



Connecticut
Master Gardener
Association
Newsletter

The Laurel

Winter, 2010 Volume 23, No. 1

The Laurel is now available in full color on the CMGA website immediately after publication. It is posted in a non-passworded location for your convenience: www.ctmga.org

Greenscapes: Variations on the Theme

CMGA's 2010 17th Annual Symposium
Manchester Community College
Great Path, Manchester, Ct.

March 27, 2010 8 am - 4:30 pm

Co-Sponsored by the University of Connecticut

The Coordinators of the UConn Master Gardener program will again be invited to stage a silent auction fund-raiser that has always been so popular with the attendees.

This year's symposium will maintain some traditions and innovate with some new features. We will again have vendors, plant societies, and other horticultural representatives dispensing information and exciting products. All of us will assemble in the auditorium for the keynote and closing speakers. However the morning and afternoon will repeat the same list of speakers to give everyone a greater opportunity to hear the presentations of their choice.

We urge you to mail your registration form as soon as possible so that we can better assign the various-sized classrooms based on your preferences. **Please see pages 6 & 7 for photos, biographies, and descriptions of the presentations of the eight speakers who will share their expertise at the symposium.**

We are especially excited by the visit of **Gregory Weidemann, Dean and Director of UConn's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources**. This will be the first time the Dean has attended the CMGA symposium and his visit will reinforce the strong bonds that exist between UConn and the CMGA.

The registration form for the symposium is available at the CMGA website: www.ctmga.org.

It takes a lot of people to create an event as complex as the CMGA Symposium and they are all volunteers who lend their talents and energy without expecting compensation in any form. We would like to offer our heartfelt gratitude to the committee members and all the other volunteers who make this great day possible.

Symposium Chair: John Carlson
Co-Chair: Paul Grimmeisen
Speaker Committee: Marge Bingham
Registration: John Neff
Brochure and Program: Diane Ostheimer
Mailings: Kathy Baechle
Signage at MCC: Richard Shaffer
Vendors: Debbye Rosen
Plant Societies: Jay Beausoleil
Caterer Committee: Sterling Andrews
Audio/Visual Liaison: John Carlson
Badges: Diane Ostheimer & Kathy Baechle
Set-Up at MCC: John Carlson & Charles Tefft
Logo Sale Items: Billy Baxter & Sandy Myhalik

And all the Board Members, Speaker Keepers, Door Monitors, and everyone who assists with the million and one last minute tasks that make the CMGA symposium such an educational and memorable event.

The brochure regarding the symposium that was recently mailed omitted the location of the CMGA Symposium which will be held at Manchester Community College, at the address shown above. We sincerely regret any inconvenience that error may have caused.

Elected Officials 2010

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Billy Baxter	John Neff
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John Carlson	Richard Shaffer
Paul Grimmeisen	Charles Tefft

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Diana Ringelheim diana@ringelheim.com

President's Message

As we usher in the New Year, we find that change is all around us. CMGA will also change in 2010. Change is necessary if we are to best serve our members. As a Board, we will be striving to increase the Size, Involvement and Value of CMGA Membership. The New Year begins with change in your Associations By-laws which were adopted at our Annual Meeting held in November, 2009.

Some proposed goals for 2010 are:

- Establishment of a Speakers Bureau
- Improved 2 Way Communication with our members
- Establishment of one or more Social/Educational gatherings for members
- Formation of an Extension Center/CMGA Advisory Board
- Improved reporting on Member Volunteer Projects
- Broaden the geographic representation on CMGA's Board
- Increase number of non board members on committees
- Increasing and retention of membership

To accomplish these goals, will require increased participation of our membership.

A project presently under consideration involves the Prof. Sid Waxman Conifer Collection located on the Storrs Campus of the University of Connecticut. This project may allow for a permanent home for CMGA and an opportunity for closer ties with the University. Over a career of 40 years, Dr. Waxman came up with 40 cultivars, as cultivated plant varieties are known. At the time of his death in 2005, a spokesperson for the New York Botanical Garden, stated that Dr. Waxman's importance transcended the popular plants he developed.

Early in the New Year, we plan to "poll our members" to determine if your association's vision is aligned with "2010 Member Needs." Please take the time to carefully respond when you receive the survey, as your input is important.

Your Board continues to solicit requests for financial grants. Many of our members are unaware of the fact that money may be available to support member volunteer efforts. Applications may be obtained by visiting CMGA's website.

I look forward to reporting on our progress throughout the upcoming year.

Wishing you a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Bill Overton

The Laurel is published four times a year for members of the Connecticut Master Gardener Association. Please send news, photographs and calendar items by email to Diana Ringelheim at diana@ringelheim.com or 121 Godfrey Rd., Fairfield, Ct. 06825. Phone (203)372-8498

Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

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A Favorite Plant

Black Mondo Grass

By David Farrell, Master Gardener, 2009

Black Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus*) is an ornamental perennial sought after for its dark green to solid black foliage and contrasting violet to white flowers. High-end gardeners who value the compact, slow spreading habit and color seek after the plants, which are more a specialty item and can be hard to find. Let's take a closer look at this prized perennial.

Native to Korea and Japan, Black Mondo Grass grows 6-12 inches in height. Plants spread by short underground rhizomes, forming new tufts of leaves close to the parent plant. Remaining compact, plants do not spread rapidly; a mature plant only spreads out a foot in each direction in ten years. Flowers are borne on short racemes not much taller than the foliage, blooming a contrasting violet to white in late spring to early summer. Berry-like fruit capsules, black in color, form after the flowers and remain into late fall. Foliage lasts into the winter, becoming dark black in color. Although foliage is evergreen, it may take some damage during colder winters. Plants tolerate full sun to shade, but will not tolerate a deep shade.

Black Mondo Grass does not have any major pests or diseases. Plants are deer resistant: an important consideration for many people who have deer problems. With proper care and protection, Black Mondo Grass can be easy to grow. The plants prefer a rich, well-drained yet moist, slightly acidic soil in full to partial sun. Black Mondo Grass is marginally hardy in zone 6, so selecting a sheltered location and protecting with winter mulch will help improve your plant's chance of survival. If the south side of the house gets partial shade in summer, this may be a good location for the plant. The south side of a rock or stone wall also will work well.

Finding a local source of Black Mondo Grass can be challenging; you may need to order it by mail. I first found Black Mondo Grass when I was working for a garden center a few years ago, and I was sent to dig up some large clumps for propagation from my boss's exotic backyard garden. Black Mondo Grass is more a high-end specialty item and can be pricey. However its unique black color and excellent habit make this plant worthwhile.

Because the plant remains short, Black Mondo Grass works best on the border or in a rock garden, as it can get lost among taller plants. Contrast it against



white or light colored hardscapes and light colored flowers and foliage. The plant can be used as a specimen in the garden if the surrounding plants are short and don't divert the eyes.

Divide Black Mondo grass in the spring when the plant has had a few years to expand. Although the new rhizomes can be separated, it is better to start off with a plant that has more shoots, as divisions can be slow to establish initially. You can also divide the clump into pieces, taking care not to damage too many shoots in the division process. Plants are best divided in the spring. Take care not to let the plants dry out, watering regularly until the plants are established.

With proper care, your Black Mondo Grass can be a worthwhile investment that rewards you for years both by its beauty in your garden and by propagation.

Connecticut Horticultural Society Symposium

Saturday, February 6, 2010

Portland High School, Portland, Ct.

Keynote Speaker: Daniel J. Hinkley, renowned plantsman, design consultant, and founder of Heronswood Nursery. Two Topics: 1) 'Exclamation, Accentuation and Punctuation: Design Elements in the Flower Garden', and 2) 'Structure in the Garden Through Underused Shrubs, Trees & Vines for Zones 5 - 6'

William Graham III, floral designer. 'Creating Unusual Floral Designs'

Kathy and Jack Donohue, herbs. 'Incorporating Herbs into Gardens & Landscapes'

More information and registration forms are available from www.cthort.org.

The arrival of *The Laurel* may not allow sufficient time to register for this even, but we want to assure our readers that the Ct. Horticultural Society is a valuable gardening resource and its website should be checked often for events.

Volunteer Opportunity at the CT Flower and Garden Show February 18 thru 21, 2010

Master Gardeners are needed to staff the UConn Home & Garden Education Center's booth at the Ct. Flower and Garden Show. Shifts of 3 to 4 hours are available. Volunteers will be representing the Center and answering the public's gardening questions. Show entrance and parking fees will be covered for volunteers. If you are interested in this opportunity please contact Bobbie Orne at rmorne@comcast.net.

A Visit to UConn

Ecology & Evolutionary Biology Plant Growth Facility

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
University of Connecticut Storrs Campus

Although the EEB Greenhouse is run by a different college than the Master Gardener Program, and for very different purposes, gardeners can benefit enormously from a visit to the facility. Some of the plants available from garden centers these days are tender and exotic tropicals that we use as disposable annual plants. Many of them can be seen in this greenhouse growing almost to their full potential, as in the wild.

The official purpose of the greenhouse is to provide living tissue for study by biologists. However, it can simultaneously provide a fantastical plant experience for we horticultural tourists.

This benefit for the general public is being expanded as



Eucomis



Cotton



Chocolate in Bloom



Allamanda



The Arid Environment



Surrounded by academic buildings, the land in front of the greenhouse is used by the summer students and volunteers for vegetable, herb, and flower gardens.

the greenhouse undergoes renovation and re-organization of its collection. It is being separated by habitat: arid, rain forest, etc., so that visitors will have a better understanding of how a wide variety of plants are linked by their environmental needs.

Science aside, visiting the greenhouse is a breath-taking experience for plant fanatics. Be sure to include it on your next visit to the UConn campus, summer or winter. The greenhouse's website, <http://florawww.eeb.uconn.edu/> has information on the hours the greenhouse is open and lots of pictures of what is in bloom at the moment.

UConn Visit Cont'd.

EEB Greenhouse Job Opportunity

The EEB Greenhouse has an immediate opening for a full-time tropical collections horticulturist. The job description and the candidate's requirements can be found at the website: <http://florawww.eeb.uconn.edu/>.

Home & Garden Education Center Storrs Campus

Master Gardeners now have the opportunity to work alongside the staff as volunteers in the Storrs office during the busy spring/summer seasons.

If you are interested please contact Leslie Alexander at 860-486-6343 or Dawn Pettinelli at 860-486-4274.

Also on the Storrs campus . . .

When we work in the local Extension Offices and receive specimens of plant disease from the public, we try as best as we can to match the specimen to disease descriptions in the reference books. But, when all of our diagnostic resources are exhausted in the Extension Offices, we think about sending the samples of diseases to the H & G Center for diagnosis. The Center uses the scientific tests and equipment of a plant pathology laboratory, tools that are not available to Master Gardeners or the general public. Pictured right is just a small section of the laboratory in which plant diseases are diagnosed with the proper scientific rigor.

Plant pathologist Joan Allen is seated in front of a Biological Safety Cabinet. All packages sent to the Home & Garden Education Center are opened in this cabinet which will confine any pathogens contained in the sample. Every specimen is handled as though it is an exotic or dangerous pathogen until it is positively identified as a natively occurring disease. Specimens infected by native diseases are thrown into the regular trash after identification. This would have been the procedure with such problems as the late-blight fungus that bedeviled us this summer. Non-native disease pathogens require that the specimen be autoclaved before disposal. Happily, Joan has not yet discovered a non-native or unidentifiable pathogen, but her laboratory routine strictly adheres to the safety guidelines anyway.



Joan Allen, Plant Pathologist

Lecture Series

Sponsored by The Friends of Elizabeth Park

All lectures are \$10 each and begin at 7 pm at The Pond House, Elizabeth Park, West Hartford, Ct. Walk-Ins Welcome. More information at www.elizabethpark.org or 860-231-9443

Feb. 3 - *Garden Design Made Easy* by Deborah Kent, Master Gardener and professional garden designer.

Feb. 10 - *An Evening With Invasive Plants* by Donna Ellis from the Univ. of Conn. Snow date: 2/17.

Feb. 24 - *Utilizing Native Plants in the Landscape* by Ronald Aakjar, Horticulturist.

Mar. 3 - *Sustainable Roses* by Marci Martin & John Mattia, Rosarians. Snow date: 3/10.

Mar. 17 - *Gardening Down and Dirty* by Bill Turull from Garden Sales.

Mar. 24 - Dinner and Lecture \$40. Begins at 6 pm. *Infusing the Garden with Personality* by Tovah Martin, Connecticut based garden writer.

CMGA Grants and Scholarships

The CMGA has again expressed its support for the UConn Master Gardener Program by awarding **\$4000** toward **scholarships** and the financial needs of the program for the year 2010. This level of commitment has endured for several years and we are working hard to insure it continues into the future.

Financial help is also available to community projects through **Grants to Master Gardeners**. As you plan the new gardening season, please remember that grants can be awarded to ongoing gardens, MG student projects, and the many programs that MGs have invented to spread the gardening word to the general public. If you have received grants in the past you are still qualified to receive financial support in the future for your ongoing projects.

The Grant application form is available on the CMGA website www.ctmga.org. Page two of the form gives the specific requirements and procedures for applying. These requirements are minimal because the purpose of the CMGA is simply to lend whatever help is needed to our members and the UConn Master Gardener Program.

2010 SYMPOSIUM

Greenscapes: Variations on the Theme

MANCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MANCHESTER, CT. - MARCH 27, 2010

By Marge Bingham, Master Gardener &
Chair, Symposium Speakers Committee

The 2010 Symposium had been redesigned from previous years. Although we are featuring fewer speakers, each one will make their presentations in the morning and repeat them in the afternoon. This will give us all a better chance of hearing the presentation that are of the greatest interest to us.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ellen Zachos is proprietor of Acme Plant Stuff, a garden design company in NYC as well as a garden writer and instructor at New York Botanical Garden. She is a Harvard graduate and received certificates in horticulture and ethnobotany from NYBG. She is a former Broadway performer and recently released her CD entitled *Green Up Time*.



Ms. Zachos' Keynote address is entitled JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A GARDENER DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE GREEN!. She notes that being a gardener doesn't mean you're an environmentalist. Many traditional gardening practices can harm local ecosystems. She will help us look at how to work with our home landscapes to create a fully organic environment. A review of sustainable gardening practices and garden designs that work to create a sense of place as well as encourage wildlife and pollinators will be included in the multi-pronged approach to becoming truly green.

Jenny Rose Carey is Director of Ambler Arboretum of Temple University located outside Philadelphia. Born in England to a family of botanists and gardeners, she has gardened in the US for the last twenty-two years. She holds degrees from the Universities of Southampton and Oxford as well as one in Horticulture from Temple. Jenny designs, maintains and offers garden tours of her four and a half acre organic theme gardens at her historic Victorian home called 'Northview'.



Ms. Carey's lecture THE GRAVEL GARDEN: GROWING PERENNIALS AND ANNUALS WITHOUT IRRIGATION will illustrate the tricks of design and installation using im-

ages from her gravel garden as well as other gardens around the world. She will define application of principles supporting healthier plants and ecosystems, involving less maintenance and fewer resources.

Tom Christopher is a garden writer with special interest in the environmental aspects of gardening for such publications as *Horticulture*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *House and Garden* and the *New York Times*. He is currently writing a one-line column about sustainable gardening for the New York Botanical Garden website and is serving as editor for a projected Timber Press publication on sustainable gardening.



Mr. Christopher's lecture is entitled YOUR BACKYARD REVOLUTION and will identify a plan for cutting your landscape irrigation by thousands of gallons annually as well as turning your garden into a source of replenishment for the local water supply. He will demonstrate how this can be accomplished merely with a shovel and a hose!

Nancy DuBrule-Clemente is owner of Natureworks Horticultural Services, established in 1983 as a fully organic garden center offering landscape design services as well as education on organic and sustainable practices through plant catalog, nursery website, workshops and lectures. She is past president of NOFA/CT and author of *Succession of Bloom in the Perennial Garden*.

Ms. DuBrule-Clemente's lecture BLENDED GARDENS: MIXING EDIBLES AND ORNAMENTALS will illustrate incorporation of edibles into existing ornamental borders, flower gardens and containers. Explore the ornamental qualities of these plants which can make your garden more practical and exciting.



2010 SYMPOSIUM

Leslie Duthie has been a staff horticulturist at Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary for over twenty-five years. Her responsibilities include propagation and installation of a variety of native plant species as well as maintenance of habitat gardens. Her lectures focus primarily on the importance of native plants and their connection to native wildlife species whether under sponsorship of Norcross, New England Wildflower Society or other educationally-oriented organizations.



Ms. Duthie's lecture **NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS FOR THE HOME GARDEN** will focus on the use of native trees and shrubs to make the home landscape more attractive for native wildlife. Many of our natives are overlooked when planning a garden. Shrubs can provide flowers, berries, color, winter interest and habitat for many of our wildlife species. Some lesser known trees and shrubs ideal for growing in New England will be discussed.

