, aliens from another galaxy. Bigger and better....

With fall comes some important events. I urge all of you to attend graduations at your respective centers and support the new graduates. It will also give you a chance to catch up on new happenings at your extension and get "back in the fold".

Open House is also a great way to reconnect with old friends.

*(Continued on page 3)*

It was a chilly day in late September and the remnants of any early morning fog filtered the sun as it rose above the tree-line. It was also one of those mornings when, even to the country dweller, Nature seemed to have somehow tucked itself temporarily out of sight and the Fall season in its infancy had seemingly vanished into an early state of hibernation. The air was calm and the leaves hung motionless from their branches, still yet green and waiting patiently for that time when they would transform themselves into their annual spectacle of wondrous color and beauty. There seemed to be, at least for the moment, the absence of the birds' song, except for the shrill cry of a red-tailed hawk gliding otherwise silently over the air currents above a distant field. The Fall season had just begun and the welcome announcement by the birds of winter had yet to be heard.

Fall garden chores for the most part had been completed, having rolled up and stored away the waterlines as well as having retrieved an assortment of pegs, coils of fencing, and other odd pieces of equipment which had been left lying scattered amongst the debris. Still remaining to be tackled were the cutting of the spent cornstalks, along with finding the hoe which had been lost in the weeds during battle with a persistent woodchuck earlier in the summer. These tasks, however, could wait for awhile as it was that time of the year when a break from summer's many demanding farm chores and activities was always so welcomed.

As I sat on the bar-way in front of the farmhouse that morning, scanning the distant meadows and bog for some sign of activity or other burst of nature's splendor (which perhaps would bring special meaning to the day), I was suddenly reminded of what my grandfather had once said to me many years ago. He had explained to me on that occasion how Nature was always around us, and how sometimes we needed only to coax it from its many hiding places.

*(Continued on page 6)*

### Inside This Issue

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The Laurel is published by the CMGA six times a year; January, March, May, July, September and November.



Please submit articles, suggestions or inquiries by the 10th of the month prior to The Laurel's release to:

Becky Raiola-Paul  
259 Saw Mill Road  
Guilford, CT 06437  
(203) 458-8413  
email: r.r.paul@att.net

Please include your phone number. Space availability is on a first-received, first-printed basis. Thank you!

Any concerns or problems regarding your newsletter mailings should be brought to the attention of:

Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
Quaker Hill, CT 06375  
(860) 439-0099  
email: dkak1@home.com

(Please contact the Membership Chairman for any other membership concerns – see 2001 CMGA Officers list on this page.)

#### **NOTICE!!!**

Please remember, when sending emails to note the subject as being for the CMGA newsletter. Any emails received from an unfamiliar address without a subject noted will NOT be opened. Thank you for your cooperation!

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MG COORDINATORS

### North-West District

West Hartford: Katie Melvin - (860) 570-9010  
Torrington: Karen Anderson - (860) 626-6240

### South-West District

Bethel: Sandi Wilson - (203) 207-8440  
No. Haven: Mira Schachne - (203) 407-3161  
Stamford - Bartlett Arboretum: Cheron Barton  
(203) 321-2826

### South-East District

Haddam: John Castagno - (860) 345-4511  
Norwich: Julia Griswold - (860) 887-1608

### North-East District

Brooklyn: Kim Kelly - (860) 774-9600  
Vernon: Mary Collins - (860) 870-6934

Home and Garden Center - UConn Storrs  
1-877-486-6271 (toll-free)

## 2001 CMGA OFFICERS

### President: Wendy Drenga

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### Membership: John Carlson

209 Old Cart Rd.  
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(860) 345-8807  
Email: john.l.carlson@worldnet.att.net

### Extension Liaison: Cyndi Wyskiewicz

(877) 486-6271 (toll free)



(Continued from page 1)

The Haddam Open House was held recently. Master Gardeners from past years heard about some of the Outreach projects that are currently in process.

Also, the Tolland County Open House will be held September 29 at the Vernon office at 11:00. A tour of the new nature trail will be at 10:00. For information call (860) 875-3331.

Recently the semi-annual meeting was held at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington. We had a great meeting with lots of attendees and a wonderful pot-luck dinner. After the meeting we had a presentation and tour of the Sunken Garden by Master Gardener Margie Carpenter, who is their volunteer coordinator. Thanks Margie for your personal insight and tour of this national treasure. I urge everyone to visit the Sunken Garden.

On September 23, 2001, the seventh annual Cornucopia Fest will be held at UCONN from 10:00 to 3:00. We will have an information table there manned by Cyndi Wyskewicz and our plant doctor, Ed Marrotte.

The Connecticut Community Gardening Conference "Planting Seeds for Tomorrow" will be held on Saturday, September 15, 2001 from 8:00 to 4:00 at the Unitarian Church, 50 Bloomfield Avenue, Hartford. There will be informational workshops and demonstrations. Please plan to attend this very important conference. For information, please call Katie (860) 570-9013 or Cyndi (877) 486-6271.

The next board meeting will be held September 11, 2001 at the Bethel Extension at 11:00. This meeting will be followed by a Symposium Committee meeting. All those interested in helping out with the Symposium should attend. We are currently looking for timely topics and interesting speakers for next year's Symposium which will be held at Manchester Community College on March 9, 2002. Please call or email me if you would like to help out.

Our Annual Meeting and pot-luck will be held at the new Litchfield County Extension office in Torrington. We will have nominations and elections, along with a brief business meeting followed by a tour of the new facilities. All members are invited and encouraged to attend these meetings.

As you can see, we have decided to raise the dues this year from \$10 to \$15. This will help defray the costs of the newsletter and hopefully give us a little more money to devote to outreach.

### CMGA COUNTY REPS

#### SW District

Diana Ringelheim, 121 Godfrey Road, Fairfield, CT 06432 - telephone: 203-372-8498, email: diana@ringelheim.com

#### NE District

Tolland County - Lloyd Hinrichs, 62 Church Street, Vernon, CT 06066 - telephone: 860-872-9720, email: mosflower@msn.com

#### NW District

Hartford County - Steering Committee Lead, Larry Van Der Jagt, (860) 658-7716. Please see article in this issue for particulars on the County's Team.

Reps are still needed for other areas of the state. Volunteer today ... It's very rewarding!

Welcome to Becky Paul as our new Newsletter Editor. Everyone's contributions to this effort are encouraged!

Now it is time to keep the pests from eating the fruits of our labor. Old New England Yankee solutions:

- "Make a slurry of decomposed slugs and paste on vegetables to keep unwanted out."
- "Dress a scarecrow in red to keep crows from the corn."
- "Wash a cat and dump the bathwater in the garden to defray rodents."
- Cats? "Cut up an old hose-pipe into 2 foot lengths and 'snake' thru the garden."
- Dogs? "Plant Rue."

And remember, as you are yanking those weeds: "A man needs a cast-iron back with a hinge in it!"

Happy pumpkin picking!

*Wendy Drenga, President*

*"...he who cultivates a garden, and brings to perfection flowers and fruits, cultivates and advances at the same time his own nature."  
- Ezra Weston*



**MINUTES**  
**CMGA SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING**  
**JUNE 23, 2001**  
**HILL-STEAD MUSEUM**  
**FARMINGTON, CT**

Wendy Drenga, President, called the Semi-Annual Meeting to order at 12:25 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Twenty-six members were present including: Wendy Drenga, President; Becky Raiola-Paul, Vice-President; Cyndi Wyskiewicz, Program Specialist, Education Outreach, UCONN; Sue Hendrick-Wilson, Secretary.

**MINUTES, THE MARCH 13, 2001 BOARD MEETING**

The minutes were read and accepted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Lucy Goodridge, Treasurer, submitted the following report dated this day and presented in her absence by Wendy Drenga.

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT | \$10,497.23 |
| MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT   | 7,681.68    |
| CHECKING ACCOUNT       | 714.78      |
| TOTAL                  | \$18,893.69 |

A motion was made and passed to accept the Treasurer's Report.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**DUES**--Current dues are \$10 per annum. The membership present voted to increase dues to \$15 per annum for the 2001-2002 year.

**NEWSLETTER**--We need committees to investigate obtaining grants to support The Newsletter and to study the feasibility of including paid advertisements. Mary Collins, our Newsletter guiding light, has resigned and Becky Raiola-Paul will assume her editorial duties.

**C.M.G.A. SHIRTS, ETC.**--The Association thanks John Neff and Paul Grimmeisen for their superb work organizing and managing our items for sale.



**BANNERS**--Cyndi Wyskiewicz reported that the banners should be ready in July.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**2002 SYMPOSIUM**--Marie Dube reported that we need a new chairperson immediately. John Neff will continue as Registrar but we need both a Speaker Chairman and a Program Advertisements Solicitor immediately.

**AUDITING COMMITTEE**--The C.M.G.A. books will need to be audited this year.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**--The 2-year terms of the current Treasurer and Secretary end this calendar year and we need to nominate replacements.

**MEMBERSHIP**--There are currently 654 registered members.

**COMMUNITY GARDENING CONFERENCE**-- "Planting Seeds for Tomorrow," a Connecticut Community Gardening Conference, will be held on Saturday September 15, 2001, 8AM -4 PM at the Unitarian Society of Hartford, 50 Bloomfield Avenue, Hartford, CT. There will be workshops, demonstrations, a garden tour and much invaluable information for those interested in this important, timely subject. Please contact Katie (860)570-9013 or Cyndi (877)486-6271 for details. Cyndi Wyskiewicz will be requesting a donation from the C.M.G.A. to help defray expenses.

**NEXT BOARD MEETING**--September 11, 2001, 11 AM, Bethel Ext. Office.

**NEXT SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING**--November 3, 2001, Torrington Ext. Office.

**THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED** AT 1:15 PM and was followed by a presentation, "The Sunken Garden," by Master Gardener and Volunteer Coordinator at Hill-Stead, Maggie Carpenter. Members were then invited to tour the Museum and its grounds.

-Sue Hendrick-Wilson, Secretary



## The Army Worm

In Bethel, we have all been quite busy in the office working on samples and calls from clients. We have had quite a few inquiries on Armyworms (*Pseudaletia unipuncta*) this summer, which marched across and devoured many lawns throughout the state. Reports of lawns moving and armies of insects marching across turf and committing mass suicide in built-in swimming pools were common. This was the first major infestation in Connecticut since 1937.

The caterpillars (approximately 1 to 1 1/2 inches long) range from black to khaki colored and have a light stripe down the center of their smooth body. A whitish inverted "Y" is usually apparent on the top of their heads. The larvae usually have 6 instars and the last two typically due the most damage.

The primary food sources of the armyworm include grasses, millet, oats, corn and rice. They will also feed on barley, rye and wheat and various vegetable crops. The larvae feed continuously for about a month, but in large numbers can seriously damage turf in only a few days. After pupating for 2 to 3 weeks in the soil or in clumps of grass, they become a brownish non-descript moth with a faint black line and a tiny silver spot the size of a pencil point on each wing. The moths are hatching now. They will be laying eggs soon and a second generation of armyworms is expected.

The good news is that damage from the next generation is not expected to be as bad as the first since many of the first generation were wiped out by pesticides, birds, parasitic flies and other predators. If the next generation is detected early enough, BT (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*) can be applied to the 1st and 2nd instars. In addition, if the grass plants were not damaged at the crowns, keeping the lawn well watered and fertilized can enhance recovery. For severely damaged lawns overseed in the fall. Grasses that contain endophytes, such as perennial rye and some of the fescues, are resistant to the armyworm. Most outbreaks in past years were followed by years with little or no damage from the armyworm -- so lets keep our fingers crossed...