John Mickel, PhD served as Curator of Ferns at New York Botanical Garden for thirty-eight years. He is the world authority on cultivation of cold hardy ferns. He has written eleven books on ferns including *Ferns for the American Garden* which was included in the American Horticultural Society's list of Great American Garden Books. He founded the New York Chapter of the American Fern Society and has established fern gardens throughout New York State including New York Botanical.

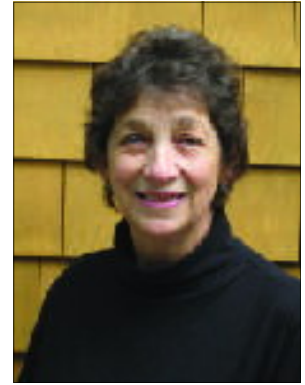


Mr. Mickel's lecture **GREAT FERNS FOR THE NORTHEASTERN GARDEN** will show how ferns make great deer-resistant garden plants with their marvelous variations in size, dissection, and color. As the most overlooked and underutilized class of perennial plants, their ease of cultivation and placement among other perennials will be illustrated.

Marie Stella holds graduate certificates in Landscape Design and Landscape Design History from Radcliffe College. Her design firm, Kirin Farm Enterprises specializes in environmental landscapes, thematic gardens and initiatives to foster preservation of open space. Her latest design project is a Platinum-certified LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) home and sustainable landscape called Beaver Lodge. It is used as a teaching site for classes featuring the innovative use of plant material, rain garden construction,

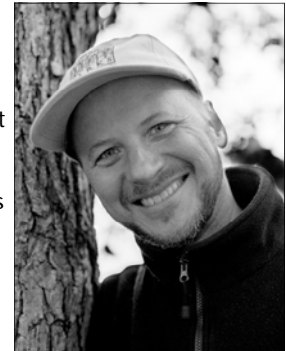
green roofs, vegetated walls, rainwater harvesting and organic vegetable gardening.

Ms. Stella's lecture **RESPONSIBLE GARDENING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: THE SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE** will identify the integrated process of building an energy efficient sustainable house and seamlessly blending it into a sustainable landscape. This presentation explores reduction of natural resource consumption, identification of conservation methodologies, selection of and investment in healthy green materials and promotion of innovative uses of plants.



CLOSING SPEAKER

Eric T. Fleisher, Director of Horticulture at Battery Park City Parks Conservancy is a national leader in the field of sustainable horticulture. He has brought this 37-acre oasis of parkland on the Hudson River to the forefront as the only public garden space in NYC to be maintained completely organically. His methods are based on the development of balanced soil ecology with an emphasis on composting, water conservation and the use of nontoxic means of pest and disease control. A frequent lecturer on sustainable practices, Fleisher also serves as consultant to Harvard University, the Rose F. Kennedy Greenway Conservancy in Boston and Bowdoin College among other organizations. A 2008 Loeb Fellow at Harvard University, Fleisher is continuing to develop protocols to help landscapes recover from the 20th century's chemical interventions.



Mr. Fleisher's closing lecture **MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT: AN ADAPTIVE CHALLENGE** will describe the design and implementation of a sustainable landscape management program utilizing the high profile public parks at Battery Park City and the campus at Harvard University as models. He will identify the most important components required to successfully implement a sustainable landscape management program.

The fees for the symposium are \$60 for CMGA members and 2010 MG Students; \$80 for non-members.

If you have not yet paid your \$20 membership dues, you won't qualify for the \$20 discount!!! The membership renewal form and symposium registration form are available on the website: www.ctmga.org.

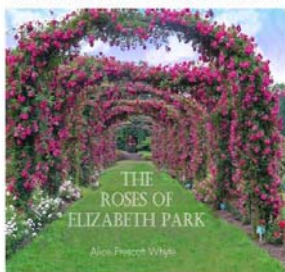
Book Launch

The Roses of Elizabeth Park: The Story of a Dream and a Book

By Ali White, Master Gardener, 2009

I was interested in becoming a Master Gardener for quite some time and had in fact applied to The Rhode Island program twenty years ago, and was already to start when word came that we were going to move again, for the seventh time!

Announcing the release of Ali Whyte's new book ...
The Roses of Elizabeth Park



I grow antique roses, a passion I succumbed to while living in Austin, Texas. Some of my favorites were relocated from former gardens and my current tally is around 70 roses.

I always knew there was a book in me. It was about mid way through the Master Gardener program that I decided to write a book for my final project. No one had ever written a book about the roses in Elizabeth Park. Another book had been written about the history of the park but didn't really feature the stars of the Park, the roses! I had to write a proposal on my project to submit to the coordinators. I think they thought I had bitten off more than I could chew, but they acquiesced, probably thinking that I'd be on the "two year plan!" I explained that I had to follow my dream and so I did.

I couldn't start photographing the garden until June, so in the meantime I contacted the new rosarian at Elizabeth Park and I obtained the inventory of roses planted in main garden. There are over 400 varieties and 15,000 plants in all! Needless to say this was going to be a mammoth project.

June arrived when the roses put forth their most superlative showing, and along with the magnificent bloom, came day after day of prolonged rain. I spent the month camped out, dodging rain showers and slogging through the mud, trying to capture the unique personalities of individual varieties. In the end, I was able to photograph all 400 varieties. July was spent pouring over hundreds of images. I knew I could not include them all, so I selected the roses to be profiled by their sheer beauty, their historical significance, or their unique color or form.

Since graduating from the Master Gardener program, I have joined the Board of Directors of The Friends of Elizabeth Park and it is my desire that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book, go to help maintain the rose garden. I am eternally grateful to the University of Connecticut Master Gardening Program for helping me realize a long held desire, a dream came true. Special thanks to Sarah Bailey for her help and support.

Preview the book at
<http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/907415>

Information

Winter Edition's Informative Websites

By Lorraine Ballato,
Advanced Master Gardener

I recently came across the Hort Science On Line website of the American Society for Horticultural Science (<http://www.ashs.org>) an interesting organization in itself. The University of Georgia recently did some work on which indoor ornamental plants remove volatile indoor pollutants and this website has this info and much more. You can browse by subject matter or specific article or by author if you know about a particular article. It's a little cumbersome at first so it helps to know what you want before you start. The article about indoor plants is indexed as Screening Indoor Plants for Volatile Organic Pollutant Removal Efficiency.

We all know about gladiolas and lilies. But there are hundreds of other flowers that we can grow from bulbs so the website of the International Flower Bulb Information Center (<http://www.bulb.com/>) is a veritable treasure trove of information. There's information about bulbs for all seasons, how to use them in the landscape or containers, how to plant, what to do after they have bloomed, and useful links to other related sites – with delicious photos and without the hard sell. How refreshing!!

Advanced Master Gardener Awards Addendum

Outreach and classroom hours had not been fully tabulated when the Fall edition of The Laurel went to press and the following people had not been included on the list of AMG awards:

Bronze Level:
Don Lukaszek
Rebecca Martorelli
Marty Sienko

Ruby Level:
Hilary Forsyth

Congratulation to all on their outstanding achievement.

Logo Design Competition

A new logo design is being sought for the UConn Master Gardener Program. It will be used on information promoting the Program, such as upcoming classes, catalogs, and activities organized by the MG Coordinators.

The logo should be clean, simple, and effective when reproduced in both black & white and 4-color. It should be printable from home or office printers and copiers, using plain bond paper as well as other materials.

Designs should be submitted as a jpg file to Leslie Alexander, State MG Coordinator at leslie.alexander@uconn.edu. For more information, contact Leslie or Susan Munger (susan.munger@uconn.edu).

The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2010.

The Prize is a basket of items valued at \$250.

Forcing Spring

The only reason forsythia is allotted space in my small garden is because it is one of the shrubs that can be forced into bloom earliest. Artificially inducing spring bloom does not appeal to everyone but it does lift spirits and re-affirms faith in the eventual arrival of the real thing. It also provides a close-up look at the fascinating process of flower and leaf development.

Spring blooming trees and shrubs have had their flower and leaf buds ready since late last summer and are only waiting for warmth and longer periods of daylight to let them unfurl. Forcing allows us to closely watch the protective bud scales loosen, change color, and sometimes drop (forsythia don't drop) as the flower petals are revealed and change into their true spring color.

If you are as crazy and I am, you'll postpone routine Forsythia pruning until January 15th and cut floor-to-ceiling branches for a glorious display in the living room. My Forsythia shrubs have never been harmed by this bizarre process.

The textbook method of forcing would have you prune branches and submerge them in tepid water in a cool place overnight. The next day place the branches in a new container of water in



Forsythia Branch in Winter

a cool and dimly lit area. Do not submerge the parts of the branch you want to bloom. Change the water daily and mist the stems twice a day. Or, you can take a more casual approach (but have a slightly greater risk of failure) and simply arrange the bare branches in a vase with water placed where and how you want, and watch them slowly come to life. Treat them the same way you would ordinary cut flowers. A cool (60° to 65°) room in your home will give you the best and longest-lasting results.

After the Forsythia flowers fade, the branches can be left to unfurl the leaves, also an interesting process to watch. The cut Forsythia branches may even reward you with roots which you can pot up and grow-on for additional plants if you want.

The chart on when to cut the branches is based on the cold requirements of each type of plant. It seems they need a minimum of winter before they will bloom in an artificial spring. After the cold requirement is met, you can cut as often as you like. The forcing process can take from one to six weeks, but as true spring approaches the process accelerates.

-Diana Ringelheim

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Botanical Name</u>	<u>When to Cut</u>	<u>Weeks to Bloom</u>
Forsythia	Forsythia	mid-January	1 to 3
Pear	Pyrus	late January	4 to 5
Willow	Salix	mid-January	2
Witch Hazel	Hamamelis	mid-January	1
Apple	Malus	February	2 to 4
Cherry	Prunus	February	2 to 4
Crabapple	Prunus	February	2 to 4
Japanese Quince	Cydonia/Chaenomeles	mid-February	4
Serviceberry/Shadbush	Amelanchier	February	1 to 3
Beautybush	Kolkwitzia	mid-March	6
Dogwood	Cornus	mid-March	2 to 3
Honeysuckle	Lonicera	March	2 to 3
Lilac	Syringa	March	4 to 5
Magnolia	Magnolia	March	3 to 5
Mockorange	Philadelphus	mid-March	4
Redbud	Cercis	March	2 to 3
Spirea	Spirea	March	4
Wisteria	Wisteria	March	3 to 5

Thanks to the American Horticultural Society for this information

GARDEN MASTER CLASSES

Advanced Master Gardener Classes : Winter / Spring 2010

Date	Time	Extension Center Office	Class and Instructor
2/9/10	7 pm - 9 pm	West Hartford	Deciduous Trees - Dogwoods. Instr: Kevin Wilcox
2/10/10	9:30 am - 12:30 pm	New Haven	English Gardens in New England. Instr: Amy Sampson
2/11/10	2 pm - 4 pm	Haddam	Community Garden Roundtable. Instr: Trish Safner and Marty Sienko. Free class. Limit of 20.
2/23/10	7 pm - 9 pm	West Hartford	Deciduous Trees - Viburnums. Instr: Kevin Wilcox
2/27/10	9:30 am - 11:30 am	New London	Growing Gardens From Seed. Instr: Linda Turner
2/27/10	10 am - 12 pm	Torrington	Basic Orchid Care. Instr: Julia Massolin-Walas
3/3; 3/10; 3/17/10	10 am - 12 pm	New Haven	Real-World Landscape Design. Instr: Amy Sampson. Limit of 12.
3/6/10	10 am - 12 pm	West Hartford	Turf. Instr: Pamm Cooper
3/8/10	2 pm - 4 pm	Bethel	Foolproof Hydrangeas. Instr: Lorraine Ballato
3/9/10	7 pm - 9 pm	West Hartford	Deciduous Trees - Rare & Desirable. Instr: Kevin Wilcox
3/20/10	10 am - 12 pm	Torrington	Orchid Pests. Instr: Julia Massolin-Walas
4/17/10	9 am - 12 pm	West Hartford	Orchid Care & Repotting Clinic. Instr: Sandy Myhalik
4/24/10	10 am - 12 pm	Torrington	Community Garden Roundtable. Instr: Trish Safner and Marty Sienko. Free class. Limit of 20.
4/28/10	11 am - 1 pm	Storrs	Turf. Instr: Steve Rackliffe
4/29/10	5:30 pm - 7 pm	New London	Grasslands & Grasses in Ct. Instr: Juliana Barrett
5/15/10	10 am - 1 pm	Brooklyn	Anyone Can Build a Stone Wall. Instr: Jim Raynor
5/19/10	5:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Vernon	Hot Topics. Instr: Various
6/3/10	6 pm - 8 pm	New London	Using ID Keys. Instr: Susan Munger

Full details on these and other Garden Master Classes : www.ladybug.uconn.edu/. Telephone 1-860-486-6343

The University of Connecticut Presents Conference for the Home Gardener

Friday, March 12, 2010

Rosalind Creasy, keynote speaker, noted author, photographer, and lecturer who will be speaking on *Edible Theme Gardens*.

Karen Bussolini, garden photographer and author, will be speaking on *Designing with Elegant Silvers*.

Steve Silk, photographer and travel writer will be speaking on *The Crazy Mixed-Up Border, An Eclectic Approach to using Trees, Shrubs, Annuals, Tropical's, Edibles and Perennials*

Heather Crawford, free lance environmental educator, will speak on *Gardening with Rain*.

Lois Berg Stack, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Specialist, will speak on *Twenty ways to Become a Greener Gardener*.

There is a pre-registration fee of \$80 per person if postmarked on or before March 5th. The fee is \$90 per person for late registration and walk-ins. **Please make checks payable to the University of Connecticut.** Registration is limited and nonrefundable. Please send checks to Dr. Richard McAvoy, University of Connecticut, Department of Plant Science, 1376 Storrs Road, Unit 4067, Storrs, CT 06269-4067. Included in the cost of admission are lunch, snacks and beverages, opportunities to purchase selected autographed books, and a wide array of gardening books.

If you have questions about the conference, please contact Dr. Richard McAvoy at 860-486-0627 or email: richard.mcavoy@uconn.edu. Information is also available at: www.hort.uconn.edu/2010garden

Two hours of credit will be given toward Advanced Master Gardener status.

The Laurel Calendar

Date and Time	Event, Location, Contacts
1st Tuesday of every month 10AM	CMGA Monthly Meeting at the Pond House, Elizabeth Park, West Hartford. All CMGA members are welcomed guests at the monthly meeting. Info at 203-372-8498.
2/6/10 - All Day	Spring Into the Garden. Ct. Horticultural Society Symposium. Daniel J. Hinkley, William P. Graham III; and Kathy & Jack Donohue. Held at Portland High/Middle School. Info at www.cthort.org. See related announcement on page 3 of <i>The Laurel</i> .
2/7/10 - 2 pm - 3:30 pm	Beatrix Farrand: Private Gardens, Public Landscapes , presented by Judith B. Tankard, Hill-Stead Museum, Farmington. Fees and information at www.hillstead.org
Thru 3/25/10 7 pm	Garden Lectures, Series of Eight , Friends of Elizabeth Park. Held at the Pond House Hall, Elizabeth Park, West Hartford. More details on page 5 of <i>The Laurel</i> . Info at 860-231-9443 or www.elizabethpark.org.
2/13/10 10 am - 4:45 pm	Shade Gardening Saturday , New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY. Info at 718-817-8747 or www.nybg.org
2/18/10 7:30 pm	Structuring Nature:Whole Property Design , presented by Duncan Brine of Pawling, NY. Ct. Horticultural Society at Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford, Ct. Info at www.cthort.org.
2/18/10 - 2/21/10	29th Annual Connecticut Flower & Garden Show. Ct. Convention Center, Hartford, Ct. Info at www.ctflowershow.com
2/25/10	Expanding the Ecological Landscape. Ecological Landscaping Assoc. and NOFA Conference. Mass-Mutual Center, Springfield, MA. Info at www.ecolandscaping.org.
2/27/10 - 4/11/10	Orchid Show at the Enid Haupt Conservatory , New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY. Info at 718-817-8747 or www.nybg.org
3/5/10 - All Day	People, Plants, Collections: Making the Connection. Longwood Graduate Program Annual Symposium. Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, Pa. Info at www.udel.edu/longwoodgrad/symposium.
3/6/10 8:30 am - 4:45 pm	Sustaining Connecticut: Growing Local, Eating Healthier, Living Smarter. CT NOFA 28th Annual Conference. Manchester Community College. More than a dozen workshops. Info at 203-888-5146 or www.ctnofa.org/events.
3/7/10 - 2 pm - 3:30 pm	Lessons from the Master: Beatrix Farrand at Dumbarton Oaks , presented by Gail Collmann Griffin, at the Hill-Stead Museum. Info at www.hillstead.org.
3/10/10 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Ct Community Gardening Assoc. Ann'l Meeting. New Haven County Extension Center, 395 Skiff St., North Haven. Panel discussion, informative displays, light refreshments. RSVP to cordalie,benoit@aya.yale.edu. Info at www.ctcommunitygardening.org.
3/12/10 All Day	Conference for the Home Gardener. Lewis B. Rome Commons, UConn, Storrs, Ct. Two hours of credit given to Advanced Master Gardener. Info from Dr. Richard McAvoy, 860-486-0627, email: Richard.mcavoy@uconn.edu, or www.hort.conn.edu/2010garden.
3/18/10 7:30 pm	Selecting and Using Ornamental Grasses , presented by Robert Herman of New Hartford, Ct. Ct. Horticultural Society. Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford. Info at www.cthort.org.
3/27/10 All Day	CMGA Symposium , Manchester Community College. See detailed descriptions of speakers and events on pages 1, 6, and 7 of <i>The Laurel</i> .
4/10/10 10 am	Workshop: Opening the Rose Garden. Held at the Rose Garden, Elizabeth Park, West Hartford. Info at 860-231-9443 or www.elizabethpark.org.
4/15/10 7:30 pm	Eggplants on Parade (Beautiful and Productive Vegetable Gardens) presented by Anita Dafonte of Newtown, Ct. Ct. Horticultural Society. Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford. Info at www.cthort.org.
6/5/10 9 am - 4 pm	HerbFest2010 Connecticut Herb Association, Pleasant View Farms, 452 South Rd., Rt. 83, Somers, Ct. 06071. Admission \$10. Workshops, weedwalks, activities for children, demonstrations, info table, bake sale, food vendors, 30+ vendors. Info at www.ctherb.org or www.herbifest.com or 860-763-5206.

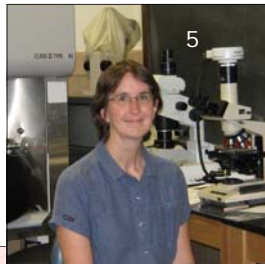
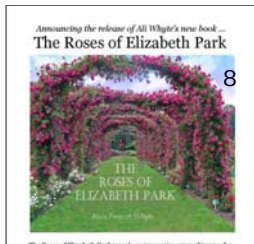
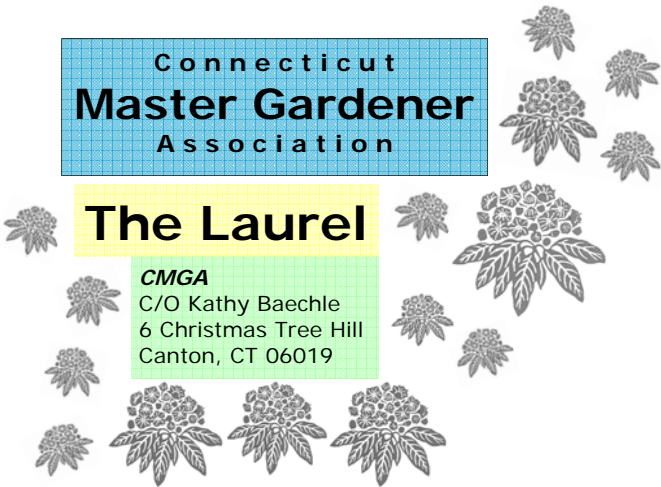
Calendar notices must be for events open to the public and of interest to Master Gardeners.
 If you have items for the Calendar, please contact the editor at www.diana@ringelheim.com. or 203-372-8498
 Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1
Thanks to Dick Shaffer for invaluable assistance with the Calendar.

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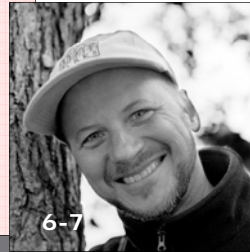
The Laurel

CMGA
C/O Kathy Baechele
6 Christmas Tree Hill
Canton, CT 06019



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Connecticut
Master Gardener
Association
Newsletter

The Laurel

Spring, 2010 Volume 23, No. 2

Summer Garden Safari

CMGA Semi-Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 17, 2010
8:30 am to 12 pm (approx.)

Litchfield County Extension Center; 843 University Drive,
Torrington, Ct. 06790

Directions:

From Rt. 8 Northbound: Exit 44; straight at the traffic light at the end of the exit ramp; at the second traffic light turn left onto Rt. 4 West.

Proceed approx. 2.75 miles; turn right onto University Drive and proceed one mile to the UConn Torrington Campus. Turn left into the campus and the Extension Center will be directly ahead.

From Rt. 8 Southbound: Exit 44. Turn right off ramp onto Route 4 West and proceed as above.



A **buffet breakfast** will fortify us at 8:30, followed by the CMGA Semi-Annual Meeting (each year we race to get through the business portion as fast as possible!). By 9:30 at the latest, buses will take us to one-hour tours of the two private gardens described below. **Please bring your lunch** and join us back at the Extension Center where the CMGA will supply drinks and dessert. We will cap off the day at 1:00 at the White Flower Farm for a guided tour (transportation to the nursery will be on our own).



**Stoner Garden -
Litchfield**

After building an addition to the house, the Stoner garden was completely redesigned. We will see a fenced garden, hosta beds, hundreds of day-lilies, vegetables, berries, dahlias, and other plants.

Ronnie & Hugh Schoelzel Garden - Litchfield

The Schoelzel garden has been 'under construction' since 1982 and encompasses 56 acres. The very long perennial border was designed by Mary Ann McGourty and features native plants. Vegetables, late blooming annuals, ornamental grasses, shrubs, trees, berries, and fruit trees make the most of this landscape. Specimen plants have survived beyond their zone hardiness in this garden, and we should enjoy and learn an enormous amount here.

Summer Garden Safari Fee \$10

Reservations are required for the visits to the two private gardens and breakfast. Please send a check for \$10 per person (payable: CMGA) and mail to:

Paul Grimmeisen
24 White Oak Road
Farmington, Ct. 06032

If you have any questions, please contact Paul at
860-677-8645 or visit ctmga.org.

**White Flower Farm
Garden Center**

We end our safari at this renowned garden center, with its 280 ft. Lloyd Border that has a dazzling display of perennials. To that, add the breath-taking beauty of the tuberous begonia greenhouse, and about 200 acres of propagation ranges that have been productive for about 200 years. Not only can we indulge our senses with garden splendor in this nursery - we can buy what we love! Master Gardeners will receive a guided tour of the facilities, beginning at 1 pm. Transportation to White Flower Farm is on our own.

Elected Officials 2010

President: William Overton
billdo103@aol.com

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gregoirerogerg@gmail.com

Secretary: Fran Maynard
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Membership: Kathy Baechle
k.baechle@comcast.net

Board of Directors

Sterling Andrews	Paul Grimmeisen
Kathy Baechle	Nancy Hinchey
Billy Baxter	Ellen Morse
Marge Bingham	Diane Ostheimer
Tracy Burrell	Diana Ringelheim
John Carlson	Richard Shaffer
Maureen Gillis	Charles Tefft

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UConn Home & Garden

Education Center:
877-486-6271 www.ladybug.uconn.edu

UConn Liaison:

Leslie Alexander: 860-486-6343
leslie.alexander@uconn.edu

CMGA Website: www.ctmga.org
Maureen Gillis cmga@comcast.net

The Laurel :
Diana Ringelheim diana@ringelheim.com

President's Message

The May meeting of the CMGA Board of Directors saw some changes to the list of Board members. Joining the team are **Maureen Gillis** who will be the Website Administrator (see Maureen's article on page 8) and **Tracy Burrell** who will be organizing the CMGA Speakers Bureau (likewise, see Tracy's article on page 4). At the same meeting we accepted the resignations of **John Neff, Sandy Myhalik, and Peggy Bliss**. The CMGA is grateful for all the enthusiasm, hard work, and outstanding service from these past and present members of its Board.

As mentioned earlier, we are preparing a poll to seek input from our members in order to plan for the future. A copy of the **survey** taken at the March Symposium is on page 14 and you can start the survey process by filling it out and mailing it in. Or, you can wait for an emailed version, which can be filled in and sent electronically. Please take the time to respond to one survey or the other.

John Carlson, Chairman of the 2010 Symposium, announced that the event ended in the black despite many competing garden symposium-style programs and the bad economy. **Thank You** to all our member-volunteers who worked tirelessly to make it happen. We plan to continue the tradition of a Spring Symposium in 2011, with a theme yet to be determined.

At his moment, we are working with Marci Martin to have a CMGA Member tour of the **Victorian Rose Garden in Elizabeth Park** – with Marci in Victorian costume! Please see page 10 or the website for details.

The Semi-Annual Meeting and Summer Garden Safari will be held in Litchfield County this year. The event will take place on July 17th and details are on page 1 and the website.

Given that most CMGA Board Meetings are held in the Hartford area, many qualified members of the CMGA find it difficult to participate. We continue to look for ways to add talented people from all parts of the state, and ask you to contact any current Board member if you are interested in helping. We have begun holding **Board meetings in Extension offices** around the state and hope you can join us when a meeting is scheduled for your area.

Best to all!

Bill Overton

The Laurel is published four times a year for members of the Connecticut Master Gardener Association. Please send news, photographs and calendar items by email to Diana Ringelheim at diana@ringelheim.com or 121 Godfrey Rd., Fairfield, Ct. 06825. Phone (203)372-8498

Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

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Welcome New Members of the CMGA

Membership in the CMGA extends the sense of accomplishment and enrichment begun by the UConn Master Gardener Program. It also helps us promote the gardening message to the general public.

Cheleen	Abely	Kathleen	Ginotti	Terry	McManus
Joanne	Alfieri	Julie	Grant	Trisha W.	Mihan
Claire	Bacon	Dorothy	Guillette	Micheal	Mikolowsky
Frances	Baiamonte	Dr.Gloria	Hager	Beth	Miller
Roberta	Ball	Susan S.	Hally	Diane	Montuoro
Michael	Ball	Andrew Merz	Hanson	Thomas	Moorehouse
Edward	Barry	Dawn	Harrison	LeaAnne	Moran
Kathleen	Barton	Bernadet	Hennessy	Marta Elisa	Moret
Martin	Behm	Nancy	Hinchey	Anne	Mygatt
Joan	Boehm	Trina	Horine	Jane	Nadel-Klien
Jean	Bonzani	David	Hoyt	Angela	Nero
Allan	Brown	Diana	Hughes	Cynthia	Newby
Karen	Brown	Susan	Hunter	Charles J.	Northshield Jr.
Deborah	Brownell	Sandra	Jerbert	Sally	O'Brien
Gail	Bruhn	Patricia	Justus	Frederick	Odell
Jamie Ann	Burgess	Kerry	Karlson	Kathie	Ohsann
Jane	Butler	John	Kasinskas	Linda	Olson
Janet	Cadro	Norma	Kerlin	Mary	Polci
Tage	Carlson	William	Kies	Clare	Purcell
Barbara	Carroll	Michelle	Kiley	Dennis	Putala
Marianne	Cassidy	Laura	King	Ruth	Randolph
Candace	Chase	Sandra	Koorejian	Patricia	Reardon, MD
Madeline	Coakley	Steve	Kovack	Marilyn	Riordan
Stephen	Colgan	Kenneth	Kraus	Mary Ellen	Smith
Norma	Collier	Peggy	Kunkel	Sue	Staehtly
Christina	Collins	Janine	LaPlante	Una	Sullivan
Cynthia	Conti	Suzanne	Lavallee	Sheree	Surdam
Gina	Cubbage	Sherri	LeBlanc	Robert	Sutton
Paola	Decristofaro	Pam	Lee	Virginia	Teichner
Rita	Depasquale	Jackie	Lee	Faith	Tyldsley
Ganga	Duleep	Penny	Loisel	Cheryl	Umscheid-Banister
Lisa	Faucher	Jason	Long	MaryEllen	Unger
Diane	Faxton	Catherine	Lynch	Rosemary	Volpe
Carolyn	Fisher	Kathi	Mag	Cheryl	Wadsworth
Susan	Flynn	Janet	Marciniak	Lynne	Warren
Chantal	Foster	Maryjane	Markey	Barbara	Weber
Katherine	Francis	Grace	Marshall	Erica	Welch
Faith	Geist	Candice	McCallum	Melanie	Wyler
Jeff	Gerbert	Katherine	McCue	Linda	Young
Rogene	Gillmor	Kathy Jo	McLoughlin	Lawrence	Zarbo
Janine	Gillum	Barbara	McLoughlin		

Speakers Bureau Master Gardeners on the Lecture Circuit

By Tracy Burrell, Master Gardener

It happens. You're at a party, walking through a supermarket or enjoying a Blizzard at your local Dairy Queen, when someone asks "Aren't you a Master Gardener? Would you speak at my garden group, library, senior center, neighborhood association... next week?"

Don't panic. You spent a lot of time and effort to become a Master Gardener. You have the knowledge and the passion. You're certainly not afraid of hard work. But the idea of speaking in front of a group of strangers, even if you have months to prepare – you'd rather walk through a field of poison ivy – barefoot.

Public speaking remains the No. 1 fear for Americans, more frightening than death or divorce. As Master Gardeners, our mission is education. The more comfortable you feel in front of an audience, whether it's giving a presentation, conducting a garden tour, or just introducing yourself to another person, the more time you can spend talking about the good stuff – gardening.

The goal of CMGA's Speaker Bureau is to develop a pool of speakers that are available to speak on a variety of topics in a variety of arenas. A key component of the bureau is providing resources and support to make sure that your talk is a success. As an example, we will be posting templates, checklists and actual presentations on our website for your reference. To get you started, consider the following questions when you are putting a talk together:

What's the topic? This may seem to be a no-brainer, but you want to make sure that you clearly understand what they'd like you to talk about – for spring planting, one group might want you to focus on garden planning, while another may want detailed information on seed starting.

How much time? Not just how much time for your talk, but how much time will you be spending at the meeting? For example, the group may have their business meeting before your talk, so you may be spending several hours at the meeting.

Are they beginning gardeners or more experienced? Tailor your talk to meet their needs.

Are they planning a project (example: community garden) or event (example: plant sale)? You may be able to integrate their activity into your talk

or provide information after the talk.

Who is the primary point of contact? The person who asked you to speak may not be in charge of the event.


What are the logistics? Make sure you know where the talk is taking place. Do a test drive – depending on time and place, a drive that takes 20 minutes on the weekend, might take 40 minutes during weekday traffic. Check out parking, especially if you're planning on bringing numerous, or heavy items for display. Ask the staff, who may not be affiliated with the organization that's asked you to speak, about their facilities – what is the capacity of the room, is there a projector, tables, a white board, etc.

Do they need any info from you before the talk? You may be able to provide the title of your speech and a brief outline that the group can use to advertise the event. Also consider brainstorming with the point(s) of contact to determine key places to advertise. For example, a town's transfer station can be a great place to post flyers on a composting talk.

What else is going on in town? Spend a little time checking out the town's website. There may be info regarding services that might impact your talk. For example, the town Groton has designated May as Healthy Groton Month – your knowledge of what's happening locally is a plus with attendees – they know that you took the time to find out a little bit about them and that you're not recycling a canned speech.

As you're putting your talk together, consider using some of the following tips to engage your audience:

Engage their senses – Learning is enhanced when you can engage multiple senses. For example, I've passed around Cowpots, which are seed starting pots made out of manure. Everybody got a kick out of the fact that they don't smell! I've also used the velvety texture of a lamb's ear, the roughness of river birch bark or the bright red stems of a rhubarb plant to emphasize specific points.

Show how failing made you a better gardener – We all know that you can never learn enough about gardening. Talking briefly about how you 

Speakers Bureau. . .continued

failed – you bought the wrong plant, planted it in the wrong area, cut buds off by mistake, killed a beneficial insect, etc. – and what you learned from it is a great way to demonstrate problem solving techniques.

Freebies and Handouts – Everybody likes free stuff. I've passed out soil testing brochures, expired seed packets and old gardening catalogs. Also consider passing out a list of all the sites mentioned in your talk or a copy of your presentation – you could print out 4 to 6 slides per page to save on paper.

If you are talking at a library consider printing out a list of gardening books that are on their shelves. The librarians have set aside copies of the books I selected to show at the talk. I include both adult and children's books, since a lot of parents (and grandparents) want to make gardening a family activity. This is a 'freebie' that encourages attendees to look at what's available at their local library.

Tag team – Consider partnering with another Master Gardener; one could give the talk while the other helps with set up, passes out handouts, runs the laptop, takes photos, etc. If you are just starting out as a speaker, having a friendly face in the audience can help if you draw a blank. You can also share what worked and what didn't work at previous talks and proofread each other's work. This can be critical if you're considering doing a demonstration or a hands-on activity - the demo that you thought would only take 10 minutes actually takes 45!

Hopefully this will get the creative juices flowing. Log onto www.ctmga.org for specifics including developing an elevator speech, putting together a go bag and using Powerpoint. □

Garden-Related Websites

By Lorraine Ballato,
Advanced Master Gardener

If you're like me, you want to know and/or track when things might bloom and/or when insects might emerge so that you can act preventively. I use horticultural newsletters to help me with this, as well as several years of experience, but I've just been turned on to a new website which I think will be even more useful: www.naturecalendar.net. Written and maintained by Janice Goldfranck, she divides the year into 19 seasons. By chronicling the various conditions that trigger plants, animals, and insects to do something, she presents associations of flowers and natural events that will help you plan social events, your garden, and lots of other things.