- Sandi Wilson, Bethel MG Coordinator

### CMGA Trip Update

Unfortunately, due to the low response this year we had cancel all of our trips. There just didn't seem to be enough interest. We will wait until next year to organize these events. Thanks to all of you who responded for your interest and support.

CMGA

The Laurel

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## UCONN Foundation

Please consider making an individual tax-deductible contribution to the UCONN Foundation, Master Gardener Account, to help augment the Federal and State funds provided for our programs.

There are no forms, no limits or recommendations on the amount of your contribution. Just be sensitive to the need for your support and give generously. Your contribution may be sent to:

**Mr. Roy Jeffrey**  
**UCONN Cooperative Extension System**  
**1376 Storrs Road, U4134**  
**Storrs, CT 06269**

Checks should be made payable to UCONN Foundation. Please make sure to note "Master Gardener Account" in the memo space.

Thank you.

## NEAHTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Northeast Chapter*

*American Horticultural Therapy Conference*

*September 28 and 29, 2001*

*Daggett Farm, Rhode Island*

**"GARDENING FOR LIFE"**

The effects of Horticultural Therapy on Physical,  
Emotional and Social Well-Being

The conference features concurrent sessions, hands-on workshops, a display competition, a silent auction, and tours of the Roger Williams Park and Daggett Farm; a panel of presenters will discuss their use of horticultural therapy with various populations. This year, 20 to 25 horticultural therapists from Japan will attend the annual conference. Richard H. Tyre, the keynote speaker, will explore the spiritual aspects of horticulture and the influence of personalities on gardening.

For More information or a registration form, contact Lorraine Brison (413) 584-4040 x2106, or Anna McLaughlin (401) 722-2038.

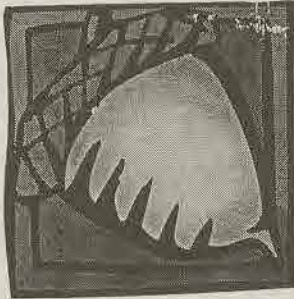


## A RENEWAL OF FAITH (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

It was then that I also recalled a couple of weeks earlier when I had gone to visit and renew the acquaintance of a friend whom I had not seen in many years. On that mid-September afternoon we had been reading some short essays together which had been written by one of our favorite authors of outdoor life, and we were sharing some of our past memories and experiences from our own respective farms back in earlier years. My friend at one point in our conversation remarked to me about how much she used to look forward to spring plowing and planting time, when the smell of the newly turned earth filled the air with an unmistakable freshness, and how the soil seemed to be beckoning to receive the seed so that it could begin its annual renewal of life and growth. Also recalled was the excitement which she felt when an occasional stone artifact would be spotted lying in the furrow of the plow, left there hundreds of years before by the Native American inhabitants.

While pondering those recollections that morning as I leaned against the fence rails, there seemed to be little reason for me not to experience that same smell and freshness today, knowing full well that from a practical standpoint little else would probably be gained by it.



The aged tractor which we own had not been used much that particular summer and the plow needed to be pulled out of storage in the barn then hitched and adjusted. Oil and fuel were added to the machinery, and the adventure soon appeared to be

well underway.

I chose a field in which to till that was long and rather narrow. It had been named by my great-great-grandfather the "Pondhole Lot". (He had names for all of his lots. I suppose he did this in order to identify them readily, being there were so many lots on his farm and because each was used for a particular purpose.)

The field appeared to be in somewhat of a neglected state as I drove through the opening in the stone wall which surrounded it. This was the first season in many years that it had not been planted to field corn, and a heavy cover of tall, dense weeds had taken over concealing the previous season's stubble of corn stalks which still protruded from the ground below. Although lacking a majestic appearance, the heavy cover with its hues of brown and tan did have a suggestion of autumn about them.

As I lowered the plow into the ground the first time and started to circle the field, a certain sense of exuberation came over me when I looked back and observed the weed cover and black earth effortlessly rolling and inverting itself with such precision. It was not long before a sense of automation had taken over as the tractor followed through the seemingly endless furrow, and my thoughts began to harmonize with the view which surrounded me. A few birds had begun to arrive on the scene, flickering across the newly exposed sod and snatching at the worms and beetles which had been brought to the surface. Any monotony was swiftly broken however as I happened to look ahead and observed the distinctive cloud of yellow jackets awaiting my arrival. Apparently, their nest had been uplifted from the ground on my previous pass and they obviously were not pleased about it. My collar went up around my neck and my shirtsleeves were quickly buttoned...full speed ahead...luckily I was not stung as a result of the incident.

Upon rounding the corner on my final pass for the day, a cottontail rabbit came into view at the opposite end of the field. I watched as it darted about, stopping occasionally as if to gather its bearings after having lost a portion of its summer habitat to the plow.

When the last furrow had been turned and as the sun was nearing the Western horizon of Mashentuck Mountain, my thoughts could not help turning to how my great-great-grandfather must have labored behind his plow and team of horses as they traversed this very same field generations ago. On a quiet edge of the field facing the setting sun was the sand bank where he buried those same horses when their ability to draft had finally ceased. There was the ice pond on the Eastern side of the field, and the remains of the stone foundation upon which the ice house once stood. There was the enormous spreading oak tree just beyond the sand bank, still appearing stately despite its old age. Evidence of a large beaver dam loomed in the distance as it intersected and crossed the distant brook.

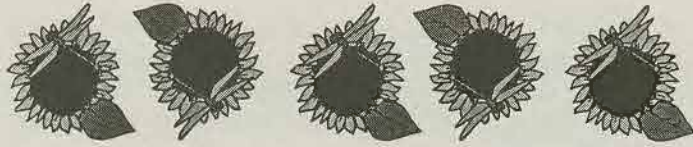
No, Nature's abundance had not gone into hibernation on this day. It had just been waiting to be prodded from one of its hiding places. A friend's favorite recollection had made this day a day for me not to be soon forgotten.

Perhaps tomorrow I will trod this newly exposed patch of earth in search of an artifact of my own. Perhaps I will pack a picnic lunch and walk the abandoned coach road which crosses Mashentuck Mountain to the West. And perhaps tomorrow I will share all of this with a friend.

- Ray Burlingame II, MG 2000 (Vernon)

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."  
- William Shakespeare





**CMGA MEMBER  
ROBERT ADAMS PASSES**

Robert "Bob" Adams, an avid gardener from Brookfield, Connecticut passed away on February 8, 2001.

Bob was a Certified Master Gardener and an active member of the Connecticut Master Gardener's Association. He was a Mentor at the Bethel Cooperative Extension Office and volunteered much of his free time, with his wife Carol, overseeing two special outreach projects in the local community. These included the re-creation of a Historical Garden at the Scott-Fanton Museum in Danbury, CT and working with the residence of the Southbury Training School to establish community gardens in Southbury, CT. The Southbury gardens were part of the SpecialOlympics project and they won numerous awards through out the years.

Before Bob turned his full attention to gardening and volunteering, he was employed by the United States Government. His first employment was with the IRS and then he was a Contract Administrator for the Department of Defense. Following his retirement from governmental service, Bob ran a gardening consulting business from his home.

For all of us who knew or worked with Bob, his sincerity, enthusiasm, wit and overall love for life will be impossible to replace and sorely missed. In honor of his love of gardening, a special scholarship has been set up at the Bethel Extension Office. It has been established in his memory to aid fellow gardeners who need financial assistance to take the Master Gardener Course.

If you would like to contribute, please make your check payable to the University of Connecticut, with Bob Adams Scholarship Fund noted in the memo line. Please send all contributions to:

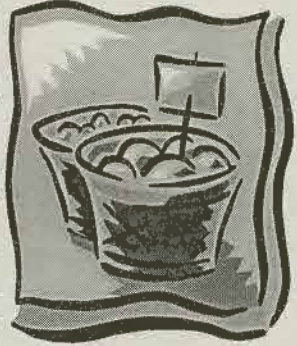
Bethel Cooperative Extension  
C/O Sandi Wilson  
67 Stony Hill Road  
Bethel, CT 06801

Bob will be sorely missed by the CMGA and all who loved him.

- Laurie Gavel, Bethel

**THE ROADSIDE  
FARMSTAND**

The purpose of this column is for listing any gardening or other miscellaneous items, tools, information or plants that you may wish to find, sell, buy, barter, trade or just plain get rid of! If you would like to list an item in this section, please leave your name, number and a detailed message at 203-458-8413. Your free "ad" will be run for two (2) consecutive issues, unless we are notified otherwise.



.....  
Wanted: Donation of a laptop computer briefcase, used, in good condition, for the newsletter laptop. Contact Becky Paul (203) 458-8413.

.....  
Wanted: Mantis ComposTwin (a backyard composter with 2 separate 10 bushel bins) - please contact Leslie Stophel - 860-667-3809; email istoph@aol.com

.....  
For Sale: Unusual Houseplants from small to extra-large floor plants. (860) 633-9056.



| SOME OF OUR FAVORITE ORGANIZATIONS...    | AND THEIR WEB SITE ADDRESSES                                         |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American Community Gardening Association | <a href="http://www.communitygarden.org">www.communitygarden.org</a> |
| American Horticultural Society           | <a href="http://www.ahs.org">www.ahs.org</a>                         |
| National Audubon Society                 | <a href="http://www.audobon.org">www.audobon.org</a>                 |
| National Gardening Association           | <a href="http://www2.garden.org/nga/">www2.garden.org/nga/</a>       |
| National Wildlife Federation             | <a href="http://www.nwf.org">www.nwf.org</a>                         |



## THE EARTH PROVIDES PLENTY

It was a chilly morning. I was groggy. So I violated a life-long habit of carrying insects out of the house, talking merrily to them all the while. Instead, I squashed a whole bunch of yellow-jackets which had come into the kitchen in search of warmth.

I've been apologizing to them ever since. So why do I tell you this story? Probably so that you understand how much I avoid having to exterminate any creature (even a weed!) and try to walk very, very lightly on this earth. (The other day I had a long conversation with a very large bumblebee who I had rescued from the pool...and so my day goes.)

I'm an herbalist/energy healer and have been working with natural, easygoing solutions so that all of us - bugs and critters and humans and plants can coexist with lots of health and energy. With a strong belief in harmony and healing, I encourage my clients to eat, drink and live those items which will increase the strength of their being, rather than taking a drug to "kill" the problem.

There's a lot of faith in this premise, and I feel the same way about plants, which need similar nutrients to ours. As a Master Gardener-in-Training, I try to discuss with each caller a gentle solution to the problem, or a more holistic one, and in this endeavor I am so happy to have the support of Bethel Coordinator, Sandi Wilson. She is intrigued enough with my homemade brews to encourage me to write this article.

Normally, my gardens have no insect or fungus (except for the Bee Balm) or disease problem, which I always thought is because of the many herbs inter-planted everywhere. Also to my wonderful composted soil. Also to my great herbal fertilizer - a whole bunch of plaintain, dandelion, some comfrey, yarrow, and mullein, a handful of chamomile flowers, and a dash of seaweed. I tear this mixture into a bucket of warm water and let it sit in the shade for a couple of weeks until fermenting nicely, and then water the plants with it. Or, brew up some fertilizer tea on the stove, let it cool and then use it. (Great for houseplants too.) Or, if I want to get rid of a lot of weedy-herby growth, I pull the leaves up and lay them on the bed as a mulch to break down. Whichever method, there's lots of calcium, magnesium and potassium for the plants.