A website I really like at planting time (now and later on for second season crops), is the National Climate Data Center. We need to know the first frost dates and last frost dates for seed starting and other garden related activities and this website lists those for us. This site lets you select your state, then brings up a table that lists freeze/frost probability for various locations in that state. Given are the dates of probable first and last frosts. For the fall and spring dates of occurrence, and freeze-free period, probabilities are given for three temperatures (36, 32, and 28 degrees F) at three probability levels (10, 50, and 90 percent). It's a long web address, so copy it down carefully or just Google the National Climate Data Center: http://cdoncd.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/climatenormalsclimatenormals.pl?directive=prod_select2&prodtype=CLIM2001&sbnum=

I'm always on the hunt for a groundcover that will outcompete weeds so I don't have to worry about spending precious time, money, and energy maintaining beds and borders. Lucky for us Cornell has accumulated information from over 5 years of study on the most successful groundcovers that overwinter in zones 5 through 7, form a dense enough canopy to block out light at the soil surface, and thereby minimize weed seed germination. Pest resistance, sun and shade tolerance, and other cultural information is available on Cornell's Allstar Groundcovers website, www.gardening.cornell.edu. □

A Sampling of Suggested Speaker Topics Collected at the 2010 Symposium

More on soils	What plants deer eat and don't eat
Native Plants	Garden design for small urban/suburban plots
Growing in salty soil	Alpines/rock gardening
Edible landscaping	Planning woodland gardens and borders
Vegetable gardening	Water gardening & native bog plants
Vegetable gardens in containers	Wildlife habitat
More native landscaping	Moss & shade gardens
Some ecological speakers	Plant propagation
Organic speakers	Pruning
In-depth composting	Cutting gardens
Meadow gardening	Garden Design

If you would like to add your suggestions to this list, please consider volunteering for the 2011 Symposium Committee.

Let me know at:
diana@ringelheim.com

BOOK REVIEW

The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession

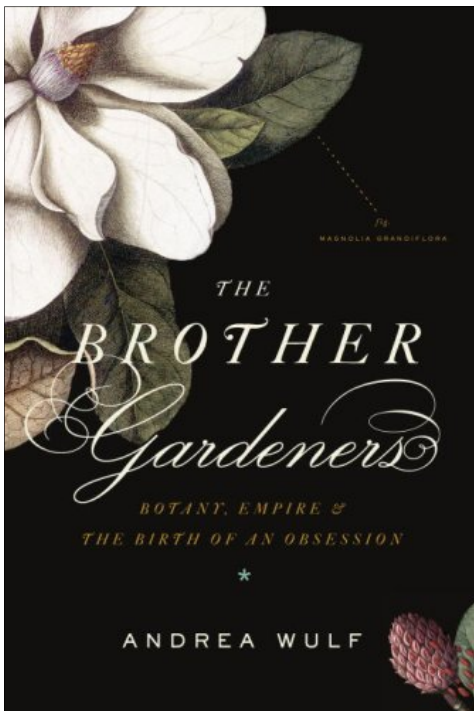
By Andrea Wulf

Reviewer: Virginia Montgomery, Master Gardener

Browsing in the Stonington Free Library on a cold winter day, I happened upon *The Brother Gardeners: Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession*, by Andrea Wulf, a design historian based in London. Gardeners and history buffs will enjoy this absorbing story about a group of naturalists who had great influence on the landscape and society of 18th and 19th century England. Published in hardcover by Alfred A. Knopf [2009], it is now available in paperback.

What is the most effective way to bring historical characters and events to life? Wulf answers that question. Adventurous ocean voyages, pioneer explorations, island dalliances, warm friendships and sour rivalries make for stimulating reading. Wulf quotes original sources extensively, and enhances her account with many illustrations, a listing of bibliography, notes, a glossary of plants, and an index.

In colonial Pennsylvania, John Bartram was a farmer and self-taught botanist. Bartram's English correspondent was Peter Collinson, a London cloth merchant and botanical enthusiast with many contacts among landed gentry. Collinson contracted with Bartram to ship seeds, plants and saplings from the Western hemisphere to England, an activity that resulted in the first seed and nursery enterprises. Many species, including *Acers*



saccharum and *rubrum*, *Franklinia alata*, *Magnolia grandiflora*, *Catalpa bignoides* and several species of pine, were imported in quantity. Those imports changed England's landscape, bringing colorful autumn foliage and new textures. I was interested to learn that a garden revolution in England had started in colonial America. In turn, Collinson's connection with the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus resulted in more plant exchanges as well as English acceptance of the Linnaean system of taxonomy. Daniel Solander, sent to England by Linnaeus, made an instant bond with Collinson, who introduced him to a wide circle of plant enthusiasts, including Jo-

seph Banks.

Banks was an English aristocrat and polymath who, in 1768, sailed with Captain Cook to the coast of South America, around Cape Horn and into the Pacific. Banks had the Endeavour's Great Cabin remodeled, with holes drilled in the floor to safely transport the plants collected from Brazil, Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia. Solander was his companion on the daunting three-year voyage that included a shipwreck, life-threatening tropical diseases, beautiful Tahitian women and plenty of 'botanizing.'

Banks' later contributions were more significant. As confidante of King George III, president of the Royal Society, and director of Kew Gardens, he persuaded merchants, army officers, diplomats and missionaries to send plants to England from their posts all over the world. Wulf credits Banks with the vision to exploit colonial botany to benefit the mother country England.

Philip Miller, the head gardener of →

The Brother Gardeners . . . continued.

Chelsea Physic Garden in London, was instrumental in making gardening England's national obsession. His *Gardeners Dictionary* was published in 1731, with eight editions following over the next thirty-seven years. Miller's *Dictionary* is the model for the gardening encyclopedias we have today.

There are more than a few colorful characters. Charles Darwin's ancestor Erasmus Darwin, wrote a best-selling poem, *The Loves of The Plants*, which helped diminish English prejudice against the Linnaean sexual system of classification. Ben Franklin's eponymous stove heated greenhouses for exotic plants. Banks employed Captain Bligh, after the mutiny on the *Bounty*, to bring the breadfruit plant from Tahiti to Jamaica where it was successfully cultivated as food for slaves in the West Indies.

The Brother Gardeners offers a captivating picture of a time before inter-continental travel could be accom-

plished in a few hours, before plants were classified through studying their DNA, or seeds were smuggled through customs. Through their friendships, trade and writings, the brotherly group of naturalists helped create the world of gardening and horticulture we enjoy today.



If you're traveling around the country this summer you may want to check this database before you leave:

www.tclf.org/landscapes

By Dick Shafer, Advanced Master Gardener

I just finished reading the January/February 2010 edition of *The American Gardener* magazine, which as you may know, is a bimonthly publication of the American Horticultural Society. An article in the "Gardener's Notebook" section got my attention concerning the launching of a new online database of parks, gardens, and a wide variety of other landscapes across America called "What's Out There". Ten years in the making, the database contains hundreds of entries from all 50 states.

The database was created by an organization called The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF), based in Washington, D.C. Charles A. Birnbaum is the organization's founder and president. The goal of the database is to "raise public awareness of the rich diversity and interconnectedness of our shared designed landscape heritage". "What's Out There" is searchable by landscape name, type, and/or style, landscape architect and/or designer, and location; public input is welcomed. "Designed as Wiki-style database, anyone can submit information, which TCLF staff will review before adding it to the database".

News from Hartford County Master Gardeners

By Sarah Bailey,
Master Gardener Coordinator

Spring is here! The winter days involved quite a few talks and presentations to area garden clubs, libraries and garden center groups, as folks got geared up for another growing season.

Classroom time is finished and the Hartford-area Master Gardeners and interns are busy starting (or continuing) their many outreach projects. On-going projects include the continued restoration of the grounds at the Mark Twain House and work at the Hill-Stead Museum grounds, along with vegetable production for Foodshare at Auer Farm in Bloomfield. This April, the first phase of the new rose garden in Walnut Hill Park, New Britain, was installed, with 800 roses planted in one day!

New projects include development of a television series on gardening for Hartford Public Access Television, a second production garden for Foodshare in Simsbury, and the installation of vegetable gardens at a homeless shelter in Hartford. Additionally, Master Gardeners and interns will be present at many farmers' markets and fairs to provide advice and information to the public.

Why Should I Read This? I'd Rather Be Gardening!

By Maureen Gillis, Master Gardener and
CMGA Web Administrator

I knew I had to use a sneaky title for this article if I wanted anyone to glance beyond the byline. Who wants to read about technology, interactive communications, the CMGA Web site . . . blah blah blah . . . when you could be infusing soil under your fingernails, shredding your arms on rose thorns, or squooshing cabbage worms off the broccoli? The fresh-air alternatives to yawning your way through **online feedback forms**, **Adobe Flash plug-in**, and **clickable links** are much more alluring even when unpleasant. However, I ask that you bear with me. Take a well deserved break for ten minutes and enjoy this walk through cyberspace. Believe me—it was more painful to write this than it will be for you read it. I'd rather be gardening, too!

What we're trying to accomplish

An important CMGA goal for 2010 is to improve two-way communication with our members. What benefits and services do you want and value? One step in that process is to enhance our online communications; this will provide an opportunity for specific and continuous feedback, as well streamline your interactions with us. This article discusses changes that have recently been made to our Web site, how to navigate the site and the new Facebook page, and what other short- and long-term enhancements are planned. There's a little something here for everyone, even if it's just discovering that you can now change your contact information with us online. Or apply for grant money without searching for a pen!

What's been done so far

One focus in the past few months has been to provide alternatives to current written communications.

The membership application is now a "typable" form, rather than one that must be filled out by hand

Changes in contact information can be entered by members online; the new information is emailed automatically to the Membership Committee; see the new sub-tab under "About CMGA" called "Update Your Info"

The grant application is now available in 2 new formats: a "typable" version as well as an online form that is sent directly to the Grants Committee

Future events, such as the annual Symposium, will provide an alternative of using online forms for registration

A second area of attention has been on creating interactive communications.

An online feedback form is available on the "Member Benefits" page for you to easily tell us what is important to you

We're now on Facebook! You can post pictures, videos, and events. You can start and respond to gardening discussions; see below for more information

Our focus has not just been on communications, but in reorganizing the site for ease of use and adding meaningful content. Some of the content changes include:

Aggregating Member Benefit items under one section, and making some of the benefit pages accessible only to members

Adding links to all "Discount Partner" Web sites

Providing descriptions of all CMGA committees and who to contact

Creating a Gardening section, which will soon include information and links about all aspects of gardening; it currently houses information about Disease and Pest alerts and links to other organizations

Web site navigation

I know that everyone has a different level of Internet comfort, and it isn't just a factor of the chair you sit in while surfing the Net. I spend a large portion of my "indoor" time on the Internet (on a most uncomfortable chair!) and even though I had accessed the CMGA site as a member, when I delved into it further as the Web Administrator, I realized some of the navigation wasn't as intuitive as I had expected. When your mouse hovers over one of the main tabs, the sub-tabs appear. Because there are drop down sub-tab menus from each of the main tabs, a user might not realize that there is distinct information contained in the main tab itself. This is the main menu with the "Member Benefits" sub-tabs displayed:



Most users might never click on the "Member Benefits" main tab, thinking that all information is included on the sub-tabs. But each main tab contains content not in the sub-tabs. For example, the Member Benefits main



Why . . .? continued

page includes an online Comment form for you to let us know what other benefits and services you'd like CMGA to offer.

Take some time to explore each tab and sub-tab on our site. What else would you like to see? Use the Comment form to let me know!

If you don't see the tabs at all when you visit our site (you see links without buttons), you might have an older browser and probably haven't downloaded the free Adobe Flash plug-in. Doing so will enhance all your Web experiences. Visit www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer/ to download.

The other aspect of a site that often isn't evident to new users is "clickable links." If something is underlined, then 99% of the time it will link to a page, a document, an email address, etc. How do you know if it's clickable? Your cursor will turn into a hand when it hovers over anything that links to something else.

Outreach and CMGA Events

A page was created to highlight the activities of each CMGA Focus Group (a group of CMGA members who meet monthly and focus on a specific project(s). If your extension center does not have such a group but you would like to help start one, let us know. For the Middlesex County Focus Group, a "photo album" of the cold frame construction (funded by a CMGA grant) allows for comments by members, and posting to Facebook and other social forums.

A sub-tab under "Events" is being created that will list events (e.g., fairs) where CMGA will have a booth and contact information for you to indicate whether you'd like to participate. We plan to include an online form for you to indicate whether you have an event at which you'd like CMGA to be represented.

State and Local Garden Events Calendar

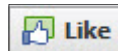
In addition to information about CMGA (its history, mission, board, committees, events, projects, and benefits) and the gardening information discussed above, there is also a page for gardening programs and activities sponsored by other organizations (the "Other Happenings" sub-tab under "Events"). Events are being added continuously to provide you with information about state and local events of interest. Please let me know if you have an event you would like me to include.

CMGA on Facebook

Facebook facilitates sharing photos, videos, and discussions among members. After posting one Discussion Forum topic, we have already received some great ideas from members—having a plant swap; setting aside a day to tackle a big project as a group; using the site to ask members to identify plants and pests we have that we just can't put our finger on. To access the CMGA Facebook page from our Web site, click on the



logo on the bottom of the Welcome page (you need to be a member of Facebook, but it's free and easy to join). To be able to post pictures, etc.



just click on the button next to our name. We're starting out simple... just one Discussion Forum to get your feedback for now. Click on the Discussion tab to add your ideas. But please post pictures and write comments on the Wall as well!

What's planned (and might be in place by the time article goes to print)

In addition to expanding gardening resources and other items mentioned above, we are developing a Feedback area of the site. We will use this, Facebook, and online surveys for soliciting input about specific events and to help us develop a long range plan. Email and electronic solutions will be used much more than in the past. We anticipate using the site (and/or a Facebook discussion) to facilitate seed sharing and the like. Details about the Speakers Bureau will be added once it has been established.

Longer-term goals

We intend to explore an online payment solution such as Paypal (for dues; events; our merchandise) and have merchandise available for sale on the site.

Questions/Issues/Ideas

What else would you like? What ideas do you have? Would a demonstration of the Web site and Facebook be of interest if we could arrange it? **Contact me at cmga@comcast.net. I'd love to hear from you.**

Visit the
**CONNECTICUT
MASTER GARDENER
ASSOCIATION**
website
at
ctmga.org
to take advantage of these
exciting changes

A Gift From . . .

Marci Martin, the Rosarian at Elizabeth Park
has offered to give
Connecticut Master Gardeners
a private tour of this historic Victorian Rose Garden -
in Victorian Costume!
Friday Evening, June 25th at 6:30 p.m.
Bring your own picnic or
dine at the Pond House Café, before or after the tour.

This event was inspired by Marci's gratitude to
Connecticut Master Gardeners for the help they generously
donate toward the maintenance of the
Rose Garden and other areas of Elizabeth Park.
Please join us for a heavenly and informative stroll through a
garden paradise.

Notification of the Rose Garden event was sent via email on May 12, 2010. If you didn't receive an email about the event, we either don't have your email or we have recorded it incorrectly. Please email cmga@comcast.net with your preferred email address or fill out the online form at <http://www.ctmga.org/#/update-your-info/4540297061> to make sure we have your correct information.

2010 CMGA Membership Directories - Two Ways:

- ◆ **Alphabetical Listing of All Members**
- ◆ **Regular Members Sorted by Town**

This year's directory is available in two formats: alphabetical lists of regular members and associate members, same as previous years, and regular members only sorted by town. We thought members may want to know other Master Gardeners in their vicinity for the purpose of forming Focus Groups, volunteer teams, or carools to CMGA events! If you would like the directory in both formats, please mention that in your email.

Many copies have already been emailed to the people who signed up for it at the Annual Meeting. If you would like one or both directories, please send your name and email address to Diana Ringelheim at diana@ringelheim.com.

It is strongly wished that the Directory travel via email, but if that's not possible for you, please call Diana at 203-372-8498 and a copy will be mailed. A charge of \$2 applies to paper copies, \$4 for both directories, to cover the cost of printing and mailing.

The Weather and the Vegetable Garden

By Roger G. Gregoire & Carol M. Gregoire, Master Gardeners

Remember how cool and wet last summer was? Both 2009 and 2008 saw cold and rainy Springs with the heavy rain continuing through June and July. In 2008, June was cool; in 2009, both June and July were cooler than usual. In fact, the temperature did not reach 90° in either month.

It was early summer when we all heard about the Late Blight (*Phytophthora infestans*) being carried on tomato transplants that were sold by a number of large retailers. The spores of this water mold usually arrives late in the growing season, or not at all. Thus, Late Blight is not always a big problem in our area. In 2009, it arrived early and the cool and wet weather was ideal for its growing and spreading. This is the same disease that caused the Irish and Highland potato famines of 1845 and 1846.