My most favorite fungicide/insecticide is a tub of water

with a squirt of Dr. Bronner's eucalyptus-flavored castile soap, and a couple of tablespoons of garlic powder. Toss all over the ground and on the foliage. It turned a honey-suckle fungused down to black stems into a now blooming beauty in two weeks - wow!

For those of you who think this is a bit witchy, I refer you to Rodale's *All New Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening* and their *Basic Book of Organic Gardening* for more info. They list garlic as a great remedy (for us too), high in sulfur and phosphorus, and a great bug repellent. There was even the suggestion to plant it around the base of a peach tree to keep the borer away.

The books also mention red pepper juice as effective in stopping cucumber mosaic virus. Peppers are very high in Vitamin C, which we humans use too when we have a virus. And then there's chamomile, the "plant's physician" for thousands of years. It's a wonderful tonic for us too - very high in calcium and magnesium, so have a cup while you plant some next to a weakling plant (either the perennial or the annual will do). It raises the pH in the soil, so I used it a lot this winter when a forced white hydrangea was dying - it worked so well that the plant bloomed again this summer in the garden.

Tansy is an old colonial remedy for keeping flies and ants away from the house - plant it near the doorway or hang some dried. Try some of the companion plantings listed below, and definitely take a look at Ruth Stout's gardening ideas - bales of hay created a living composted garden which needed no weeding, no watering, had no insects, no diseases. She just planted and harvested, relaxing in-between.

Parsley attracts lacewing; mints repel mosquitoes; marigolds take care of nematodes, bean and Japanese beetles; nasturtiums discourage aphids; catnip repels cabbage pests; basil does away with mites (as does onion spray) and radishes are a trap crop for maggots.

Small flowers attract beneficial insects, e.g. calendula, fennel, dill, anise, coriander, zinnias, asters, while yarrow brings in bees and parasitic wasps. Corn loves lambs quarters, pigweed and purslane; potatoes love horseradish, and carrots are partial to chives, rosemary and sage.

- Susan L. McMahon  
Herbalist and Master Gardener-in-Training (Bethel)

### WEB MAILING LISTS TO EXPLORE

|         |                     |                            |
|---------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| mgarden | Master Gardeners    | Listproc@listproc.wsu.edu  |
| gardens | General             | Listserv@ukcc.uky.edu      |
| herbs   | Medicinal /Aromatic | Listserv@vm3090.ege.edu.tr |





## To the Editor...

Becky, wanted to pass along something you might want to check out on the Web, and mention in the Sept./Oct. edition of CMGA's newsletter, The Laurel.

I subscribe to UMass Extension's Hort Notes, a bi-weekly publication that's also available on their Web site, [www.UMassGreenInfo.org](http://www.UMassGreenInfo.org).

The May 14, 2001 issue indicated at that time no reports of daylily rust have been made in Mass. The rust is able to spread from one susceptible plant to another during the growing season, so green industry workers (and us Master Gardeners, too) should be familiar with symptoms of the leaf rust disease.

Two web sites with excellent photos are [www.ces.uga.edu/agriculture/plantpath/daylilyrust](http://www.ces.uga.edu/agriculture/plantpath/daylilyrust) and [doacs.state.fl.us/~pl/enpp/pathology/daylily-rust.html](http://doacs.state.fl.us/~pl/enpp/pathology/daylily-rust.html). I've had very little luck connecting to the second site, but no problem connecting with the first site...*Richard Shaffer, UConn Master Gardener, 1999*

Rich, thank you for your note with the great web site references. I received it while in Vermont and immediately went to visit our local friends at Olallie Daylily Farm in South Newfane, VT. They had heard of the disease, but hadn't seen any as of mid-August. I've asked our members to write to "The Laurel" with their input regarding this potentially destructive disease. I'm sure many of our readers will be interested in learning more. - *brp*

Hi Becky, the Middlesex County MG Office received a rather odd request from a client doing research on terrorism. The gentleman was looking for a formula regarding making explosives using Ammonium Nitrate. The client was advised this probably did not fall under the category of home gardening! The client's request was immediately forwarded to a higher authority by the MG Coordinator. Ah yes, we do meet some interesting people at the Haddam office! *John Castagno, MG Coordinator - Haddam*

John, thank you for this startling, yet very serious perspective on a "day at the local office"! - *brp*

...You can add my perennial gardens to your list of "Virtually Real Garden Tours" for Master Gardeners. I'd prefer a call in advance. *Sylvia Wagner, 22 Hunters Run, Storrs, CT (860) 456-7044.*

Sylvia, thank you for your generosity! - *brp*

## From the Editor...

It's an absolutely gorgeous late-August afternoon and I've had to pull myself out of my home environment and settle into the beautiful James Blackstone Memorial Library Reading Room in Branford to finish up this issue of The Laurel.

I just couldn't get beyond pulling the odd weeds, watering the fully-realized annuals, harvesting more basil for pesto, making tabbouleh with the beautifully ripe tomatoes and parsley, preparing crabapples for jelly, canning peaches and anticipating tomorrow's salsa-making session with my Dad.

So, here I am!

Though I've had lots of fun putting together the newsletter for the first time, I'd like to solicit the membership's support in realizing the full potential of The Laurel. Your contributions will make each issue more interesting than the last. Please send along articles, questions, challenges, recipes, or whatever you would like to share.

Letters to the editor are very welcome. I received one this month from Richard Shaffer regarding daylily rust. The email appears in the previous column. Any knowledge or input on this topic by our membership will be printed in the next issue for all to read. Please send along any information by email or U.S. Mail. The next newsletter deadline is October 10.

The membership form for new and renewing members has been placed on Page 15 for ease in response. All applications received by September 30 will be placed into a drawing for an elegant season-appropriate prize. Please respond quickly! The winner will be contacted by telephone early October, and their name will be published in our next issue.

Thank you for your support in ensuring that our CMGA newsletter remains one of the best publications of its kind in the country!

- *Becky Raiola-Paul*  
Editor

*"It is the marriage of the soul with Nature that makes the intellect fruitful, and gives birth to imagination."*

- *Henry David Thoreau*



## MASTER GARDENER INTERNS HELP ESTABLISH A MEADOW

This summer, at the Bartlett Arboretum in Stamford, MGI's have assisted Michael Harvey with establishing the Arboretum's Hillside Meadow. The entire project has been made possible by the sheer interest and energy of a group of interns from this year's class.

Chuck Storey, Teresa Mucci, Ellie Auchincloss, Gus Fowler, Ann Marie Belak, Margaret Valier, Rose Cox, Fred Ernst, and Brynne Hahn have grown in knowledge while working alongside the plants. They have learned to identify differences between cool season, undesirable grasses, and the long-term, warm season grasses like Little Bluestem. Little Bluestem germination from the original seeding was poor, and these MGI's were busy pulling out cool season grasses, and replanting with Little Bluestem plants grown by the group in the greenhouse during the winter.

The project has led to a wonderful cyclical connection. The MGI's are planting into the meadow the plants they grew from seed months ago. To be involved at every level of the project this way has made them quick learners about the value of meadows as alternative land management practice. Several are planning on establishing their own meadows at home. Teresa Mucci, from Wilton, has been working with the Wilton Land Trust and has successfully lobbied for the establishment of a four acre meadow along a scenic route through the town.

The value of outreach in the MG program has been emphasized by this project. The value of projects in the program helps the MG Interns learn, and brings valuable information to the public.

- Michael Harvey, Bartlett Arboretum

## Cornucopia Fest 2001

Come to the Fest! Cornucopia Fest 2001 will be held at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Sunday, September 23, UCONN, Storrs. Exhibits and demonstrations from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., auction at 3:00. Watch the Cornucopia Cup, the first polo match in the College's new indoor arena. Take a hayride, bring your ailing plants for diagnosis, learn about agricultural biotechnology, take a guided hike of UCONN's own forest, visit the Horticulture Show, bring a soil sample for a free pH test, go on a GPS treasure hunt, and much, much more! Admission is free, and everyone's invited. Click on [www.canr.uconn.edu/cornfest](http://www.canr.uconn.edu/cornfest) for a schedule of events and to preview the auction items. See you there!

## ADVANCED MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The Advanced Master Gardener Catalog for Fall and Winter has been sent and registrations are already coming in. If you have not received your copy, please call the Home and Garden Education Center. We have added some new and exciting classes!

### Native Plants Sought!

We are looking for plant materials for the Advanced Class LD 126: Creating a Wildlife Habitat. Our instructor, Melissa Starzac, and I are looking for native materials to plant for this workshop. If anyone wants to donate any of the following material please call the Home and Garden Center or drop it off the week of September 24<sup>th</sup>. Native Species are preferred over cultivars. Please join us. We are going to have lots of fun!

### We need:

- Vaccinium (Blueberry)
- Buddleia (Butterfly Bush)
- Cornus (all but Cornus Florida Flowering Dogwood)
- Clethra (Sweet Pepper Bush)
- Rubus (Blackberry, Raspberry, etc.)
- Perennials: Monarda, Rudbeckia, Asclepias, Hemerocallis, Eupatorium, Echinacea, Helianthus, Sedum, Lobelia, Lupine, New England Asters, and Yarrow.
- Annuals: Dill, Heliotrope, Impatiens, Lobelia, Parsley, Queen Anne's Lace, Thistle, Verbena, Wild Strawberry and Zinnias.

- Cyndi Wyskiewicz  
UCONN Extension Liason



### Put Yourself In A Plant's Roots

In a pot of black I sat  
Sunbaked and roots growing  
in a ringed mat,  
Take me out I shout  
Massage the stress away  
A light manicure will do  
before I'm placed in the  
soft earth anew  
My flower notes were prepared  
as I waited for you  
In a bit of time  
my stems will lift  
and come to color again  
And then,  
You can pick a bouquet  
to prolong our song  
for winter is not far away.

Catherine M. Prishwalko



## Winter Care of the Pond and Aquatic Plants

Many of us have expanded our gardening interests into the area of Water Gardening. Some of us were even fortunate enough to work with Clifford Tiffany of Tiffany Water Gardens (Brooklyn, CT) during the summer's Advanced Master Gardeners class on the subject held at Camp Harkness in Waterford.

(Editor's note: I have to mention here that the absolutely phenomenal water garden/pond at this site was the Master Gardener project of Carol Williamson and Julia Griswold. They continue to oversee and maintain the garden. It is definitely worth travelling down to the shoreline for a visit!

...I also have to share with you that the afternoon of my class I started my own water garden in a large tub made for this purpose – complete with Water Lily, Water Iris, Water Snowflake and fish. The class was excellent!

With the winter approaching we should have flowers in our garden through October or early November, but we need to begin the winterizing process in September to prepare for the upcoming season.

General recommendations include:

**September:** During the month give you plants their last dose of fertilizer tablets. Remove any dead or dying foliage and cut back any heavy growth of water hyacinths and oxygenators. Remove debris from the bottom of the pool. Transplant lilies, lotus, marginals.

**October/November:** As the fish metabolisms slow down you should stop feeding the fish (when water temperature drops below 55 degrees F). Run your filter to remove particles, convert ammonia and to oxygenate. You can do a partial water change (50%) at this time. Use a water treatment to break down the chloramines and to add colloids to the water. A pH test is a good idea. Dead foliage needs to be removed. Remove water hyacinths and other annuals to the compost pile. Oxygenators should be cut back. Hardy grasses and rushes should wait until spring to be cut back.

**Late Fall:** Hardy aquatic plants should be lowered to the bottom of the pool. Fish owners should install their pond heater. Fountains, waterfalls and filters should not be allowed to freeze.

The National Climatic Data Center's date for frost in Norfolk is October 2, Danbury is October 6 and Hartford is October 10. Get Ready!