The Late Blight showed up on my tomato plants in July. I fought it through the month of August and into September. I used a solution of one part milk to two parts water as a spray to control the fungus. This mixture is said to be as effective as commercial fungicides and it is not toxic. The spraying was done with a hand sprayer and it stabilized the plants for a couple of weeks. That extra time allowed the hanging fruit to ripen. I credit the spray mixture with saving enough tomatoes for us to produce about half the amount of tomato sauce we generally put up for the winter.

So, what is 2010 going to be like? Let us search our crystal balls and make some predictions if we may. To do this, I consulted three (3) sources to. The most authoritative weather source, in my view, is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and I checked it first. Then I searched the often quoted Old Farmer's Almanac (OFA). The third source was the Harris-Mann Climatology (HMC), a website maintained by two noted meteorologists. These sources were accessed in January, 2010.

Temperature

NOAA says the temperature will correspond to about the 10 year average throughout most of the growing season (from March to August) with a 33 to 40 percent chance for above average temperatures in September and October.

The OFA predicts March temperatures 2 degrees below normal; April at normal; May, 2° above normal; June, July and August all 1° to 2° below normal; and September and October at about normal.

HMC predicts April and August at normal temperatures; March, May, June, July and October at 1° below; and September 2° below normal.

To summarize: March is expected to be cooler than normal; April normal; May around normal; June, July and August cooler than normal; September and October around normal.

Precipitation

NOAA expects normal precipitation throughout the 2010 growing season.

OFA predicts a drier than usual season with about

1" less precipitation per month (about 20 to 30% less).

HMC forecasts about 15% more rain per month.

The three sources I researched all have different expectations. Blending all the predictions together, we can be pretty sure our weather this growing season may be as usual; trying one's patience and frustrating all!

Planning Ahead

What can we do to prepare for the onslaught of pests and diseases to come? What should we plant that will thrive and produce a bountiful harvest?

If we have conditions similar to the past few years, the weather will be a cool wet spring. We will hesitate to put seed into the ground, fearing they will rot before germinating. We will keep our transplants in the house longer because the soil has not warmed sufficiently to promote growth. A little hesitation is all right, but be strong in the conviction that Mother Nature knows best! Spring will come, followed by summer. So, be prepared. We may have to take even small opportunities to get our gardens started.

Go back to the basics and practice time tested gardening techniques. Everyone's garden, and gardening style, is unique. So what works for one gardener may not be right for another. However, recommendations that are always appropriate include:


Remove plant debris – As early as possible, clean out any remaining vegetation from your garden beds. Spent plant materials left in the garden are breeding grounds for plant diseases and garden pests. Take them away early and compost them.

Till the soil - Turn over the garden soil as soon as it is workable. Hungry birds will scavenge the soil and remove many insect pests for you. If you are fortunate, freezing night temperature will kill exposed insects as well. Working the soil will also allow the ground to dry a little better and may be just the edge needed to get a crop established in a treacherous spring.

Good spacing for ventilation – Allowing air to flow freely between the plants speeds up the evaporation of any moisture on the plants' leaves. Faster drying minimizes the amount of time available for the growth of fungal diseases.

Mulching – Covering the soil with a good mulch lowers the contact between the plants' leaves and soil borne diseases. A layer of newspaper with a 3 to 4 inch layer of salt hay, straw, lawn clippings or other such material keeps fungal spores from being splashed up onto the plants during watering or a rain storm.

Remove diseased or damaged leaves – This practice reduces the amount of disease that is available to spread throughout your garden. Dispose of diseased leaves in the trash for removal from your property. Damaged leaves can go into the compost pile.

Visual examination – Get into the habit of examining your gardens daily. Look for signs of diseases or pests. Deformed plant growth could result from disease, pests, or poor growing conditions. It is easier to hand pick and destroy several insects now than it is to 

The Weather . . . continued.

wait a week when their numbers have grown into the thousands. As a friend says, "The best fertilizer is the farmer's footsteps."

Plan to rotate your crops. The same crops grown in the same area year after year will deplete certain, necessary nutrients and pests will congregate to the spot as well. Both will limit the harvest. Even where space is limited, do the best you can. Shift the location as far as possible from where the same crop grew last year. If you have a lawn, consider appropriating a small, sunny section as a new vegetable patch that will provide the needed separation. This technique works well and lets you spread out the garden and the insects that like your lawn probably will not like your tomatoes. A little more space will let you plant a few more vegetables and hopefully leave more space between plants for better air circulation. Good air movement between plants is critical in fighting the fungal diseases associated with cool, wet growing season.

Do not plant on a rainy day when the weather forecast predicts more rainy days ahead. However, if a couple of dry days are predicted, that may be one of the few opportunities to put out seed with a good chance of germination. It also may be an opportunity for a new transplant to establish its roots.

Now, select the plants you will grow. First criteria is foods that you and your family like to eat. Second, consider what has done well in the past. Which vegetables grew and produced well for you. Refine that further to identify the particular varieties that yielded larger harvests, tasted better, or survived the Late Blight longer. The best from your past successes will form the backbone for this year's vegetable garden. But, don't stop here.

Many popular vegetables have disease resistant varieties for you to choose from. These varieties have some resistance to specific diseases as listed in the seed catalogs or on the seed packets. They may still be attacked by the disease if exposed long enough. That is where practicing good sanitation helps lower the time

your plants are exposed, and vulnerable, to the diseases. Left unchecked, the disease will usually win out.

Try something new! Buy seeds or plants of a variety you have not grown before. Experiment and have fun with it. Select a variety or two that are well suited to your area and climate. With a cooler growing season, perhaps a faster maturing variety will help assure a harvest. Different varieties will usually do well under different conditions. By growing more than one variety, you increase your chances of having a good crop. Also, you get to taste several different flavors of the same vegetable.

Last season, I planted fourteen (14) varieties of tomatoes ranging from heirlooms to disease resistant varieties. Eventually, they all succumbed to the Late Blight, but not before producing a crop about half the size of our typical harvest. It appeared that a disease resistant variety of Roma, a paste tomato, fought the Late Blight better than most others. The plants produced nearly their normal harvest. Their determinate nature probably helped, too. Since heirlooms are not known for disease resistance, it was interesting that two varieties produced sizable crops. Matina, a German heirloom, and Brandywine, often called the best tasting tomato, performed well. Other heirlooms, including standbys, Marglobe and Rutgers, produced only a few tomatoes each.

Summary

As gardeners everywhere, we look to the future with hope and optimism. The weather will cooperate nicely; our seeds will germinate properly, grow vigorously, and produce a bountiful harvest. Then the weather brings us less than ideal, or even, unfavorable weather patterns that chill and soak the seeds and transplants and make our favorite warm weather crops shudder.

Following a few of the recommendations discussed above may provide our gardens with the advantage of being ready for whatever gets thrown our way.

Tomatoes in a Shady Garden

By Diana Ringelheim, Advanced Master Gardener

I start my tomato plants from seed each year and even though they are started early, I have had no luck harvesting a fruit before September 1st. Considering the amount of shade in my garden I probably shouldn't be growing tomatoes at all, but I am a gardener. A gardener who pretty much lets nature take its course without resorting to artificial means or devices.



On 5/12, these tomato plants were in bloom

However, picking a ripe tomato is a desire that beats loudly in every gardener's veins. For the past two years, I have resorted to the Wall-of-Water gadgets (also call Tomato Teepee) pictured here. This year they were set in place and filled with water on April 1st. My seedlings (started on February 1st) were planted out on April 8th. We had frosts, torrential rains, high winds, etc. but the tomato plants were in their cozy shelters and survived and thrived. Last year I picked my first tomato (o.k. - a cherry) on July 10th - from a shady garden. Imagine the results from a sunny garden. I don't mean to use *The Laurel* to endorse a product; just passing along a modest gardening success story that proves what we can achieve despite what the books and conventional wisdom tell us.

"Real World" Garden Design at the New Haven County Extension Center

By Jude Hsiang, Advanced Master Gardener and County Coordinator

In 1994, when New Haven Extension Center moved to the corner of Whitney Avenue and Skiff Street in North Haven, Master Gardeners received permission to establish a garden. With donated plants and a lot hard work, they built and maintained the site. However, the years took their toll on the garden as well as the gardeners. Fifteen years later, the gardeners were spending most of their time hand-weeding in a valiant attempt to preserve the original plantings.

On a 2009 visit to the Center, UConn College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Dean Gregory Weidemann made a commitment to fund basic upkeep of the site. With this assurance, Master Gardeners were encouraged to renovate the garden. In the fall, several dying trees and shrubs were removed and a serious attack on the weed problem was begun.

In March 2010 an Advanced Master Gardener class, "Landscape Design in the Real World" was held at the Center. This class was limited to a dozen MGs who agreed contribute to the implementation and/or upkeep of the new plans which would emerge. Instructor Amy Sampson, a landscape designer and educator whose AMG classes have been very popular, guided the class in



A view of the Extension Office grounds from the corner of Skiff St. and Whitney Ave. A busy intersection that will provide some gardening advice and options to passing motorists.

adapting established design principles to this difficult location. The site is a sunny, windy, urban street corner next to a parking lot. Sand and salt are kicked up by snowplows, and water access is a challenge.

Several groups were formed to propose designs for the most prominent part of the landscape as a starting point for an expected multi-year project. These designs are being reviewed with the Master Gardeners active in the County as well as other professionals and staff who work in the Center.

Funding is being sought to purchase hardy shrubs which can thrive on the site, focusing on native plants. Donations will be sought as well. A group of MGs and interns is anxious begin to planting soon. Several stand ready to transplant perennials and shrubs that require relocation to the shadier or sunnier spots that have appeared as the growing trees have changed conditions over the years.

The Master Gardeners of New Haven County and the "Real World" class are pleased to have been awarded a grant from the CMGA to purchase plant material for this project. We all look forward to sharing the results of the project with the readers of *The Laurel* later this year.

Garden Days at the Mystic Seaport

Saturday, June 19 9 am - 7 pm

Sunday, June 20 9 am - 5 pm

Charles Tefft, CMGA Board member and Master Composer, is assembling a group of volunteers to staff a CMGA table at the Mystic Seaport Garden Fair on Saturday June 19 (9 am - 7 pm) and Sunday June 20 (9 am to 5 pm). The CMGA table will be alongside the New London Extension Center's Master Gardener table and we'll all be promoting the virtues of the UConn Master Gardener Program. If you are interested in helping with this event, please contact Charlie at 860-822-8726 or ruthtefft@comcast.net.



Survey - Help Shape the Future of CMGA

An email survey is also being prepared, which can be answered electronically. You are certainly free to wait for that survey, but if you prefer, please use this one and mail it to CMGA Survey, P. O. Box 1784, Hartford, Ct. 06144-1784. Your opinion is vital to the CMGA, so please take a few minutes and complete one survey or the other.

Times are changing and so are we. Your input is needed to help us recognize what you value about CMGA, your alumni organization, and what we can do differently to meet your needs and satisfy your interests.

Which aspects of your CMGA membership do you currently utilize?

Place an **X** in the correct column for each.

	seldom	frequently	often
Newsletter (<i>The Laurel</i>)			
CMGA website			
Symposium			
Summer Safari			
Board Meetings			
Grants			
Member Discounts			

Other (please describe)

Master Gardeners, in what year did you earn your certification? _____

How long have you been a member of CMGA? _____

How many times have you attended the CMGA Symposium? _____

Would you prefer a spring or fall Symposium? _____

Would you like CMGA to offer any of the following? Place an **X** in **yes** or **no**.

	yes	no
Offer field trips or tours?		
Arrange class reunions?		
Create a Speakers Bureau as a resource for community groups/ garden clubs?		
Provide opportunities to socialize with other Master Gardeners?		

Other ideas?

We value your input!
Thank you!!!

The Laurel Calendar

Date and Time	Event, Location, Contacts
1st Tuesday of every month - 10am	CMGA board meeting. Email diana@ringelheim.com or phone 203-372-8498 for location of specific month's meeting.
6/2 - 6/5 2010	20th Native Plants in the Landscape Conference & Plant Sale. Millersville University, Millersville, Pa.
6/6/10 9:30 am - 4 pm	South Windsor Garden Tour & Plant Sale. Co-sponsored by the Down To Earth Garden Club - Wood Memorial Library. Advance ticket \$15, on June 6 \$20. Info at www.freewebs.com/downtoearthgardenclub/ or 860-289-1783
6/12/10 10 am - 4 pm	Farmington Kitchens and Gardens Tour. Six Village colonial houses with unique kitchens and gardens. Tickets \$20, or \$25 on day of tour. Info at 860-677-4444.
6/17/10 7:30 pm	A Dragon's Lair - Creating Dragonfly Habitat. Ct. Horticultural Society. Ice cream Social. Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford. Info at www.cthort.org or 860-529-8713
6/18 - 6/20 2010	Rose Weekend - Elizabeth Park, West Hartford. Friends of Elizabeth Park Outstanding display of 15,000 rose bushes. Info at 860-231-9443 or www.elizabethpark.org . Free event.
6/19 2010 10 am-3 pm	CT NOFA Urban Organic Garden Tour in New Haven, Ct. Info at 203-888-5146 or www.ctnofa.org .
6/19/10 9 am-7 pm 6/20/10 9 am-5 pm	Garden Days at the Mystic Seaport. Lectures, vendors, Master Gardeners, and CMGA. See related story on page 14.
6/25/10 6:30 pm	CMGA Event - Marci Martin will conduct a tour of the Elizabeth Park Rose Garden. Please see related announcement on page 10.
6/25/10 8 am - 6 pm	Branford Garden Club Trip to the Newport Flower Show. Open to the public. Cost: \$75 without lunch; \$110 with lunch. Make check payable to The Branford Garden Club, and mail to Maureen Dendas, 5 Thimble Farms Rd., Branford, Ct. 06405.
7/16/10	Woody Plant Conference. Lang Performing Arts Center, Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. Also, free admission coupons for public gardens that co-sponsor this event. Info at Longwood Gardens Continuing Education Office at 610-388-1000 ext. 559 or www.perennialplantconference.org .
7/17/10 8:30 am-12 pm	CMGA Summer Garden Safari and Semi-Annual Meeting. Litchfield County Extension Office and garden/nursery tours. Please see related article on page 1.
8/15/10 12:30pm - 5pm	8th Annual Bethel Gardening Fair. Fairfield County Cooperative Extension Office. Event run entirely by Master Gardeners and MG Interns. More information will be available in the Summer edition of <i>The Laurel</i> .

Calendar notices must be for events open to the public and of interest to Master Gardeners.
 If you have items for the Calendar, please contact the editor at [www.diana@ringelheim.com](mailto:diana@ringelheim.com) or 203-372-8498
 Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1
Thanks to Dick Shaffer for invaluable assistance with the Calendar.

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Connecticut
Master Gardener
Association
Newsletter

The Laurel

Summer, 2010 Volume 23, No. 3

8th Annual Bethel Gardening Fair

Sunday, August 15, 2010
12:30 - 5:00

One again, the UConn Cooperative Extension Office in Bethel, Ct. will host a gardening fair designed, staged, and staffed exclusively with UConn Master Gardeners and Interns. This free event is heavily attended by an enthusiastic public.

Information Booths

- ◆ Low Toxic Approaches to Problems
- ◆ Invasive Plants and the Alternatives
- ◆ Asian Longhorned Beetle & Emerald Ash Borer
- ◆ Soil pH Testing - Free!
- ◆ Vegetables & Herbs (as design elements and answers to problems)
- ◆ Annuals and Container Gardening
- ◆ Ferns
- ◆ Turf
- ◆ Power Equipment for the Landscape
- ◆ Used Gardening Books

Wildflower Walk

2:30 to 3:15

Led by Donna Katsuranis, AMG

Take a short walk through the grounds and along the outskirts of the wooded area at 67 Stony Hill Road with Advanced Master Gardener Donna Katsuranis, a professional landscaper specializing in wildflowers. Donna will point out the wildflowers that grow there and explain their role in sustaining birds, butterflies and bees. Learn too how to spot invasive plants often found in natural areas.

Presentations

Nancy Baker on Edible Landscaping

From vegetables to shrubs, Nancy will demonstrate how to create a landscape that does double duty and looks beautiful, too. (12:45-1:30)

Lorraine Ballato on Vegetables Contained

Lorraine will help us choose the right site; prepare the container; select the appropriate plants and cultivars, and manage the challenges of the growing season. (1:45-2:30)

Carol Beerbaum on Vegetables That Grow Above the Soil

Carol has been a vegetable gardener for years and will tell us what to look for before problems get out of hand. (3:15-4:00)

Matt Wage on Vegetables That Grow Below the Soil

Matt will introduce us to the secrets of successfully growing crops that you can't see! (4:15-5:00)

The Fair will be held on the grounds of the Fairfield County Extension Center at 67 Stony Hill Road in Bethel, CT, less than a mile from Exit 8 on I-84. Call the Master Gardener office with questions at (203) 207-3262. Additional information will be available at the Fair website: <http://www.BethelGardenFair.com>.

Elected Officials 2010

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Editor's Letter

Hello Scorched Gardeners,

I would sincerely like to thank the members of the CMGA for the opportunity to hide in my house, with the shades drawn, gulping ice water, without feeling guilty because I'm preparing this newsletter. If any of you have clever solutions to the problems of gardening in unrelenting heat, please share them with the rest of us. Meanwhile, use *The Laurel* as your excuse for huddling in the house to escape the heat and humidity.

This edition has many articles that will keep you informed and excited about Master Gardener activities. The **Class of 2010** has a number of people interested in writing and sharing their experiences. There are four articles included here and more are promised. The range of topics is broad, and include **pesticide** usage and the consequences, **invasive plants** and some control measures, **pleasure garden** restoration and design, and how eye-opening and moving an **outreach activity** can be.

Certified Master Gardeners have also written about outreach activities that keep them energized and fulfilled. There's even a recommended **inactivity** for those of us who like to take advantage of the summer without exertion.

Relax and enjoy,



The Laurel is published four times a year for members of the Connecticut Master Gardener Association. Please send news, photographs and calendar items by email to Diana Ringelheim at diana@ringelheim.com or 121 Godfrey Rd., Fairfield, Ct. 06825. Phone (203)372-8498

Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

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Urban Vegetable Garden

McKinney Homeless Shelter Vegetable Garden By Larry Zarbo, Master Gardener

The McKinney Shelter was founded more than 20 years ago after a homeless man was found frozen to death under a bridge.



I am a Vernon 2008 MG graduate (trained by Kay Varga and Kim Kelly) and I'm writing to let you know about an outreach project working with a homeless shelter in Hartford

that raises vegetables for the homeless men staying at the shelter. Last summer McKinney Shelter in Hartford planted a modest vegetable garden, tended by the men, and used the fresh produce in their daily menus. I work with the staff at the shelter via my job at Community Renewal Team. As a 2008 MG I was naturally interested in the urban garden and visited the shelter, viewed the garden and met the staff. As successful as the garden was last year, I believed it could be improved this year, with the help of the UCONN MG program.



Last year the shelter director installed the communal garden and supervised the planting and overall maintenance. However that director has left, creating a great opportunity for a MG Outreach Project. Two 2010 MG interns,

Shari Guarino and Bobbie Wasdo are instrumental in the design and execution of the garden and are working closely with shelter staff and residents. As you can imagine the project requires more than just assisting on planting day. Here is a brief summary of what the team has and will accomplish:

- Design the garden - working with shelter staff and residents to determine the size; analyze and amend the soil; determine the use of organic fertilizers and IPM
- Determine the use of raised beds; determine the need for fencing and if water supply is adequate
- Determine what vegetables will be planted; develop planting schedule
- Develop a maintenance plan for the season; monitor the progress of the garden during the growing season
- Educate shelter staff and residents about soil, vegetables, watering, organic fertilizer, IPM

- Remain available to staff and residents for diagnosing problems, researching, and advice
- Coordinate with other partners in the project such as UCONN MG program, and City of Hartford, (shelter owner)



As of this writing a soil sample has been analyzed by UCONN. The raised beds were constructed by YouthBuild, a program teaching out-of-school young people construction skills and other basic education and skills. Knox Parks Foundation and the City of Hartford donated soil, compost, and mulch. On planting day several Master Gardeners answered the call and volunteered to help plant seeds and vegetables to get the garden going and growing.

Even though the growing season is just getting underway the benefits to the residents and neighborhood are numerous. The communal garden improves the quality of life for shelter residents because it gives residents time for exercise, recreation and relaxation. It encourages self reliance, promotes positive mental health and instills pride in the residents for the good work accomplished in the garden. Not only does the garden produce nutritious food it reduces the shelter's food budget and teaches residents about nutrition and healthy choices. Finally the garden provides a catalyst for neighborhood development by bringing beauty to the area, restoring green space, and building positive relationships with the neighboring residents.



GARDEN MASTER CLASSES

Advanced Master Gardener Classes : Summer 2010

Date and Time	Location	Class and Instructor
9/14/10 10 am to 1 pm	Bethel Extension Center	HOT TOPICS

The only Garden Master class scheduled at this time is the HOT TOPICS class which is required to maintain Advanced Master Gardener certification. If you attended the HOT TOPICS class at the Vernon Extension Center earlier this year, you do not have to attend the September class in Bethel. You must register for HOT TOPICS, so check the Home & Garden website or call for availability.

Check the website for future Garden Master Classes : www.ladybug.uconn.edu/. Telephone 1-860-486-6343

The Birds and the Bees

By Susan Pelton, Master Gardener Intern

UConn Coordinator
Approved Outreach
Article



Almost 50 years ago, Rachel Carson jolted our collective consciousness with the release of her book *Silent Spring*. She challenged the world to change its perspective on the way our actions can manipulate the envi-

ronment. The beginning of the American environmental movement, the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and the subsequent banning of DDT in 1972 were directly due to Ms. Carson's work. *Silent Spring* catalogs the environmental impact of indiscriminate use of pesticides without fully understanding the consequences. When DDT was first developed as a synthetic pesticide in 1939, it was heralded as a way to bring about the end of malaria with the extermination of the disease-bearing vectors, mosquitoes. It turned out to be toxic to a wide range of animals in addition to insects. Its affect on the eggshells of many birds caused the decline of the bald eagle, the brown pelican, the osprey and the peregrine falcon, putting them on the Endangered Species list. Fortunately the populations of these birds have recovered to the point that they have been removed from the list. Although DDT is banned in the United States it is still in use in other areas of the world to control the mosquitoes that carry malaria and visceral leishmaniasis, both parasitic diseases.

Today we have a new threat from the misuse of insecticides and pesticides. There has been a marked decline in pollinators in North America, notably western honey bees, particularly when insecticides are used in violation of label directions.

The label's use directions can reduce the potential for bee exposure by providing instructions on how, when and where the product should be applied. If at all possible, do not spray blooms directly with pesticides. If it is necessary to spray the bloom it should be done in

the evening as honey bees forage during the daylight. Choosing the appropriate formulation can also help. The use of solutions and emulsified concentrates which dry quickly and do not leave a powdery residue, or granular products which have a large particle size and can be broadcast on the ground, are best. Dusts and wet-able powders will adhere to the hairs on the body of the bees and will be transferred back to the hive. This can cause the entire colony to die.

In 2007 media attention focused on Colony Collapse Disorder, a decline in honey bee colonies in regions of North America. As \$15 billion worth of crops are pollinated by bees in America every year this is of the utmost importance. Many of the new pesticides available today have a shorter residual time, taking only a few hours to degrade to levels safe for bee activity. In addition, the farther the colonies are from the area being treated the better chance the bees have against pesticide poisoning. The EPA is currently working with researchers from North America, Europe, and Australia to improve the understanding of the ways in which pesticide exposure can affect pollinators and other wildlife.

For more information on CCD please visit the United States Department of Agriculture website at <http://invasivespeciesinfo.gov/news/hotissues.shtml#ccd>. Bee-kill incidents can be reported directly to the EPA by e-mail at beekill@epa.gov.

Rachel Carson predicted a spring without birdsong. Happily that did not come to pass as mankind stepped forward to correct its mistake. Let us look forward to many springs filled not only with birdsong but with the wonderful buzz of the bees.



ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE FOUND IN BOSTON

A small infestation (six maples) was found and disposed of in the Jamaica Plain area. If you see any damage that you suspect is from the ALB, report it immediately at <http://massnrc.org/pests/albreport.aspx> or call toll-free: 1-866-702-9938.

Websites Explored

By Lorraine Ballato,
Advanced Master Gardener

Everything has been so early this season; I wonder what will be left for us as the season wanes. If you're looking to add some long blooming perennials, go back to good old coneflowers. But which ones? The recent explosion of options are dizzying. To help us out, the Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware evaluated 43 new cultivars and 5 species over a three year period and created a fabulous downloadable report, Coneflowers for the Mid-Atlantic Region. Their top picks received high ratings for good habit, disease and pest resistance, abundant flowering and winter hardiness, with the research focused on coneflower performance in the mid-Atlantic region.

Those that received high marks included Pixie Meadowbrite™, as well as the *Echinacea purpurea* cultivars 'Pica Bella,' 'Elton Knight,' 'Fatal Attraction,' and 'Vintage Wine.' 'Pica Bella' has a sturdy, vase-shaped habit and unique, star-like, pinkish-magenta flowers. 'Elton Knight' is compact, with broad-petaled, brilliant magenta blossoms. 'Fatal Attraction' has an upright, columnar habit and vivid pink flowers atop deep burgundy to nearly black stems. 'Vintage Wine' has an excellent upright habit, deep pinkish-purple blooms and dark stems. *E. pallida* although lighter in color also got high marks. It has 3-4" wide flowers and gets its name from silvery-pink drooping petals. I was a little more interested in the Tennessee cone-

flower (*E. tennesseensis*) that was described with cupped petals and notched tips.

Of all the white coneflowers *E. purpurea* 'White Angel' was tops; and for yellow, 'Sunrise' won the honors. If orange is your color, 'Tiki Torch' is the choice. See how useful this report is?

For the complete 2009 coneflower research report, you can type in the very long web address: http://www.mtcubacenter.org/images/PDFs-and-SWFs/Mt_Cuba_Report_Coneflowers_for_Mid-Atlantic.pdf or use your search engine to find it via an entry like Mt. Cuba Center Coneflower Report.

The second site to tell you about is from the U.S. Forest Service, another free resource. Treesearch is a web database of over 24,000 publications by research and development scientists of the U.S. Forest Service. Publications include research monographs published by the agency as well as papers from other organizations in their journals, conference proceedings, or books. You can search by author, title, keyword, their help box, or a Google search. So what good is this to you? Maybe you're working on an outreach project on street trees. Or you need to know something about how trees improve air quality. The site is organized regionally so I have been spending time on the "Northern" section perusing the various options which includes webcasts and science themes. Go to <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/>.

An Inactivity for a Summer's Afternoon

By Diana Ringelheim, Advanced Master Gardener

Avid gardeners are often enthusiastic naturalists who rejoice when wildlife (non-mammals anyway) partake of the bounty of their plant collections. Birds, butterflies, bees, and dragonflies are some of the creatures that animate our backyards. We have all used binoculars to spy on the birds, but have you had the magical, mystical experience of watching butterflies, bees, and dragonflies through field glasses? The longer you look the more you feel like you've shrunk to their size, and you can watch their activities without alarming them.

The best method for having this tiny adventure is to place a chair near a nectar plant (in the shade for your comfort); sit quietly and watch the parade of colorful creatures that come to sip. The longer you hold the binoculars to your eyes, the smaller you feel. Bees species exist in a huge range of sizes and colors, the variations revealed as you watch. Dragonflies, built like bi-planes and colored like rainbows, are almost too marvelous to believe. You've never seen a butterfly until you've seen one the same size as you. The genius is in the details and the more you watch the more you notice. As you get hypnotized by the beauty, you feel yourself get even smaller and drawn into their world. If you are lucky, a hummingbird will buzz into view with a shock!

And don't fidget as you sit . . . remember this is an inactivity.

Channel 3 Kids Camp

By Steve Aldi, Master Gardener

The Channel 3 Kids Camp celebrates its 100th Anniversary this year on Times Farm Road in Andover and this is the 5th season of existence for the Teaching Gardens at the Camp. In 2006, Master Gardeners from the class of 2005 Bill Overton, Paula Robinson, Jay Beausoleil, Mary Cross, Dick Stroiney, Bobby Duffy along with 2006 interns Ann Harrington-Dibella, Carole Miller and Toni Royal began renovating a garden plot at the Camp and offering classes on gardening to the campers. Their goal then, as it remains today, is to share their joy of gardening with campers aged 6-16 from around the state.

IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE WAY

In 2007, the main garden and fencing were expanded to give a larger growing area. The new section, a former roadway, required a lot of work to convert it to soil capable of sustaining plant growth.

In 2008 the team planted an orchard with peach, apple and cherry trees donated by Bobby Duffy, owner and operator of *The Funny Farm* in Ledyard, CT. A big challenge in the orchard continues to be trying to discourage the local wildlife from enjoying the foliage and fruits of the trees before it's ready for human consumption. Also, Fran Maynard and Steve Aldi (MG Class of 2008) joined the family as interns.

In 2009, Dick Stroiney and Bill Overton enclosed the smaller mounded beds of the main garden. Raised beds make planting and maintaining easier. There are fewer weeds, better drainage, less soil compaction from trampling feet, warmer soil both earlier and later in the season and less soil erosion during heavier rains.

In 2010, compost bins were constructed by Jay Beausoleil, George Christoph and Steve Aldi of donated pallets to supplement our composting lessons. We had been using only a compost tumbler, but it couldn't sustain the volume of leaves and garden debris we collected in the fall each year.

Also this year, the last section of the main garden as well as the existing herb garden was enclosed by Dick and Bill. This year, 2010 MG interns George Christoph, Sheil Dunn, Marilyn Bacon, Sue Stavola and Wendy Burki were welcomed. All helped with planting in the greenhouse, garden clean up, soil prep, and final planting.

Wendy took ownership of the butterfly garden, adding some structure by re-arranging existing plants and providing new plant material to attract birds, bees, butterflies and interested campers. Wendy also added labels where necessary to help with plant identification.

OUR CUSTOMERS

The campers start arriving after Fathers Day and the last session ends in mid-August. We are in a very competitive market – competing with all of the other exciting classes the camp offers like archery, swimming, nature, etc. Miss Paula is instrumental in making sure our class offerings are “child-friendly” with a more hands-on approach rather than lecture. Each year we try to offer new ideas and freshen up the teaching materials. This year's sessions include soils and composting, bugs, herbs, butterflies, how plants grow and every camper's favorite – garden to table. Miss Ann is also offering a class on

growing plants in an empty water bottle so that each camper can take something home. (The plastic bottle is cut in half the bottom becomes the water reservoir and the top, after attaching a piece of cloth around the neck, is inverted and used as the planter. Keep water in the bottom and it will wick-up and feed the roots of the plant above. How cool is that?)

Our classes start beneath a fixed white canopy about 9 am on Tuesday and Friday mornings, but the classes most often end up in one of the garden areas playing in the dirt.

The volunteers at the Teaching Gardens would like to thank: CMGA for their generous grant this year; the Directors and Staffing of the Channel 3 Kids Camp for their continued support; the various “Friends of Bill” for their materials donations; and the campers who give up a piece of their summer camping experience to join us in the gardens. Thank you all.

<http://www.channel3kidscamp.org>



Pictured above: Foreground: Jay Beausoleil; (kneeling) Sheila Dunn & Ann Harrington-DiBella; Standing: Carole Miller, Paula Robinson, Mary Cross, Marilyn Bacon, Toni Royal and Bill Overton.

Learning How Much I Don't Know

By Liz Lewis, Master Gardener Intern

UConn Coordinator
Approved Outreach
Article

An Outreach Experience Beyond Gardening

Returning to an educational setting after years away can be a humbling experience, no matter what the subject. Taking the Master Gardener Course this year has proven that true for me, on many levels. First, having no "official" experience (having been a corporate girl since graduating college), I knew there would be much to learn; but I'm not sure I could ever have imagined just how much I didn't know. Now I realize there is an infinite supply of information that I'll never really know...sure, I can look it up; and now at least know where to go for the information I need...but knowing it all, well that's just impossible.

Second, there's the outreach...

One of my classmates is a corrections officer and special education teacher at the Manson Youth Institution in Cheshire, CT. It's a prison. It houses several hundred young men, roughly ages thirteen to twenty-one. She spoke in class one day of the program she'd started years ago. It was a garden therapy program in which in-mates could, if they qualify (meaning they had to be on their best behavior all of the time – not just while gardening), come out to the recreation field and help grow a vegetable garden. She opened it up to us as an outreach opportunity and would welcome any willing volunteers. Of all the outreach programs available, this pulled at me the most. It was suggested I come to the facility for a tour to see how I'd feel once in that environment. She didn't want folks committing themselves to the program only to show up the first day and find themselves too uncomfortable to continue. We would, after all, be out in a field with a small group of convicted felons wielding garden tools. So, I went. I won't deny the whole picture was a little intimidating. The list of do's and don'ts for a volunteer made things pretty clear...from obvious things like not wearing

anything revealing to taking care not to give the in-mates any personal information with which to track you down upon their release, in the event they developed an "attachment" to you. My first day, I was a little afraid to talk. What if I blurted out my home address or something?! That passed quickly enough, though; even though I did learn that one of the kids was in for killing someone. I'm not really supposed to know their crimes, but you can't help but hear some things. I drove home that day pondering the idea. Taking someone else's life was so foreign to anything I could imagine doing or even knowing someone who'd done it...I couldn't wrap my mind around it; not to mention that I'd just been weeding a tomato bed with the kid an hour earlier.