### Recommended Care of Aquatic Plants

#### Water Lilies – Nymphaea – Hardy Cultivars

Lower plants to the bottom of the pool (18-30" of water) after they have gone dormant. Tub gardens: remove plant to a cool, dark location and keep moist.

#### Water Lilies– Nymphaea-Tropical Cultivars

Remove dormant tubers from water and soil. Store in damp sand in a cool, dark location (55 Degrees F).

#### Tropical Marginals

Colocasia and Cyperus (Taro and papyrus varieties) will do fine indoors as windowsill plants. Keep moist. Eleocharis (Chinese Water Chestnut) treat as the Tropical Water Lily.

#### Louts – Nelumbo

Lower pot to the bottom of the pool when dormant (same depth as water lilies). Remember to raise the plant near the surface and fertilize in early spring.

#### Lily-like Aquatics – Nuphar, Nymphoides, etc.

Floating Heart, Spatterdock, Water Hawthorne, Water Poppy, and Water Snowflake. These will not survive in Zone 5 without protection. They will survive with no more than "windowpane" ice.

#### Floaters – for surface cover

Floating Fern, *Salvinia brasiliensis*, Water Hyacinth, and Water Lettuce are annuals and will not survive winter. Remove from water along with falling autumn leaves, avoiding the possibility that they will decompose in the water. Duckweed (*Lemna minor*) is hardy, Duckweed (*Lemna polyrrhiza*) and Fairy Moss are marginally hardy.

#### Oxygenators

Moneywort, Cabomba, Anacharis are hardy and should be located on the bottom of the pool as are the hardy lilies where they will not freeze. Parrots Feather is not likely to survive.

#### Potted (Shallow Water) Marginals

These hardy plants survive this climate when growing naturally, but container (artificial) conditions, sitting on a shelf may be less suitable. Mulch these plans in or, for the emergent varieties, place them in deep water.

This winter would be a wonderful time to explore and plan if you haven't yet tried Water Gardening. Many excellent books are available on the subject.

- Becky Raiola-Paul



September-October To Do List

Take a look at your Autumn landscape and plan to add more perspective for next Fall by considering new trees, shrubs and berries. Suggestions include: Yellow – Fringe Tree, Redbud; Orange – Fullmoon Maple, Stag-horn Sumac, Carriere Hawthorn; Red – Dogwoods, Tri-dent Maple, Paperback Maple. Shrubs you want to consider are Spiraea, Eyonymus, Witch Hazel, and Virbur-num. Our favorite berries include: Crabapple, Mountain Ash, Cotoneaster, Winterberry, and Pyracantha.

Improve your Lawn. Fall feed twice (around Labor Day and again late-October). Seed the lawn unless you're planning on controlling weeds. Handle weeds now, then plant seed in Spring. If you are addressing your weeds, then use a weed and feed product for best results.

Plant your Spring flowering bulbs. The earlier the bulb flowers the sooner it should be planted.

Select and plant your new trees, shrubs and perennials. The plants' roots will establish before the ground freezes and will start growing earlier in the spring.

Divide those perennials, move a few to a new location and share some with friends. Don't forget to mulch them after the ground is frozen. Complete by mid-October.

Dig up and label the dahlias and glads. Cut back perennials, rake leaves, and prune the roses.

Relax by the season's first fire, take a well deserved rest, and plan your garden vision for next year!



Keep an eye on the Moon!

Our October Full Moon is the Full Harvest Moon and will greet us so beautifully on October 2. This is the full Moon occurring closest to the Autumn Equinox. In two years out of three the Harvest Moon comes in September, but in some years it occurs in October. At the peak of harvest, farmers can work late into the night by the light of this Moon. Corn, pumpkins, squash, and beans are now ready for gathering.

By the way, during the last quarter it is time to can fruit and vegetables. It's also said this is the best time to pull weeds. For those of you interested in these activities, the last quarter dates this year are September 24th and October 24th. Have fun!

HARTFORD COUNTY OUTREACH ORGANIZATION

Now that this year's challenging gardening season is coming to a close it is time to think about future gardening activities. In response to the many requests from CMGA members for a local outlet for their gardening talents, a Steering Committee and Team Leaders are putting together an organization of Master Gardeners for the Hartford County area. In May the Hartford County CMGA members were sent an update of the MG's Outreach Program and organization structure being implemented for the Hartford County Area.

The Steering Committee and Team Leaders have been meeting monthly through late June. At the June meeting Katie Melvin, MG Coordinator of the Hartford County Cooperative Extension Office, updated the team on what she envisions the future needs of the office will be. I assure you there is a great need for your talents here in our local area. The Steering Committee and Team Leaders will resume meeting in September to refine the structure and program support with a goal of having an operational outreach program in place by January 2002. It is with this goal in mind that I am asking you to send your ideas about what you would like your local organization to be and to volunteer your time to help make this project a success.

The names of the Outreach Program Team are listed below. Please call the person on this list that fits the need you would like to help fulfill. And, please contact me with any ideas, questions or concerns. Thank you.

- Larry Van Der Jagt

| CMGA Hartford County Outreach Program Team |                            |              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Katie Melvin                               | UCONN Coordinator          | 860-570-9010 |
| Larry Van Der Jagt                         | Steering Committee Lead    | 860-658-7716 |
| Debra Rosen                                | Steering Committee Member  | 860-521-0743 |
| Linda Labinski                             | Steering Committee Member  | 860-236-4960 |
| Bob Slabinski                              | Steering Committee Member  | 860-673-4669 |
| Ellen Morse                                | Steering Committee/Mentors | 860-649-6192 |
| Bob Levitt                                 | Hungerford Nature Center   | 860-827-9064 |
| Randi Rigg                                 | West Hartford Campus       | 860-668-4418 |
| Carol Quish                                | Elizabeth Park             | 860-649-0452 |
| Shiela Craven                              | Jubilee House              | 860-668-9543 |
| Maggie Carpenter                           | Hillstead Museum           | 860-693-0340 |
| Joanna Gerber                              | Junior Master Gardeners    | 860-233-7363 |



## OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

"Let a man once begin to think about the mystery of his life and the links which connect him with the life that fills the world, and he cannot but bring to bear upon his own life and all other life that comes within his reach the principle of reverence for life..."  
- Albert Schweitzer

### SW District

The **Scott Fanton Museum** in Danbury. Historic gardens.

**CSI - Norwalk** - Young girls' short-term detention center. Lovely greenhouse on site. Work with young girls approx. 10-14 years old. Gardening, greenhouse work and nature craft projects.

**Southbury Training School**, Department of Mental Retardation - Need help with many gardens. Call Volunteer Services - (203) 586-2485.

**New Canaan Nature Center**-Call Gail Egol (203) 966-9577.

**South Stamford Community Garden** - call Chris Hadin (203) 323-1978.

### NE District

**Nature Trail** - located at the **Tolland Cty. Ext. Center** in **Vernon**. Help is always needed in all aspects including trailwork, field trip curriculum and promotion/marketing.

**Tolland County Ext. Center - Vernon** - Opportunity to design and plant gardens around the center.

**Willimantic - Bridge conversion** - get involved with converting the old Jillson Hill bridge into a walking bridge/park with flowers, trees and more!

**Immaculata Retreat House - Willimantic** Contact Marie Kuchy at 860-537-5556, or kuchiman@snet.net

### SE District

#### Community Gardening

Town of Groton - Town of Waterford

#### Gardening with Disabled

Camp Harkness, Waterford - Byran House, Haddam Alliance for Living, New London

### SE District (cont.)

#### Correctional Facilities

York C.I., East Lyme  
Montville Expansion Minimum Security Facility

#### Historic Gardens

Florence Griswold, Old Lyme  
Hart House, Old Saybrook  
Shaw Mansion, New London

#### Miscellaneous

Save the establish plantings from construction equipment at the Norwich Office! Create a garden around the sign located on New London Turnpike. Please call Julia Griswold (860) 887-1608 if you can help.

### NW District

**Mary Mahoney Village Greenhouse:** This brand new greenhouse is a wonderful opportunity for an Advanced MG project. MG's are needed to teach seniors and elementary children about gardening in this "intergenerational" greenhouse.

**UCONN West Hartford Campus Butterfly Garden:** MG's are needed to join Randi Rigg and Katie Melvin in the planning and installation of this exciting garden.

**The Children's Place:** Join Master Gardener Laura Dillman in her terrific efforts to create gardens at this DCF facility in Windsor.

We always need help in the following gardens:

- Jubilee House
- The Hillstead Museum Sunken Garden
- Hungerford Nature Center
- Auer Farm

**Help in the office:** Katie Melvin appeals to Master Gardeners to help out by answering the phones next summer. There won't be a class in West Hartford in 2002. Please consider spending some time in the office again...please call at (860) 570-9013 or email kmelvin@snet.net.

**Plymouth Historical Society** - historic gardens

**Prime Time House, Torrington** - disabled clients.

**Community Gardens, Torrington**

*Note: If a telephone number is not listed by a project, please contact the MG Coordinator at the local Extension.*



## NE DISTRICT NEWS

*From the folks in Vernon...*

The MG **Open House** in Vernon is scheduled for Saturday, September 29 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., with a walking tour of the Nature Trail planned, weather permitting, prior to the Open House, at 10:00 a.m.

A lecture series is being planned at the Vernon Office for this coming winter (January through April). Anyone with a particular gardening interest who would like to volunteer to speak please contact Vernon's MG Office.

Vernon MG's supported the Hebron Harvest Fair with an informational booth.

Cornucopia Fest at UCONN, Storrs. September 23 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Information: [www.canr.uconn.edu/cornfest](http://www.canr.uconn.edu/cornfest). See related article on Page 10.

## NW DISTRICT NEWS

*From the Greater Hartford area...*

The first Connecticut Community Gardening Conference, entitled, Planting Seeds for Tomorrow, Saturday, Sept. 15th. We hope to see you there! More information: Katy Melvin, West Hartford MG Coordinator.

Propagation Workshop Event at the Hill-Stead Museum. Re-spotting Hill-Stead's Sunken Garden and preparing the beds for winter. October 12 and 13 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The gardens include 36 perennial beds, 15 varieties. Divide overgrown masses and re-spot beds helping to restore the original garden. Participate one or both days. Refreshments provided. Let us know if you'll be joining us via email at [metcarpenter@yahoo.com](mailto:metcarpenter@yahoo.com) or via phone at (860) 677-4787, extension 120.

## SW DISTRICT NEWS

*From North Haven...*

The group recently held a Saturday morning site cleanup followed by a sharpening clinic and lots of networking.

The MG **Open House** will be held Tuesday, September 25 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the New Haven County Extension Office. The program will be held in conjunction with The New Haven County Extension Resource Council Showcase. MG's will have exhibits, discuss current outreach projects and offer networking and volunteer opportunities. RSVP Mira Schachne, (203) 407-3167.

## SE DISTRICT NEWS

*From our friends in Haddam...*

We are in the process of working with the staff at the new 57 million-dollar CT Juvenile Training School in Middletown. Master Gardeners are being asked to assist with the curriculum outline, teach in Horticulture classroom and fabulous 3-zone Greenhouse. Plans include vegetable, herb and butterfly gardens. MG's may also work on a transition team to prepare the students for life outside the facility. Contact John Castagno in Haddam (860) 345-4511 for more information. This should prove to be a great opportunity to touch the life of a troubled youth.

Garden Programs by Master Gardeners will be presented at the East Lyme Public Library for the 11th consecutive year. Composting, September 12 with Nancy Patenaude and Bob McNeil; Caring for Landscape Plants, October 10 with Bob Sherman; and, A Garden Clinic with a MG Team, November 14. Programs begin at 7:00 p.m. Reservations requested. Info: (860) 739-6926.

*From the group in Norwich...*

Tovah Martin, Gardening Editor and Author, will present a lecture and demonstration at the Norwich Free Auditorium, Friday, October 5 at 7:00 p.m. This is a fund raiser for the Botanical Garden in Norwich, CT. Tickets \$15 or 2/\$25. Contact Joan Spivar at (860) 889-3587.

The summer gardening program at Camp Harkness in Waterford was extremely successful. Five Master Gardener Interns assisted regularly on Wednesday mornings providing gardening experiences to the campers from Oakhill School, New London ARC, United Cerebral Palsy and Southbury Training School. Activities included flower identification and arranging, propagation, planting window boxes and hanging baskets, and picking/preparing cucumbers for a snack. The garden was designed to meet the needs of a multi-challenged population and includes raised tables, stonedust walkways, adaptive tools and various sensory components such as a water garden and specially chosen plants.

Master Gardeners manned informational booths at the Lebanon Fair, Norwich Grange Fair and Ledyard Fair.

Summer volunteer projects in the area included: Salem (school playscape), Dennison Homestead Gardens in Mystic, the East Garden of the Harkness Mansion in Waterford, the Shaw Mansion and the Hygienic Art Gallery in New London.

The Norwich Extension Office will soon be undergoing long awaited renovations and will be relocating toward the end of the year while work is in progress. Volunteer help will be needed - please see the Outreach Section and give Julia Griswold at (860) 887-1608 a call if you can help.



# The Laurel

The Connecticut Master Gardeners Association



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

I woke up this morning to frost on my green pumpkins. I am hoping for a speedy transition to orange. As gardeners we are faced with many dilemmas, and must make eco-friendly decisions: whether to pick or leave on the vine; to kill or merely repel; introduce foreign species or plant native; to work with the natural rhythm of our plot or adjust it to our whims. The deer seem to be going through a diet evolution. The tunneling mole uproots my anemones. The vole moves in for the kill. They emerge glossy, sleek and strangely beautiful. I'll leave them to the cat....

Dues are coming in at a rapid rate-thank you all for helping to reestablish our financial base. Congratulations to the early dues entry winner: Evelyn Anderson of Berlin, who will receive the wonderful hand-crafted basket provided by Becky Raiola-Paul, our Newsletter Editor and Vice President.

*(Continued on page 3)*

November/December, 2001

Volume 14, Issue 6

## DEAR SANTA,

One scorching day this summer, Kim was reminded of when she was a kid and the Sears Roebuck Catalog arrived weeks before Christmas.

Her sister and she spent days turning the pages, drooling over a million toys. Her wish list grew every day until Mom reminded Kim she shouldn't be greedy and, after all, Santa only had so much space on the sleigh.

Twenty-five years later an early issue of a bulb mailer has replaced the Sears Roebuck Catalog. Gone were the dolls and games from her list. Red Emperor tulips, giant purple crocuses, and sunny daffodils had replaced them.

Kim's strong desire for blossom gratification overrode Mom's voice. Days after receiving the catalog she succumbed to the temptation of the pay-later incentive. She told herself it paid to shop early as the bulbs were less expensive if purchased in early June.

Ordering was so easy. She just picked up the phone and a friendly woman named Vera took her order. She let her in on some wonderful specials. Before Kim knew it, she had selected 500 bulbs.

When the box arrived in mid-October, Kim was in the middle of a major project. Her summer enthusiasm was slightly diminished as she now faced the prospect of planting 500 bulbs.

The enclosed instructions said that the bulbs needed to be beneath the soil as soon as possible since the company timed their deliveries for the best planting period.

Panic set in since Kim couldn't touch the bulbs for at least another two weeks. She called the bulb catalog hotline for advice and a nice woman assured her the bulbs

*(Continued on page 6)*

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## 2 The Laurel CMGA

The Laurel is published by the CMGA six times a year; January, March, May, July, September and November.

Please submit articles, suggestions or inquiries by the 10th of the month prior to The Laurel's release to:

Becky Raiola-Paul  
259 Saw Mill Road  
Guilford, CT 06437  
(203) 458-8413  
email: r.r.paul@att.net

Please include your phone number. Space availability is on a first-received, first-printed basis.

Any concerns or problems regarding your newsletter mailings should be brought to the attention of:

Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
Quaker Hill, CT 06375  
(860) 439-0099  
email: dkak1@home.com

(Please contact the Membership Chairman for any other membership concerns - see 2001 CMGA Officers list on this page.)

### **NOTICE!!!**

Please remember, when sending emails to note the subject as being for the CMGA newsletter. Any emails received from an unfamiliar address without a subject noted will NOT be opened.

## CMGA COUNTY REPS

### **SW District**

Diana Ringelheim, 121 Godfrey Road, Fairfield CT 06432. 203-372-8498. diana@ringelheim.com

### **NE District**

Tolland County - Lloyd Hinrichs, 62 Church Street, Vernon CT 06066. 860-872-9720, mosflower@msn.com

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MG COORDINATORS

### **North-West District**

West Hartford: Katie Melvin - (860) 570-9010  
Torrington: Karen Anderson - (860) 626-6240

### **South-West District**

Bethel: Sandi Wilson - (203) 207-8440  
No. Haven: Mira Schachne - (203) 407-3161  
Stamford - Bartlett Arboretum: Cheron Barton  
(203) 321-2826

### **South-East District**

Haddam: John Castagno - (860) 345-4511  
Norwich: Julia Griswold - (860) 887-1608

### **North-East District**

Brooklyn: Kim Kelly - (860) 774-9600  
Vernon: Mary Collins - (860) 870-6934

Home and Garden Center - UConn Storrs  
1-877-486-6271 (toll-free)

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- Extension Liaison: Cyndi Wyskiewicz**  
(877) 486-6271 (toll free)



(Continued from page 1)

We are currently interested in taking ideas for fundraising. If you have any ideas or ways to help out with the fundraising effort, please phone or email me at the address in the front of this newsletter.

The Tolland Open House was held September 29 in the Vernon office. The informative and fun afternoon was organized by Mary Collins, coordinator for the Vernon office. Besides the wonderful feast, Mary had a "bragging rights" table of master gardener triumphs, a plant giveaway table and a raffle. Dr. Nancy Bull of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources spoke, and a spectacular Orchid display was offered by Paul Cusson and Joe Hertz, who will be speakers at the next Symposium. Signups were posted for the projects presented by the day's speakers. Kudos to Mary for a successful day.

Save March 9, 2002 for the ninth annual CMGA Symposium to be held once again at Manchester Community College. We will be raising our admissions number to 300 this year, the maximum the college will allow. We hope to not turn anyone away this year. The theme will be "Gardeners: Masters of the Environment". We as Master Gardeners have the responsibility to get the message out: we are in control of our environment and must make sound gardening decisions.

I'm going outside now to remove the frost-withered pumpkin vines. I am looking forward to October 12...."If the wind comes from the west on October 12, a mild winter follows....". I will let you know in the next newsletter how that turned out.

Many New England farmers compared root crops to body parts:

- \* Potatoes: "As long as my arm, as thick as my wrist"
- \* Cabbages: "As round as my head, as big as my behind"
- \* And for turnips: "The size of my head and as big as my thigh". And some for the neighbors who live close by".

I certainly won't torture my neighbors with my turnip harvest, unless requested.

Don't forget the next newsletter deadline is December 10. Please get those articles in and share the wealth of talent and information.

Bountiful Harvest,

Wendy Drenga, President

## From the Editor...

It's that time of year again – everyone's busy, busy, busy getting ready for the holidays. It's also time for the beautiful seasonal plants we enjoy both indoors and out...and all of the horticultural questions from friends and family to their beloved Master Gardeners on how to care for them.

This issue of The Laurel is designed to be a tool and a reminder of our mission to continue learning and sharing our knowledge with the community.

I love this quote from Albert Schweitzer. "As we acquire more knowledge, things do not become more comprehensible, but more mysterious." Isn't this true?

Please remember to renew your membership (or join The CMGA 2001 Graduates!) for the 2002 membership year. The membership form is on the second to last page of this issue for ease in submission.

I'd like to offer a special thank you to Jeane Warren, who donated a case for our organization's laptop. The computer is now cozy and protected in it's new home.

Also, thank you to Nancy Patenaude, Marie Friess-McSparran, and Eleanor Goldman for their entertaining articles in this month's issue.

Please send any articles, information or comments you'd like to see included in the January/February 2002 issue of The Laurel by December 10. We're planning to have the next issue out to you right after New Year's Day.

I wish you a safe, joyous, and peaceful Holiday Season.

Becky Raiola-Paul, Editor



*Our Earth is but a small star in the great Universe. Yet of it we can make, if we choose, a planet unvexed by war, untroubled by hunger or fear, undivided by senseless distinction of race, color, or theory.*

- Stephen Vincent Benet

(Editor's Note: Acknowledgement is made to Michigan State University Extension for information used in the preparation of articles on "Caring for Holiday Plants", "Planting a Live Christmas Tree", "Ilex", and "The Poinsettia".)



## 4 The Laurel CMGA

### CARING FOR HOLIDAY PLANTS

Many plants can be grown to provide color during the Christmas season, and flourish with proper care. While the poinsettia has become the traditional holiday plant, the cyclamen and the Jerusalem cherry are also beautiful holiday plants. The cyclamen and poinsettia are grown for their colorful flowers, whereas the Jerusalem cherry is grown for its small, red fruit. However, in order to achieve holiday color, these plants must be given proper care throughout the year. Other plants appearing during the holidays and all year round include the amaryllis, azalea, begonia, Christmas pepper, chrysanthemum, cyclamen, gloxinia, holiday cactus, Jerusalem cherry, kalanchoe, and paperwhite narcissus, all of which flourish beautifully as houseplants.

Proper care varies with species, but there are some general recommendations to follow when caring for these plants. Most species do best in a location where as much natural light as possible is available. Optimal temperatures include a daytime temperature of 65 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit (F), and temperatures around 50 to 55 degrees F during the night. However, there are some exceptions; the cyclamen and paperwhite narcissus would hold up better at 60 to 65 degrees F during the daytime and 50 degrees F at night. African violets, poinsettias, and begonias should be kept even warmer at night, at temperatures around 60 degrees F. Because most homes are extremely dry compared to the greenhouse environment where they were grown, it is recommended that the plants be placed in groups or on trays with water. To help prolong the flowering period, plants can be placed in rooms with higher humidity, such as the bathroom or kitchen. Usually, however, the plants should be kept in a COOLER room, away from warm air currents. The plants should be checked daily and watered as needed. If the pot has a drainage hole, enough water should be applied so some will drain out the bottom, but the plants should NOT stand in water for extended periods of time. Most of these plants do not need any fertilizer during their blooming time. Reblooming is not recommended except for amaryllis and holiday cactus.

The cyclamen should be grown in a cool, well-lighted area but not in direct sunlight. An ideal exposure is an east window where the plant does not touch the glass and temperatures are 50 degrees F. at night and 60 degrees F during the day. Cyclamen requires moist soil and good drainage. When watering, use lukewarm water, taking care to keep the water off the foliage and crown of the plant. Don't allow the plant to remain in water for long periods, as diseases may occur. The plant should be watered so that the soil is not washed from around the corm (bulb-like structure) and roots. Drain-

age may be improved by placing gravel or broken pieces of pottery in the bottom of the container.