I've been a few times now and the kids are starting to let their personalities show in front of me. They talk to each other about home, their moms, music, school, even their weight, believe it or not. They kid each other and joke around like "normal" kids do. I can forget where I am and that these kids are in prison when I'm there listening and laughing with them. They call me "Miss" and some make sure to offer me the best tools. One has this pure and open smile that makes you smile back without conscious thought. One sings beautifully, despite some ribbing from the others.

When I tell people what I'm doing...that the hope is that as these kids learn to nurture the plants it might just flow over into how they treat other human beings...the response is mixed. Some people think it's a beautiful idea (like I did). Some give a little grunt as if to say "yeah, good luck with that". Most fall somewhere in the middle. I'm ever more aware of the assumptions we can make about certain people or groups of people...like criminals...and I'm ever more aware that there's so much I don't know. I'll try not to forget that.

[On the Way to MG Certification](#) By Jude Hsiang, MG Coordinator, New Haven County

Among the 47 busy interns in the 2010 New Haven County Master Gardener class are two men who have recently won recognition for their commitment to the community. Architect and MG intern Britton Rogers, and fellow architect Derek Byron, won a competition held by the New Haven Land Trust and Architects for Humanity to design a multi-purpose structure for use at the Land Trust's many community garden sites. This structure will serve as storage, a meeting site, and even includes planting walls and solar lighting. The design can be replicated by novice builders using recycled materials. Students from the Hopkins School in New Haven assisted Britton, Derek and Land Trust volunteers in construction of the first structure. Britton is continuing his volunteer work with community gardens, far exceeding the required 30 hours of outreach.

MG Intern Bernard Brennan was awarded a 2010 CT Climate Change Leadership Award by Gov. Jodi M. Rell. Bernard is a founding member of Transition New Haven and the SHARE New Haven Time Bank, and an active member of several local commissions and organizations devoted to environmental education and hands-on work. Bernard's MG outreach activities include working with children at an organic garden in Hamden's Brooksvale Park and planting chestnuts at a chestnut orchard in Guilford, a project of the CT chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation. Bernard says, "As direct caretakers of the land, farmers and gardeners are the most important environmentalists. We are the leadership we have been waiting for."

Invasive Plants & Alternatives

By Eliazbeth A. Valdez,
Master Gardener Intern

UConn Coordinator
Approved Outreach
Article



Berberis thunbergii with fruit

Many gardeners have purchased homes with established invasive shrubs such as Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) or Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*). These invasive shrubs should be removed, but

have admirable attributes. Japanese Barberry can survive in the most deer infested neighborhoods and the Winged Euonymus is popular because of its gorgeous fall color. Invasive shrubs are adaptable. While they may prefer sun, they will grow in shade and thrive in a wide range of soil types. They have no serious pest problems in North America. Not having a native insect herbivore contributes to the invasiveness of the non-native shrub because there are no native measures to control the growth or spread of the shrub.

In nature, these shrubs propagate easily by seeds. A single plant can produce hundreds of seeds per year and the seed germination rate is very high. Gardeners may see many seedlings around their shrubs, which can be controlled by mowing. Barberry and Winged Euonymus seeds are transported to new locations with the help of birds. Their fruit is desirable to birds, which will disperse the seeds to distant areas. Birds frequently disperse seed while perched on power lines or on trees at forest edges. Because of its growth and reproductive characteristics, invasive shrubs have spread across many open spaces in North America.

These shrubs have been replacing native shrubs in Connecticut. The seedlings will form a dense mat of fibrous roots just below the soil that crowd out other native plants. The rapidly growing shrub soon reduces the amount of sunlight available, further impacting sun-loving native plants. Invasive plants have altered native ecosystems by out competing native plants and influencing native insect communities and natural fire regimes.

These are convincing reasons why an invasive shrub should be removed, but some gardeners may be unable or unwilling to remove the shrub because of cost or physical ability. When removal of the invasive species is not an option, there are a few actions that may minimize the invasive impact. Suggestions include trimming the shrubs to four feet, annual pruning to remove as many flowers as possible, which will reduce the number of seeds, and covering the shrub with netting while fruit is on the shrubs.

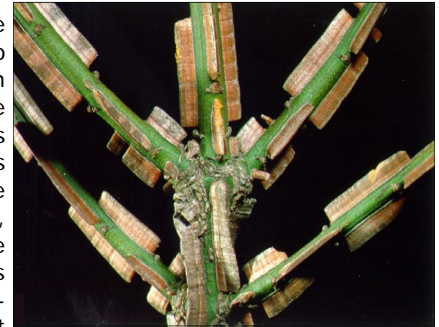
Trimming the bushes to four feet will greatly reduce the number of seeds, while retaining the privacy

features of the hedge. I have also seen the bottom branches of the Winged Euonymus trimmed. This would reduce the number of seeds, but keep the height. Pruning as the shrub is blooming will not affect the fall color, but removing most of the flowers will eliminate most of the seeds.

Shaking limbs and sweeping up fallen fruit in the fall will also decrease the chances of the seeds being spread by birds. Seeds should be discarded. Placing the seeds in a compost bin may result in weeds the next spring. Seed germination may be impeded by placing the seeds in a bucket of boiling water. Even taking this preventive measure, I do not recommend putting cuttings or seeds in a compost pile. Covering the bushes with netting during the fall will prevent birds from eating the fruit that remain after shaking.

Because it is easier to prevent than solve a problem, gardeners should be aware of the problems associated with invasive plants and be encouraged to plant only native or non-invasive shrubs. The Connecticut Invasive Plant List should be reviewed by garden exchange clubs to prevent members from distributing seedlings from invasive shrubs, especially the 15 ornamental plants that have not been banned.

There are many alternatives to invasive plants; a good source, Burrell's *Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants*, recommended *Aronia melanocarpa* (Black Chokeberry) and *Vaccinium corymbosum* (Highbush Blueberry) to replace the Winged Euonymus. Both of these bushes are suitable for a hedge and provide brilliant autumn color. Winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*) and Inkberry holly (*Ilex glabra*) have very colorful fall berries, and are good alternatives to Japanese Barberry. These native or non-invasive alternatives are carefree and low maintenance and will provide a similar landscape effect and use.



Euonymus alatus - detail of stem



Ilex verticillata with berries

Edgerton Park

By Chris Lees Jonientz, Master Gardener Intern

UConn Coordinator
Approved Outreach
Article

Edgerton Park in New Haven was originally part of the Eli Whitney family holdings. Later the Brewsters built a manor house and eventually donated the property to the city on condition the house be demolished. A few original structures remain, including the stone Carriage House which has been the site of the New Haven County Master Gardener classes since 2008.

I'm a student in the Master Gardener class of 2010. My love of Edgerton Park began when I used to stroll there with my young son, enjoying the wind in the trees, the sun on the copper beech, the gentle splash of the fountain, the shady expanses of lawn. It is a place of repose amidst the noise and traffic near our home, only half a mile away--a secret, magical, treasure island. No matter what time of year, the Park is a jewel to be viewed at different angles.

Naturally, my idea for a Master Gardener outreach location was Edgerton Park. MG intern Gerralyn Lawson, who is also an employee of the Edgerton Park Conservancy, was already working on the perennial beds in front of the Carriage House, so I joined in along with another MG intern, Marty Dauwalder. At the same time, my eyes were drawn to the nearby azalea bed. The area was choked with weeds. It was just wrong that the Carriage House, used for weddings, parties, Sunday in the Park and other special occasions, had this unattractive plot right next to it.

Once the major perennial bed work was done by the end of May, Marty and I began raking, weeding and edging under the existing large azaleas. The Conser-



vancy was pleased with how that looked. However, I still had a vision of an expanded and improved azalea bed.

I talked to Groundskeeper Lianne Audette who brought the proposal to the Conservancy Directors who were amenable to it. First we started a small path to a lone azalea lost in the weeds. We discovered a multiflora rose which was soon disposed of. Lianne mowed the area and provided landscape cloth as I edged the new path. Marty, with the help of a client of the Easter Seals Goodwill

Industries Greenbrier Program which is located in the Park greenhouses, laid down wood chips.

At this point it is imperative to thank the Edgerton Park Conservancy, Park Groundskeeper Lianne Audette, and the Greenbrier program, for their assistance with resources and people power for this project. We also thank Sandweiss Tree Service for their generous donation of wood chips.

As June went on, work on the azalea bed accelerated. Lianne mowed the area again and weeded under the bushes. We bought and planted two new azaleas.

Now, in mid-July, the bed isn't quite done yet, but with the continued help of the Edgerton Park community, the area will soon complement the beauty of the rest of the Park.

Master Gardeners provided advice, education and assistance when requested. They will be maintaining and building on the results. I keep in mind a Chinese proverb I once heard, "When you have two loaves of bread, sell one and buy a hyacinth to feed the soul." These projects feed everyone--the participants and the community.

Growing Tomatoes in a Shady Garden - Update

By Diana Ringelheim, Advanced Master Gardener

Is this a good year for tomatoes, or have I finally learned something about gardening? In the last issue of *The Laurel*, I mentioned that I used the 'Wall-of-Water' gadgets to get an early start on the season. Well, I'd like to brag that I harvested my first Sun Gold tomato on June 26, eight more on July 3, and nine on July 4. Now I've stopped counting!

Please share your personal gardening experiences with your fellow Master Gardeners and jot down your impressions of the season, the weather, the crops, the flowers, or anything else that interests you. The fall edition of *The Laurel* is the perfect place to warn gardeners about disappointing performers or recommend superstars for next year. Send your thoughts to: diana@ringelheim.com and we'll all be better gardeners for it. The deadline is October 1. Thanks so much.

Notable Trees

Hartford County Extension Council
By Debbye Rosen, Master Gardener

Educating People on Notable Trees in Connecticut
2008, 2009, and 2010

In October 2008 and October 2009, the Hartford Cooperative Extension Council hosted a charter bus tour of Notable Trees in two areas of Connecticut. In 2008 the tour visited notable trees in the Central Connecticut area. In 2009, the Quiet Corner (Northwest Connecticut) was visited. The work of Cooperative Extension Council supports the work of the Extension Center which includes, among other things, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, food safety education, lead paint remediation education and support, urban gardens, pesticide safety, the Master Gardener program, 4-H and urban forestry.

The tour guides are well known tree experts Ed Richardson and John Kehoe. To be classified as Notable, a tree must satisfy a number of specified criteria having to do with height, circumference of the trunk and spread of the canopy. Many of the trees on the tour were not only unique but are located on private property and are not normally accessible to the public.

Established in 1985, the Notable Trees Project collects and distributes information about Connecticut's largest and most historic trees, both native and introduced. Education of the citizens about the importance of the state's natural heritage contributes to the preservation of that heritage. It is a volunteer enterprise sponsored by the Connecticut Botanical Society, The Connecticut College Arboretum, and the Connecticut Urban

Forest Council. A database of notable trees is maintained at the Connecticut College Arboretum. The database includes records of over 2,800 individual trees in the state. Information for each tree includes size, location, ownership, and condition. Exact location of the trees is not always given because some are on private property and not open to the public.

A full description of the project and a listing of all notable Connecticut trees can be found at the project's website, at:

<http://oak.conncoll.edu:8080/notabletrees/>.

The tours have been so successful that the Extension Council has decided to do it again. The third annual Notable tree tour will take place Saturday October 16, 2010. This year, stops will be in Litchfield County. Once again several stops will be at private residences, not normally available to the public. The bus tour, including a box lunch, begins at 9 a.m. and will end at approximately 4 p.m. While the bus takes us to each stop, the tour does include some extensive walking through the tree areas. A portion of the registration is tax deductible. For registration information or additional information about the tour, send e-mail to: debbyerosen@sbcglobal.net (Master Gardener class 2000 Hartford County). The bus tour will be held rain or shine and is limited to 60 people.



The Laurel Calendar

By Richard Shaffer, Advanced Master Gardener

Date and Time	Event, Location, Contacts
1st Tuesday of every month 10AM	CMGA Board meeting at various locations. Call Diana at 203-372-8498 for information.
8/1/10 - 1 pm to 3 pm	Gardening for Life presented by Sydney Eddison at the Minor Memorial Library, Roxbury, Ct. Proceeds to benefit the library. Admission: \$15.
8/28/10	Garden Tour: Sue Webel, Idyll Haven, Wethersfield, Ct. Connecticut Horticultural Society. Info at: www.cthort.org/calendar
8/28/10 - 10 am	Fern Identification Workshop , 55 Harvest Lane, Glastonbury, Ct. Connecticut Botanical Society. Info at www.ct-botanical-society.org . Click on 'Field Trip Schedule'
9/12/10	Garden Tour: Steve Silk and Kate Emery, Farmington, Ct. Connecticut Horticultural Society. Info at: www.cthort.org/calendar
9/14/10 - 2 pm	Connecticut Invasive Plant Council monthly meeting. Ct. Agricultural Experiment Station, Valley Laboratory, Windsor, Ct.. Info at www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/ipc .
9/18/10 - 10 am	Connecticut Botanical Society field trip: Babcock Pond, Colchester, Ct. Info at www.ct-botanical-society.org . Click on 'Field Trip Schedule'
9/22/10 - 12 pm	Closing the Perennial Garden. Workshop at Elizabeth Park, West Hartford, Ct. Sponsored by the Friends of Elizabeth Park. Free. Info at 860-231-9443 or www.elizabethpark.org .
9/26/10	Garden Tour: the Anthony Garden, Wallingford, Ct. Connecticut Horticultural Society. Info at: www.cthort.org/calendar
10/9/10 - 9 am	Bioblitz at Beardsley Zoo, Bridgeport and Stratford, Ct. Scientists from many disciplines join to survey plant, insect, fish, and mammal populations in a variety of habitats. Info at www.ct-botanical-society.org . Click on 'Field Trip Schedule'
10/14/10	Invasive Plant Symposium: "Challenges & Successes: Working Cooperatively to Manage Invasive Plants" Held at UConn in Storrs, Ct. Early registration by 9/18/10. Info at 860-486-6448 or www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg .
10/15/10	Perennial Plant Conference , Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa. Info at Longwood Gardens Continuing Education Office, 610-388-1000, ext. 559 or www.perennialplantconference.org .
10/16/10	Notable Trees of Western Connecticut. Hartford Extension Council tour of notable trees of western Connecticut. Info at www.ladybug.uconn.edu or Debbyerosen@sbcglobal.net . See related story on page 10.

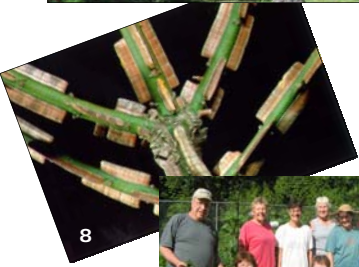
Calendar notices must be for events open to the public and of interest to Master Gardeners.
If you have items for the Calendar, please contact the editor at www.diana@ringelheim.com. or 203-372-8498
Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

The Laurel

CMGA
 C/O Kathy Baechele
 6 Christmas Tree Hill
 Canton, CT 06019

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Connecticut
Master Gardener
Association
Newsletter
The Laurel

Fall, 2010 Volume 23, No. 4

Annual Meeting

Saturday, November 20, 2010 9 am—12 pm

Zandri's Stillwood Inn
1074 S. Colony Road
Wallingford, Ct.

DIRECTIONS TO ZANDRI'S STILLWOOD INN:

From I-91 North and South—take exit 13.
At the end of the ramp turn right and
Stillwood Inn is about 800 ft. on the right.

Keeping alive the tradition of combining educational and entertaining presentations at the end of the business portion of the CMGA Annual Meeting, this year we will travel to the beyond!



John Bartram, who died in 1777, will visit us through the magic of Kirk Brown, his 21st Century incarnation. Bartram was a botanist, horticulturist, and explorer as well as a good friend of Benjamin Franklin's.

Bartram introduced

many European botanists and gardeners to the diversity of American flora by regularly sending seeds to notable British gardeners and plant collectors. He was so successful that King George III designated him as the King's botanist in North American with a handsome annual stipend of £50.

The annual meeting of the CMGA will begin with a breakfast and proceed to a business meeting for the purpose of electing officers and new and/or returning members of the Board of Director, and other business that may arise.

Officers standing for election for 2011 are:

- ◆ President — William Overton
- ◆ Vice President — Maureen Gillis
- ◆ Treasurer — Roger Gregoire
- ◆ Secretary — Tracy Burrell

Board of Directors - 3-Year Terms:

- ◆ Tracy Burrell
- ◆ Maureen Gillis
- ◆ Paul Grimmeisen
- ◆ Nancy Hinchey
- ◆ Donna Katsuranis
- ◆ Charles Tefft

If you are interested in serving on the CMGA Board, please contact any of the Elected Officials listed on page 2 of *The Laurel* and they will gladly help. Remember, you can also join as a Board Intern (please 'Election of the Members . . .' on page 10).