In the late winter and early spring, older flowers will fade and new flower buds will continue to open, until about the first part of February. At this time, the leaves may start to turn brown, no more flowers will appear, and the plant will seem to deteriorate. If the plant is to be carried over to another season, it will need a rest period. The amount and frequency of watering should be reduced, and the plant should be placed in a cool area (40-50 degree F.) until warm, spring weather arrives. At this time, the corm can be replanted in a prepared soil mix of one part soil, one part peat moss, and one part sand).

After danger of frost is over, place the plant in a cool, protected, outdoors location. The plant should be given adequate water and fertilizer about once a month or less, with a water-soluble fertilizer employed during the summer months. During the brightest days of summer, select a bright location that provides partial shade for the plant to grow. The plant should be taken indoors before frost in the fall.

During the late fall and throughout the winter, the plant should be given full sun (east exposure), with temperatures no higher than 65 degrees F. Flowering should occur between mid-November and early December.

During the holiday season, in order to keep the fruit of Jerusalem cherry on the plant for the maximum length of time, put the plant in a cool (45 to 50 degree F. at night), sunny location. If the plant is kept in a warm, drafty room the leaves and fruit may drop quickly. It should be noted that the fruits are considered poisonous.

After the holidays, the plant itself is seldom worth carrying over for a second year. However, by collecting the ripe fruit from the original plant, and removing and drying the seeds and storing them until spring, new plants can be produced for next Christmas. In early March, the seeds should be sown in a mixture of one part sand and one part peat moss and germinated at 70 to 75 degrees F. The plants should be transplanted to four-inch pots when they are one month to six weeks old and then grown at 50 to 55 degrees F.

During the summer, plants should be placed outside in semi-shade and watered when necessary. The plants should not be allowed to wilt or the leaves will turn yellow and drop. They should be fertilized moderately with a water-soluble fertilizer, always with care taken in following manufacturer's directions; heavy fertilization will cause poor fruit set. The plants should be pinched occasionally, but not after July 1. In September, the plants should be brought indoors and transplanted to 6".

The plants should then be placed in a sunny location and kept at a cool temperature. They should be watered thoroughly when needed and provided with good drainage. The fruits should start to color in early November; the plants will reach full fruiting by early December.



## The Poinsettia

Poinsettias are traditional Christmas flowering plants whose blooms will last throughout the Christmas season. And with proper care, poinsettias may be grown on to flower again the next year.

When selecting a poinsettia, it is recommended to choose a plant that has dark green foliage; as fallen or yellow leaves indicate poor fertilization or a root disease problem. Flower bracts (red, pink, or white) should be of good size and have little or no pollen showing on the actual flowers (those red or green button-like parts in the center of the colorful bracts). The plant should be well wrapped when taken outside for the ride home; exposure to low temperatures for even short periods of time can cause leaves and bracts to turn brown and fall.

During the Holiday season, poinsettias should be placed near a sunny window or other well lighted areas, where they do not touch cold window panes. A temperature between 60 degrees and 70 degrees F. is desirable; higher temperatures will shorten the life of the flower bracts. Plants should be kept away from drafts (radiators, air registers, and open windows or doors). In order to preserve the blooms for the maximum length of time, plants should be placed in a cooler area (55 to 60 degrees F.). The soil should be examined daily and watered only when dry. Water should be applied so as to soak the soil to the bottom of the pot, and excess water should be discarded. If there is not enough water applied, the plant will wilt and the lower leaves will drop. If too much water is applied, the lower leaves will yellow and then drop. A soluble fertilizer is recommended, such as is used on house plants, once a month according to the recommendations of the manufacturer.

After the Holiday season, the plant may be kept and will bloom again the next. If the plant is too large for the old pot, it should be repotted a larger pot. The soil mix recommended is a mix of 2 parts garden soil, 1 part peat moss, 1 part sand, vermiculite, or perlite, and 1 tablespoon of superphosphate. This mixture, when thoroughly mixed in with each pot-full of soil makes a good mixture for poinsettias. After the danger of spring frost is past and night temperatures exceed 50 degrees F., sink the poinsettia pot in the ground to the rim in a well-drained, slightly shaded position out-of-doors. Between July 15 and August 1, the terminal portion of all shoots should be cut off. These can be rooted in a mixture of half peat moss and half sand, and flowered for Christmas using the procedure described next.

Fall care of poinsettias is crucial to assuring beautiful Holiday blooms. The poinsettia plant should be taken inside before the first frost (usually around Sept. 15, and placed

*(Continued on page 11)*

## CMGA The Laurel 5

### Class of 2001 Graduation!

The entire CMGA membership applauds the efforts of this year's Master Gardener Class.

Graduation dates are:

- ⇒ November 9th West Hartford (West Hartford Café)
- ⇒ November 13 Haddam (Extension Office)
- ⇒ November 16 Brooklyn (Extension Office)
- ⇒ November 19 North Haven (Location TBA)
- ⇒ December 1, Stamford (Bartlett Education Building)

Congratulations!

### Advanced Master Gardener Update

Advanced Master Gardener Classes are now on the new Home and Garden Education Website.

**[WWW...CANR.UCONN.EDU/GARDEN](http://WWW...CANR.UCONN.EDU/GARDEN)**

Check out all of the latest classes and download a registration form. Go the site for all of the latest gardening information. It's great – check it out!

### Who do you know that exemplifies "GOOD GARDENING"

...has true gardening skills and artistry, a heart for the community and the environment, and an attitude that inspires a job well done?

NOMINATIONS are now being sought from you, the gardening public, for the Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Millennium Trophy, awarded to an individual or group from Westchester or Fairfield County that exemplifies "Good Gardening". The winner's name will be engraved on an antique Tiffany sterling silver bowl. Send in your nominations today, a hundred words or less, and honor your friends who honor us and the earth they garden upon. The deadline is 12/31/01. Mail your nominations to WFHS, P.O. Box 18, Cos Cob, CT 06807. The winner will be announced at the annual January Awards Dinner of the Westchester Fairfield Horticultural Society.

Previous winners are Mary Jo Palmer of Sam Bridge Nursery for her over 20 years of service to the community, and Mark and Carrie Greenwald of Maher & Greenwald for their work in community gardens in New York and Connecticut.

Questions? Call Kathrine Neville, President of the WFHS, at 203-874-4752 or [kgardens@optonline.net](mailto:kgardens@optonline.net).



## DEAR SANTA, (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

could wait until then, suggesting the bags be opened to let the bulbs breathe. Kim opened the box, tore into the green bags, and prayed they survived.

A week later, Kim's schedule lightened.

She rolled up her sleeves and began burying daffodils in her front flower bed. Her mind imagined spring visitors smelling the yellow blooms' sweet fruity fragrance drifting near the entrance. Someone was sure to ask, "What's that wonderful scent?". "Oh, that?", she would say, "just 100 daffodils that I planted last fall".

So, she dug holes between shrubs and the grasses in the front bed. Too late, Kim discovered she only had space for 40 bulbs.

Next she tried to plant purple and yellow crocuses in the side yard. When Kim studied the crocuses on glossy pages she visualized beautiful purple and golden petals among the lush green grass. Too bad her day-dream neglected to include the picture of her sweating as she tried to puncture a hole in the dry, hard dirt beneath the grass. She slid the first plump crocus bulb back into the sack. Perhaps after a heavy rain she could succeed in burying the crocus in the lawn.

The next day Kim skipped crocuses and headed straight to the back beds with iris bulbs. The soil was pliable there and planting went much smoother and quicker. Maybe a little too quick. Surely the digging depths didn't really have to be 4 inches, did they?

Day after day Kim gradually planted the bulbs and thought back to her original joy in making her wish list. Maybe Santa was right by not always giving us everything we asked for.

Several frustrating weeks later she finished planting those 500 bulbs. The extra daffodils made their way into clay pots. When she finished, Kim took out her pen and wrote a letter to an old friend:

DEAR SANTA,

*Growing bulbs takes both heart and hand. I*

*ordered with my heart but forgot my hands.*

*Hundreds of bulbs mean a lot of digging.*

*If it's not too much to ask, could you use your*

*connections and get my name off those gardening catalog lists? Love to you.*

Her letter, she believes, says it all!!!

Nancy Patenaude, Old Saybrook  
1991 Extension Master Gardener

## Gardening Wisdom

If you are a humble gardener you know that using resources to gain more knowledge is a must! We at all times have word of mouth to gain knowledge about gardening, not very scientific, but it is enjoyable. If you need more detailed facts where do you go, and how do you start? There is a plethora of information out there waiting for the gardening enthusiast.

All you need to do is search the word "Garden" on the Internet and you have hundreds of resources listed. How do you know what to believe and not to believe? Use recommendations that are from well-recognized establishments. The Internet can be a great source of information; nevertheless it can also be very overwhelming. Try looking up your favorite Garden magazine, or TV show. Several have web pages chock full of information, some of which may be from the show or magazine, on the other hand some is more detailed and covers additional information including references. Many colleges have databases you can use to gain information (UCONN has a plant database that was just featured in *People, Places, and Plants* magazine).

There are Extension centers from the University of Connecticut around the state, all you have to do is call and ask the Master Gardener for advise. They can send you copies of the reference material they used to answer your questions so that you can have that information for your records. They can also use their available resources to research a specific dilemma you may be having if the data is not on hand at the time you call.

You can also try the local garden nurseries. Some of their staff are well-practiced gardeners, and they can be a great supplier of facts. Some garden nurseries even have web sites and they can answer your questions via email, so you can get your information at a convenient time for you and it could save you an unnecessary trip to the nursery, only to find out they don't have what you are looking for.

There must be literally hundreds of books on the subject of gardening out there. You can find material from the very basic gardening advice to detailed books about a specific topic. Plan to spend time looking through the stacks of books to find one that fits your needs. You can also use the Internet to search for reference books that may be hard to find.

Lastly, there is always the old stand by, chatting over the garden gate. Neighbors are great assets of wisdom, especially if they have lived in that area longer than you. They have a collection of memories on the subjects of local weather, soil and insect history as well as possible solutions to those tribulations. So, we end up right back at word of mouth, still one of the finest resources on hand for the hopeful gardener.

Marie Friess-McSparran  
Class of 2001, Haddam



Holly beautifully decorates our doorways, mantels, wreaths, floral arrangements and our landscapes at this time of year. Let's learn more about nurturing this magnificent ornamental.

## Varieties:

### *Ilex opaca* – American Holly

American holly should be given a protected spot. This slow growing, broad leaf evergreen grows 40 feet tall and spreads 20 feet. Grow holly in the shade and a light, acid, moist soil. Avoid heavy soil and expect difficulty in transplanting. The main ornamental features are bright red berries and evergreen foliage. American holly is dioecious so both male and female plants are needed for fruit production. One male plant can provide pollen to three female plants. It is possible to graft a male branch into a female plant.

### *Ilex meserve* – Blue Holly

The blue hollies are so named because the dark-green, foliage has a blue overcast. Many male and female cultivars are available and both must be grown in order to obtain fruit production on the females. The plants are generally hardy to zone 4 and can attain a height and spread of 10 feet.

### *Ilex crenata* 'Northern Beauty' – A Japanese Holly

This cultivar of Japanese holly is suggested for use in cold climates. It is a rounded plant reaching a height and spread of 3 feet. This broadleaf evergreen has glossy, green leaves and a dense growth habit. Useful in foundation plantings, Japanese Holly do not need a male partner to bear fruit.

## Environmental Problems:

Spring Leaf Drop, Winterburn, and Chlorosis

## Diseases:

Diseases with no chemical control include: Bacterial Blight, Leaf and Twig Blight, Canker, and Root Rot.

Tar spot may occasionally cause small yellow spots on the leaves in early summer. Eventually the spots turn reddish brown with narrow yellow borders. Leaves may not drop prematurely but the infected areas drop out leaving holes in the leaves. Gather up and destroy badly infected leaves. (Control: Benomyl)

## *Diseases, cont.*

Many different fungi cause leaf spots on holly. Reduce the injury caused by leaf spots by keeping trees healthy. Should a leaf spot become serious identify the causal fungus before spraying. Dispose of diseased leaves. (Control: Benomyl)

Cankers caused by several different fungi lead to sunken areas on stems and plant dieback. Keep trees healthy and prune out infected branches.

Spine spot is small gray spots with purple margins and is caused by spines of one leaf puncturing an adjacent leaf.

Chlorosis symptoms are light green or yellowish leaves with darker green veins. This problem is due to a high pH leading to iron deficiency. Use acidifying fertilizers and chemicals to bring down the pH. Sprays of iron chelate will green up plants until the pH can be lowered.

Hollies scorch during the late winter due to rapid and wide temperature fluctuations. Shade plants during the winter to prevent the problem.

Purple blotches on the leaves are caused by some environmental factor such as nutrient deficiencies, drought, and winter injury

## Common Insects and Controls:

Holly leaf miner larvae mines out the leaf middle leaving yellow or brown trails. Use Diazinon or Orthene when the mines are first noticed.

Scales of various types may infest holly. Crawlers can be controlled with Orthene, Diazinon, or Malathion. Two to three sprays may be needed at 7 to 10 day intervals when Orthene is used. The other two chemicals are used whenever the crawlers are present.

Black vine weevils: Control adults with Acephate, larvae with Dursban.

Spider mites cause discoloration and speckling of holly foliage. Use sprays of Orthene.

It takes true effort to care for these beautiful plants, but my how we enjoy the results!





## PLANTING A LIVE CHRISTMAS TREE

Every year I struggle with the same decision: go to a "farm" and cut down a strong, viable tree for decoration or buy a "live" tree and try to sustain it after the holiday festivities. Here is input to share on the dilemma and to help us successfully keep this year's Christmas memories alive for years to come.

No longer merely a holiday decoration, Christmas trees can now be replanted to provide year-round decoration! Several varieties of pine, fir and spruce are sold balled and burlapped or in containers for use as Christmas trees, and can be replanted after the holiday season. In areas where winter weather makes replanting difficult, the tree may be kept alive through the winter and replanted in the spring.

When replanting Christmas trees, care should be taken to keep the trees alive and healthy. A good location within the site should be chosen so as to best showcase the tree, keeping in mind the eventual size of the tree.

The following are some characteristics to consider when choosing a tree and planting site (approximate height in 20 years is noted).

**Austrian Pine:** Long, dark green needles, 40 ft tall, wind and salt resistant

**Eastern White Pine:** Soft blue-silver to green needles, 40 ft tall, windburns

**Scotch Pine:** Short green needles, orange 40 ft tall bark, prone to insects

**Balsam Fir:** Very short dark green needles, 30 ft tall, open form

**Douglas Fir:** Yellow to blue green needles 40 ft tall, dense form

**White Fir:** Short, soft silvery blue 25 ft tall, green needles, tolerates moderately heavy soils

**Blue Spruce:** Short stiff, sharp blue green needles, 40 ft tall, full sun



The hole in which the tree is to be planted should be dug before the ground freezes. The hole should be 2 inches wider and 6 inches deeper than the estimated root ball. The hole should be covered with boards to prevent accidents, underneath which the soil should be spread with a foot thick layer of straw to prevent freezing.

When choosing a Christmas tree in a nursery, look for a single, straight trunk and well-colored, firm needles. A smaller tree is a wise choice, as trees which stand under five feet transplant most easily. Plants with frozen soil balls should be avoided; their roots may suffer damage when they thaw out and then refreeze again. Plants with frozen root balls should be planted at once instead of being brought inside.

The tree should be kept outdoors until close to Christmas, and may be brought inside no sooner than the day before. The soil should be kept wet at all times, before and while the plant is indoors. The tree should be planted outdoors immediately after Christmas. Minimal decoration is advised, and electric lights should not be used on the tree, as they may cause the plant to break dormancy, leading to partial or complete death when planted outside.

At planting time, all containers, ropes or burlap should be removed from the tree (as well as all decorations). The newly planted tree should be watered well, insuring adequate moisture and the removal of all air pockets from the soil. The tree should be watered again during all thaws, especially in dry winters. An anti-desiccant will prevent moisture loss by coating the needles with a

thin layer of plastic. When planted, the tree should be staked at two or three points, securing the tree from movement caused by the wind which will break new roots.

In climates where the ground is too frozen for planting, the trees may still be kept healthy until the springtime. Placing the tree in its container in a sheltered location outdoors will allow it to grow without exposure to direct sun or the west wind. The soil ball should be kept warm with a foot thick covering of straw or some other mulching material.

*"To the attentive eye, each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field, it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again."*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*



## I'M READY TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

I'm proud of my garden. It's comprised of lots of beds overloaded with the usual, and always gorgeous, bee balm, roses, coneflower, and autumn joy sedum. Most of the beds are grown cottage garden style, mainly because I'm too impatient to plan and organize anything with proper rows and subtle arrangements. Sometimes the garden appears imbalanced, with areas of exquisite beauty and areas of plant sloppiness, but there are usually a couple of weeks when somehow nature smiles on my one-eighth acre and everywhere is loveliness. Sometimes cars stop and strangers sit and gaze. Every now and then they timidly leave their vehicles and snap photos.

A lot of people are growing biblical gardens these days, especially gardening groups associated with churches and synagogues. Every plant grown is mentioned somewhere in the bible. See, for example, <http://www.rodeshalom.org/Garden/initial.htm>. This idea overwhelms before I even begin.

Maybe I'll grow a garden that's so depressing it'll make me laugh; the Somber Garden. This idea seems straight out of *Harold and Maud*. Everything grown in the Somber Garden is supposed to be black. I learn about this from a "gothic" gardening website that I find enormously entertaining. See: <http://www.gothic.net/~malice/black.html>. It includes an extremely long list of "black" plants, most of which are actually described as dark red, crimson, burgundy, maroon or purplish. This concept fascinates me, although I think such a garden doesn't sound somber at all. I'd call it my "Passion Garden." I think an all white flower garden would be much more depressing and funereal (like a lot of Kleenexes awaiting teardrops).

Also described on that wonderful website are bat gardens and gardens of "ill omens." I've already tried to attract bats to my garden, in hopes of decreasing the mosquito menace at night. I've grown the recommended salvia and phlox and cornflowers, but my bat house, for the fifth consecutive year, remains unoccupied.

The "garden of ill omens" is strictly for the superstitious masochistic. It's only supposed to include plants that bring bad luck. For instance, the presence of Queen Ann's Lace will hasten your mother's death, poppies will bring destructive thunderstorms, and stag horn sumac will make for spousal discord. Would someone *really* spend his time growing such a garden? How creepy!

I'll click on a new website: P. ALLEN SMITH reports from the garden at <http://www.pallensmith.com/features/highlights99/h1704f.htm>. He likes the idea of growing plants with odd names for the purpose of impressing others. He suggests "Charlie's Radiator Shop Mortgage

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Lifter" tomato, "Chicken Gizzards" (whatever that is) and "Schizophragma hydrageoides", which are Japanese climbing hydrangeas. I'm thinking that the pleasure of being 43 years old is that I'm *not* trying to impress my friends anymore.

My sons might enjoy a miniature garden. Go to <http://www.diy.net.com/DIY/article/0,2058,2047,00.html> to learn more about this. This garden includes tiny plants that look like miniature full size plants, similar to bonsai only much faster to produce. The goal is cuteness rather than authenticity. You grow only little plants with little leaves that can be pruned to look like diminutive bushes and trees. Add pebbles as stepping-stones, inset a bowl to create a water garden, and place small ceramic figures to serve as statue substitutes.

Lastly, since I am a gal who enjoys experimenting, I might want to grow an "experimental garden." I learn about this option at <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/fall2000/tulip/Update1013000.html> which is a web site where people describe the experiments they're conducting with regards to tulip growing. It might be fun to participate in an informal garden scientific study. In fact, I already view my garden as an ongoing experiment, in so far as I see how I can create the most visual oomph for the least time input.

I have all winter to decide my next gardening move. All will depend on impulse, work schedule, weather, and my children's after school activities. This summer my perennials took over for the first time, leaving little space for the late summer color soar of annuals. While it made for an easy workload, I especially missed my tall zinnias. If you drive past my house next September, I think you will see that I've chosen simply to fill a bed with nothing but a variety of dependable, reliable and stupendous zinnias; always vibrant, proud and bold, and ready to share with friends.

*Eleanor Goldman  
Class of 2001, West Hartford*

## Amaryllis

Have you seen the absolutely gorgeous Amaryllis bulbs in the holiday catalogs? If they are not pre-potted, plant in a 6 inch pot leaving half the bulb above soil. Set in a sunny window or warm room with good light. Keep soil evenly moist. Stems may need to be tied to stake. Keep plants out of direct sun while blooming. After blooming, cut off stalk. Continue to water until late summer when foliage yellows. Then, put in a dark place for 6-8 weeks. Repot bulb, water well, and set on a sunny windowsill to wait for new blooms.



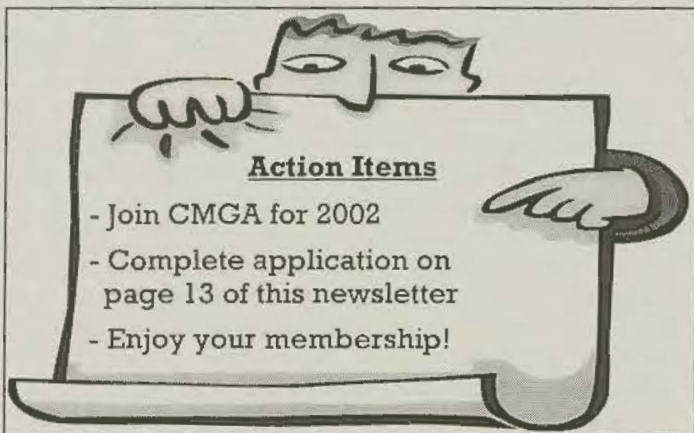
SYMPOSIUM NEWS  
MARCH 9, 2002

CMGA  
Symposium Survey – 2001 Event

We received 126 survey responses for the 2001 Master Gardener Symposium. People thought it was an excellent, well organized program with wonderful speakers. Many commented that the symposium gets better every year – “Best symposium yet”. They liked the luncheon provided last year by a new caterer – “keep the same caterer!”. Attendees appreciated the vendor tables and would have liked more time to view them. There were many helpful suggestions offered – using portable clip-on microphones was mentioned several times, and there were several suggestions to lower the heat in the large meeting room. Many people were disappointed the speakers were unable to complete their presentations or ran overtime due to frequent questions from the audience. They suggested holding all questions until after the presentation. They also suggested that speakers should adhere to the time schedule. There were many requests to repeat speakers for next year and also excellent suggestion for future speakers and topics. It was wonderful to see so many Master Gardeners offer to volunteer for next year’s symposium. Judging from the comments, the Symposium was a great success, someone even suggested “Can you arrange this symposium twice a year?”. (- Marie Dube)

The Symposium Committee and Board have listened to your input and are now actively planning the 2002 Symposium for our education and enjoyment next March.

Sylvia Foster has taken over the role of Speaker Chairman. She has been coordinating The Committee’s efforts over the last month to secure informative and entertaining speakers.



Specific information regarding speakers and registration choices will be offered in the January/February issue of The Laurel.

We are planning to print interviews held with some of our speakers. In this issue we offer our initial interview conducted by John Neff with Steve Silks.

**An Interview with Steve Silks**  
Garden Photography

Once a stage coach trail, Prating Pond Road winds its way up and down through the heavy and secluded woods of Talcot Ridge overlooking the Farmington Valley in Farmington, Connecticut. It is not a place one would expect to find two acres of gardens carved out of the hillside. But that is exactly what Steve Silk has done with an astounding variety of flowers, shrubs, and trees.

Steve began his career as a reporter for the Hartford Courant, but his love for photography and plants developed into a career of photographing and writing about a wide range of horticulture subjects. For a number of years, Steve has been a contributing editor for "Fine Gardening" magazine, where his articles and pictures appear in almost every issue and are outstanding for their beauty and interest, they can't be missed.

From the road, one would never expect that the comfortable looking, brown frame house overlooked to the south, paths and terraces leading to several gardens, surrounded by a forest of trees. These paths are lined with rocks and boulders which were excavated when the house was built, and Steve assures us that he moved them himself with crowbars and two by fours. Inside the house, the walls are lined with framed photographs and prints of flowers and plants, some Steve's, some other photographers, and some very early drawings which are now collector's items - all beautiful.

Steve believes that in planning a garden or taking a photograph, you have to see it as a picture. When he planned his paths, patios and planting he always had in mind what kind of a picture it would make. He stated that if you can't see the picture in your mind, it doesn't matter what lens or openings or cameras you use. He says it is amazing what you can do with an ordinary camera by using simple zoom and wide angle settings plus the correct use of light. Always focus on what you want to see, exploit the best features.

Steve Silk is going to be one of our speakers at the CMGA symposium on March 9th at Manchester Community College. His talk will be about the nuts and bolts of taking pictures of your garden illustrated by magnificent slides of his own garden. Even if you are not a camera buff it will be a treat to listen to this energetic, young man whose enthusiasm for gardens and their pictures is unlimited.



## Farewell Dr. Bridgen!

After more than 17 years at the University of Connecticut, Mark Bridgen will be leaving the Department of Plant Science in January 2002. Dr. Bridgen will be joining the faculty in the Department of Horticulture at Cornell University. He will be the Director of the Long Island Horticulture Research and Extension Center in Riverhead, NY. Dr. Bridgen's new address is:

Cornell University  
Department of Horticulture  
Long Island Horticulture  
Research and Extension Center  
3059 Sound Avenue  
Riverhead, NY 11901

Anyone who wishes to bid Dr. Bridgen farewell is cordially invited to a festive night of good food and dancing to the DJ music of Frank C on Friday, December 14. The party will be held at the Rome Ballroom on South Campus of the University of Connecticut in Storrs from 7:00-11:00 pm. Dress is "snappy casual" and a cash bar will be available. Reservations can be made by sending \$10 per person (checks should be made out to the UConn Foundation) to: Mr. Steve Miner, Department of Plant Science, 1376 Storrs Road, Storrs, CT 06269-4067 by December 3.

Questions can be addressed to Steve at 860-486-3435 or E-mail [sminer@canr.cag.uconn.ed](mailto:sminer@canr.cag.uconn.ed).

The CMGA wishes Dr. Bridgen all of the best!

## Garden Mums: Winter Protection

Our winter hardy mums look great in full bloom today at the beginning of November. Here are hints to keep them healthy, protected and prepared for reblooming next year.

- ✓ Keep garden mums moist as winter approaches.
- ✓ There is no need to prune plants until the spring.
- ✓ Mulch the plants after several hard frosts with straw, evergreen branches, or what have you.
- ✓ In the spring, remove any old garden mum stems and gradually remove the mulch.
- ✓ Pinch back the mums in the spring as soon as the new growth is 4-6" tall to encourage branching and development of compact bushy plants. Remove/pinch about 1/2 of the new growth at the top of each shoot. Repeat through summer whenever new shoots are 3-5" long. Stop pinching the 15th of July.
- ✓ After the last pinch the plant will grow to more than double in size.

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*Poinsettias, continued from page 5*

in a sunny window as before. In order to flower a poinsettia, you must keep the plant in complete darkness between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. daily from the end of September until color shows in the bracts (almost mid December) Temperatures should remain between 60 and 70 degrees F. If this procedure is followed, the poinsettia will be in flower for Christmas.

The growth cycle of the poinsettia is as follows:

- DECEMBER: Full bloom.
- FEBRUARY: Flower fades. Lateral growth starts.
- MARCH : Remove flower. Cut stems to 6 inches. Many laterals will start below break.
- JUNE 1 : Repot in larger pot if necessary. Plant outside in pot.
- JULY : Pinch all lateral shoots to 4 inches. Root shoots if desired, then pot.
- End AUGUST: Take inside.
- September 20 to December 1: Keep in light only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

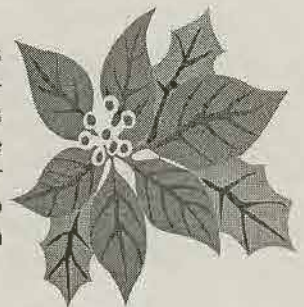
### Poinsettia Pests

Mealybugs look like white puffs of cotton. They suck plant juices and heavy infestations will coat the leaves with sticky honeydew. Use house plant insect sprays according to label directions.

Whitefly is named for the adult, a small, white fly. The immature whitefly is a small, almost translucent scale- like insect. This insect is hard to control. Use a house plant spray specially formulated for whitefly.

Scales are usually brown, hard shells attached to the stems or undersides of the leaves. Sprays are not effective since the shell protects the insects. Heavily infested plants should be discarded. Physically removing the scales and then controlling immature stages with sprays may control the problem on lightly infested plants.

Our local nurseries, florists and even grocery stores provide us with many varieties of this holiday favorite. Be sure to check the plants for these annoying pests to avoid inviting them to join you for the holidays!







**News from Southwest:** New Haven County MG's co-hosted an Open House with the New Haven County Extension Resource Council. Members of one of our ongoing Outreach Projects provided indoor plants for guest souvenirs.

We have been making contact within local communities for new Outreach Projects. Included are schools, Senior Residences, Community Centers and Group Homes. We need speakers on subjects for adult groups.

**News from Southeast:** The move at the Norwich office is complete. The following people responded to the request for help: Master Gardeners Tom Cornick, Frank White and Ken Warner; and, Class of 2001 members Joan Spivak and Charles Tefft. The new garden looks just great. The UCONN sign was reset and is more visible. I would like to extend many thanks to the above people for a great job!

**News from Northwest:** Two workshops will be held at the Litchfield County Extension. For info: 860-626-6240.

Dish Gardens: Saturday, November 10, 1-3:00p.m. with Art Hall. Fee \$22.

Wreathmaking: Wednesday, November 28, 7-9:00 p.m. with Joyce Lake. Fee \$20. Joyce is a Master Gardener. She and her husband, Dan, own The Litchfield Horticultural Center.

| OUTREACH                         |                    | OPPORTUNITIES                  |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                  | <b>SW District</b> |                                |
| The Scott Fanton Museum          | Danbury            | Sandi Wilson, 203-207-8440     |
| CSI (Detention Center)           | Norwalk            | Cheron Barton, 203-321-2826    |
| Southbury Training School        | Southbury          | Volunteer Svs., 203-586-2485   |
| New Canaan Nature Center         | New Canaan         | Gail Egol, 203-966-9577        |
| So. Stamford Community Garden    | Stamford           | Chris Hadin, 203-323-1978      |
|                                  | <b>NE District</b> |                                |
| Nature Trail (Tolland Extension) | Vernon             | Mary Collins, 860-870-6934     |
| Extension Center                 | Vernon             | "                              |
| Willimantic Bridge Conversion    | Willimantic        | "                              |
| Immaculata Retreat House         | Willimantic        | Marie Kuchy, 860-537-5556      |
|                                  | <b>SE District</b> |                                |
| Groton Community Gardens         | Groton             | Julia Griswold, 860-887-1608   |
| Waterford Community Gardens      | Waterford          | "                              |
| Camp Harkness (Disabled)         | Waterford          | "                              |
| Shaw Mansion (Historical)        | New Londodn        | "                              |
| Byran House (Disabled)           | Haddam             | John Castagno, 860-345-4511    |
| York CI (Correction Facility)    | East Lyme          | "                              |
| Montville Minimum Security       | Montville          | "                              |
| Florence Griswold (Historical)   | Old Lyme           | "                              |
| Hart House (Historical)          | Old Saybrook       | "                              |
|                                  | <b>NW District</b> |                                |
| Mary Mahoney Village Greenhouse  | Hartford           | Katie Melvin, 860-570-9010     |
| Auer Farm                        | Bloomfield         | "                              |
| CT Children's Medical Center     | Hartford           | "                              |
| The Children's Place (DCF)       | Windsor            | "                              |
| Jubilee House                    | Hartford           | Shiela Craven, 860-668-9543    |
| UCONN Butterfly Garden           | West Hartford      | Randi Rigg, 860-668-4418       |
| Hillstead Museum Sunken Garden   | Farmington         | Maggie Carpenter, 860-693-0340 |
| Hungerford Nature Center         | Kensington         | Bob Levitt, 860-827-9064       |
| Elizabeth Park                   | Hartford           | Carol Quish, 860-649-0452      |
| Plymouth Historical Society      | Plymouth           | Karen Anderson, 860-626-6240   |
| Prime Time House                 | Torrington         | "                              |
| Community Gardens                | Torrington         | "                              |





The Connecticut Master Gardener Association  
Membership Application for 2002

Membership Dues: \$15.00

YES, I am a fully certified Master Gardener and I want to be a part of the CMGA. I am (a) renewing my membership \_\_\_\_\_ or (b) a new member \_\_\_\_\_. Please fill out completely, even if there are no changes from previous years.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

County\*: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

\* CT Residents only (Be sure to fill in.)

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension Office: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: Circle 5 or fewer of your most avid interests:

- |                    |                     |                  |                   |                  |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Annuals            | Community Gardening | Greenhouses      | Organic Gardening | Seedlings        |
| Beekeeping         | Computers           | Herbs            | Perennials        | Shade Gardening  |
| Birds              | Containers          | Historic Gardens | Photography       | Vegetables       |
| Bonsai             | Drying Flowers      | House Plants     | Plant Diseases    | Water Gardens    |
| Butterflies        | Education           | IPM              | Plant Propagation | Wild Flowers     |
| Cactus             | Flower Arranging    | Landscaping      | Plant Therapy     | Woody Ornamental |
| Gdn. w/Children    | Fruit               | Lawns            | Rock Gardens      | Writing          |
| Gdn. w/Handicapped | CMGA Fundraising    | Native Plants    | Roses             |                  |
| Gdn. w/Seniors     | Garden Design       | Orchids          | Seed Saving       |                  |

Indicate subject(s) you are willing to teach:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Affiliations you would like listed in the GA Directory (such as, CT Horticultural Society, NOFA, Arboretum and Local Garden Club):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Our Organization is only as strong as our members make it. PLEASE help make the year 2002 a big success. Volunteer for one or more of the following CMGA or District committees: Auditing \_\_\_\_\_ District Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Nominating \_\_\_\_\_ Publication/Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_ Symposium \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your completed application and dues payment (Make check payable to "CMGA") to:

Paul Grimmeisen  
24 White Oak Road  
Farmington, CT 06032



# The Laurel

CMGA  
c/o Kate Cheromcha  
9 Northwood Road  
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*The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, along with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature...I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles. - Anne Frank*