This event is free and limited to members of the CMGA. Please RSVP by 11/15/10 so that we can have a count for breakfast. Contact Kathy Baechle at k.baechle@comcast.net or 860-693-6616.

Elected Officials 2010

President:	William Overton billdo103@aol.com
Vice-President:	James Beausoleil jbeau1@directv.net
Treasurer:	Roger Gregoire gregoirerogerg@gmail.com
Secretary:	Fran Maynard fo45maynard2@gmail.com
Membership:	Kathy Baechle k.baechle@comcast.net

<u>Board of Directors</u>	
Sterling Andrews	Paul Grimmeisen
Kathy Baechle	Nancy Hinchey
Billy Baxter	Ellen Morse
Marge Bingham	Diane Ostheimer
Tracy Burrell	Diana Ringelheim
John Carlson	Richard Shaffer
Maureen Gillis	Charles Tefft

Cooperative Extension Center	
Coordinators (by County):	
Fairfield:	Sandi Wilson
203-207-3262	Sandra.wilson@uconn.edu
Fairfield (Stamford):	Regina Campfield
203-322-6971	bartlettarboretum.org
Hartford:	Sarah Bailey
860-570-9010	Sarah.bailey@uconn.edu
Litchfield:	Pat Eldredge
860-626-6240	Patricia.eldredge@uconn.edu
Middlesex:	Victoria McCarthy
860-345-4511	Victoria.mccarthy@uconn.edu
New Haven:	Judith Hsiang
203-407-3167	Judith.hsiang@uconn.edu
New London:	Susan Munger
860-885-2823	Susan.munger@uconn.edu
Tolland:	Rondi Niles
860-870-6934	rondi.niles@uconn.edu
Windham:	Kim Kelly
860-774-9600	Kimberly.kelly@uconn.edu
UConn Home & Garden	
Education Center:	
877-486-6271	www.ladybug.uconn.edu
UConn Liaison:	
Leslie Alexander:	860-486-6343
Leslie.alexander@uconn.edu	

CMGA Website:	www.ctmga.org
Maureen Gillis	cmga@comcast.net
The Laurel :	
Diana Ringelheim	diana@ringelheim.com

President's Message

Change seems to have been all around us in 2010 and that was true for your Association. In January, several goals were published which we believed would benefit our members:

- ◆ Improved 2-way communication with our members
- ◆ One or more Social/Educational opportunities for members
- ◆ Formation of an Extension /CMGA Advisory Board
- ◆ Improved reporting on volunteer projects
- ◆ Broaden geographic representation on CMGA's Board
- ◆ Increase non-board members on committees
- ◆ Increase and retain members of the Association

At that time we asked for increased member participation, we will continue to do so in 2011.

Goal-wise we have had some success:

Tracy Burrell has initiated CMGA's Speakers Bureau. Please contact Tracy if you wish to participate: burrell.tracy@gmail.com

Maureen Gillis as our current webmaster has helped lead the way towards improving communication with members. Our Facebook address has also improved our ability to interact with members. Early in 2010, we polled our members to gain a better sense of what they wanted out of their Association. By that means we will continue to focus on adding "VALUE" to your membership

Maureen has and continues to publish project reports submitted by members. Please submit information and photos on your volunteer efforts. Email: cmga@comcast.net.

Educational opportunities included tours of Elizabeth Park in June and Connecticut College in October. We hope to increase the number and frequency in 2011.

The Advisory Board has yet to be assembled and that continues to be a goal going forward, as it is another means of determining what members want.

The Board has held its regular monthly meetings in several locations including New Haven, Haddam, Torrington, Norwich and Bethel in 2010. Our goal was to allow members from various geographic areas to join in. This has enabled CMGA to attract several new board members and committee volunteers.

As this will be the last publication in 2010, let me take this opportunity to wish our members a "Happy and Healthy Holiday Season". Please take an interest in your association by getting involved in 2011.

Sincerely,
Bill Overton

The Laurel is published four times a year for members of the Connecticut Master Gardener Association. Please send news, photographs and calendar items by email to Diana Ringelheim at diana@ringelheim.com or 121 Godfrey Rd., Fairfield, Ct. 06825. Phone (203)372-8498

Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

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Preview - 2011 Symposium

Dear Master Gardeners:

I wish to talk to you about your Master Gardener Symposiums and the importance of these events to the Association. I'll start with what the symposium brings to you and, in the long run, to the gardeners and wannabe gardeners of Connecticut. We strive to make your day enjoyable from the moment you arrive to the time you leave. We strive to make your day exciting, and we strive to make your day an educational experience, that is, we hope that by the end of the symposium you leave with more knowledge about gardening than you arrived with. This should be reason enough to attend the symposium.

Yet, there is another important aspect that you may not know about and that has to do with the support the revenue derived from the symposium provides and how that revenue provides the support necessary to carryout the Association's purpose and mission, that is, to provide information, a.k.a. educating, the gardeners of Connecticut.

The Association carries out this mission in various ways. It funds grant requests for outreach projects submitted by Master Gardeners, it donates funds to each of the UConn coordinators, it donates funds to the UConn Master Gardener Program's scholarship fund, it funds our very popular publication *The Laurel*, and it funds essential operations of the Association.

Now where does the vast majority of funds come from that allow all these things to occur? The two major sources are membership fees and symposium revenue. It is the second of these, symposium revenue, which is of concern. When the event is well attended the needed revenue is there and when it is not, well, the answer is obvious.

Now that you see the importance of full Symposium attendance, I encourage each of you to look beyond the cost to attend and recognize the good your registration dollars do for you, the Association, the University of Connecticut, Master Gardener Program and, most importantly, all the gardeners of Connecticut, young, old and those in between.

Please plan to attend the 2011 Connecticut Master Gardener Symposium to be held Saturday, March 26th (snow date Sunday, March 27th) at Manchester Community College, Manchester, Connecticut.

John Carlson, Chairperson,
Symposium Committee

2011 SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS

Theme: "Garden Designs for Properties Large and Small"

March 26, 2011

Manchester Community College

By Marge Bingham, Chairperson, Speakers Committee

Opening Speaker: **Janet Marinelli: "Beyond Pandora: The Future of Garden Design"**

Closing Speaker: **William Cullina: "Botany of Design"**

Your choice of two speakers, one each for the morning and afternoon sessions:

Jenny Rose Carey: "Northview Gardens: Inspirations and Lessons"

Anita Dafonte: "Eggplants on Parade: Beautiful and Productive Vegetable Gardens"

Nancy DuBrule-Clemente: "Designing for the Future: A Ten-Year Plan for a Two-Acre Property"

Caroline Summers: "Gardens Filled with Life: Designing with Northeast Flora"

Sal Gilbertie: "Small-Plot, High-Yield Gardening"

Amy Ziffer: "A Connecticut Cottage Garden: Adapting a Classic Garden Style to New England"

Full details will appear in the Winter, 2011 edition of *The Laurel* and on the website, www.ctmga.org.

Volunteer Opportunities at Connecticut College Arboretum

By Tracy Burrell, Master Gardener

Become a Docent!

Looking for a volunteer activity that will increase your horticultural knowledge, educate the public and accrue approved outreach activity hours – all on over 700 beautiful acres overlooking Long Island Sound? Join your fellow Master Gardeners and other horticultural enthusiasts and become a Connecticut College Arboretum docent!

The Arboretum provides training and documentation for new docents; first year docents are paired with experienced docents when they begin conducting tours. Docents are asked to give a minimum of two tours a season; docents also have the option to focus on specific tour or tours. A fall potluck and a spring barbeque for Arboretum volunteers and staff are provided as a way for everyone to get to know each other.

Interested? Contact Kathy Dame, the Arboretum's Assistant Director of Public Education and Community Outreach: Phone 860-439-5060 or email ktdam@conncoll.edu.

Connecticut College offers free Arboretum tours to the public every Sunday afternoon from the beginning of May through the end of October. Each tour lasts approximately 90 minutes. Due to the size of the Arboretum, three distinct tours have been developed, each with their own highlights:

- ◆ 1st Sunday of the month – Campus Tour. See how the college has integrated native and exotic plantings amongst a thriving college campus.
- ◆ 2nd Sunday of the month – Caroline Black Garden. Explore garden 'rooms' in a formal garden nestled near the US Coast Guard Academy.
- ◆ 3rd and subsequent Sundays of the month – Native Plant Collection. Lead tours through a meadow, around a pond and over a winding stream.

In addition, private tours are also scheduled throughout the year. Seasonal changes in the landscape make the Arboretum a beautiful place to visit year round. Visit the Arboretum web site at: <http://arboretum.conncoll.edu/>.



Join Connecticut College Arboretum Hort Helpers!

Interested in helping the Connecticut College Arboretum staff maintain their 700 acre Arboretum? Master Gardener Allen Gauthier will be leading a team of volunteers in this exciting undertaking. This effort will involve hands-on work and educational projects that will benefit Arboretum programs. Specifics are being worked out with the Arboretum staff and the New London County Extension coordinator, Susan Munger – as the program is developed details will be posted on CMGA's website.

A spring launch is planned; if you are interested contact Kathy Dame, the Arboretum's Assistant Director of Public Education and Community Outreach - phone: 860-439-5060; email - ktdam@conncoll.edu.

The Campaign to Save Lisa Lane Farm

By Hannah Roditi, 2010 Master Gardener Intern

UConn Coordinator
Approved Outreach
Article

Lisa Lane Farm is one of the few remaining farms in Bloomfield and is visited all day long by residents who come from the immediate neighborhood, as well as Hartford, and other towns to buy fresh Calaloo (a Jamaican favorite that tastes like spinach) and other produce. The farmer who rents the land, Desmond Samuda, started growing things in Jamaica and is passionate about farming. It's a local business that is growing while operating on a shoe-string. It is on soil-rich land that provides an important wildlife corridor on the east side of Bloomfield. The farm has cooperated with the Agricultural Program at Bloomfield High school and the land also has two vernal pools that offer abundant educational opportunities for local schools.

Because the family that owns the land has decided to sell it, all this will likely disappear in favor of condo development unless the town intercedes to buy the development rights to the land, and that is what residents are organizing to make happen.

My outreach project involved organizing a community tour of the farm, which included extensive door-to-door canvassing in the neighborhood, and then organizing a speak-out in favor of saving it at one of the town's development planning meetings.

Saving the farm is a joint effort of Bloomfield's Open Space Subcommittee, made up of town residents, and the Wintonbury Land Trust which works to preserve natural environments and waterways. A land trust may accomplish this through establishing and monitoring permanent conservation easements which are legal agreements by which landowners voluntarily limit the development potential and use of their land. The land remains in existing ownership but the easement "runs with the title" insuring that the protections remain in place regardless of who may own the land in the future.

A land trust works with landowners to protect the natural values of their property and ensure that the scenic beauty of the area will be maintained for future generations. The protected property may be donated by land owners, or the trust may purchase property.

In this case, the Open Space Subcommittee and the Land Trust submitted an Open Space grant application to the Department of Environmental Protection last May. The Town has made a commitment to buy the property from the owner for \$300,000 if the grant is received and the team has found additional funding to make up the difference between the grant and the purchase price.

The Town's commitment, as well as its commitment of \$20,000 for an appraisal, came after many residents spoke out at Town Council meetings about the issue.

My project involved walking the neighborhoods all around the farm, knocking on doors at several hundred homes, talking to residents about the issue, inviting them to the tour, and leaving flyers. I found that many neighbors had no idea there was a farm that sold inexpensive, fresh produce practically in their backyards.

They were very interested to learn about it. Many others were loyal customers but did not know that the farm was threatened. The farmer was so busy running his business, he was not focused on building the community support he would need to stay on the land.

Over 50 people attended the tour. It was the kind of diverse crowd, with strong neighborhood participation, that we had hoped for. One of the current owners of the land was there to talk about the family's need to sell. Leaders of the Land Trust and the Open Space Subcommittee spoke about what was underway and about the importance of building political support to save the farm. People were invited to speak out at the upcoming Planning & Development town meeting, and a number of people agreed to do so. Others made a range of suggestions for building political alliances and support and were invited to take action.

Every ten years each municipality in the state must update its plan of development. This process is an important one because it sets development priorities and goals for the next decade, with significant environmental/open space consequences. Ten people who had attended the tour came out and spoke at the meeting in favor of saving the farm. They represented about a third of the people at the meeting! This sent a strong message about the importance of the issue.

This was just once small step in what will likely be a lengthy and arduous trek to preserve this farmland. It is one thing for people to come out for a tour, and quite another for them to stay active and vocal in a longer-term campaign. Yet that broad and diverse support will be important for generating the political will to allocate resources to get the job done. It was a privilege to be part of the effort and I look forward to continuing to be part of the process.



Participants at the tour of Lisa Lane Farm

Elevator Speech

By Tracy Burrell, Master Gardener

Imagine you're in an elevator with Bill Gates and he says "I have \$100 million dollars that I'd like to donate today . . . what program could I give it to? I have 30 minutes before my next meeting. Are there any other folks I can talk to?" He spies your Master Gardener badge and then asks you those dreaded words "Tell me a little about yourself." You realize that if he likes what he hears, those 30 minutes are yours. The elevator doors are opening in 30 seconds. What do you say?

Okay, that scenario is a little out there (who talks to each other in an elevator?), but having a succinct way to introduce yourself can be like a set of small garden shears in your back pocket – trusty, dependable and always ready. The term elevator speech (also known as a 30 second commercial, curbside audition or mini biography) describes those few sentences that you have at the ready. You can use it with groups or individuals. You can also give it to someone else to introduce you. Having 3-4 sentences ready that can be adjusted for specific instances can be a time and sanity saver.

Think you don't need one? Consider the following situations:

- ◆ You're at a roundtable discussion – the facilitator asks everyone to go around the table and say who they are and what they hope to get out of the discussion
- ◆ You wrote an article for a local gardening club newsletter. The editor wants some info about you to add at the end of the article
- ◆ You're leading a garden tour and need to introduce yourself
- ◆ You're judging a gardening contest and the head judge wants some info on you to introduce you to the audience
- ◆ You're giving a presentation at the library and the librarian asks you to email some information about yourself for an ad in the paper about your talk
- ◆ The local garden club is placing announcements about your workshop and wants some info for their flyer
- ◆ The scheduled speaker is stuck on I-91. You've been asked to fill in. You know the material cold, but need a few sentences to introduce yourself

By having an elevator speech already prepared, you can focus on gardening (aka the good stuff) and not spend time laboring over these few sentences. Here's an example of an elevator speech:

"I decided to become a Master Gardener when my eight year old grandson became fascinated with gardening. We started out with a few spindly seedlings for a Mother's Day gift, but over the next few years, we landscaped my yard, grown over 500 plants for his school fundraisers, and the Mother's Day gifts for my wife and daughter have become better and better. I tell folks that I became a Master Gardener to keep up with my grandson!"

Just a few sentences, but it tells a little bit about him and his background. It also indicates some specific areas of gardening that he has some experience with – landscaping and working with kids. If he was giving a talk on kid friendly garden projects, he could add the following sentences:

"Today I am going to show you three kid-friendly gardening projects. They each take less than an hour to complete. Most of the materials are probably lying around your house. I have a lot to show you so let's get started!"

You can also expand the 30 seconds to 60 or ninety seconds – this is where having a few notes about significant projects, activities, etc. can come in handy. Ask yourself a few questions:

- ◆ Why did you become a Master Gardener? What do you want to do with what you've learned?
- ◆ What gardening projects did you work on? What did you learn from those projects – skills, techniques, etc.
- ◆ What gardening topics do you love? What do you hate? For example, after struggling to maintain a lawn in my hilly yard, I got rid of it and haven't missed it since. I could give a talk on reducing your lawn.
- ◆ What life experiences influence your gardening?

Examples:

A teacher – "The mission of the Master Gardener Program is education. After a 30 year teaching career, I get to combine my two loves – teaching and gardening."

An engineer's fascination with how do things work – "I love building things. I've used my engineering skills to build and test the three easy trellises that I'm going to demonstrate for you. I have several tips and tricks that will hopefully make these projects easy and fun for you."

A scientist's love of research – "In the lab, we're constantly asking the question – 'Why?' I'm going to talk about some common garden problems in our area

**You're in an elevator with Bill Gates . . .
He's ready to give money to a worthy cause . . .
The doors will open in 30 seconds . . .
What do you say????????????????**

Elevator Speech Cont'd.

and what I did to solve them in my garden."

A parent of three hungry teenage boys – "Our boys were eating us out of house and home! I learned to garden so that my spouse and I would have something to eat!"

A new homeowner – "I watched helplessly as my brand new garden became brown and lifeless. I was determined that that would never happen again."

Here's a 90 second commercial example. We'll use the same man who became a Master Gardener because of his grandson:

"I decided to become a Master Gardener when my eight year old grandson became fascinated with gardening. We started out with a few spindly seedlings for a Mother's Day gift, but over the next few years, we landscaped my yard, grown over 1000 plants for his school fundraisers, and the Mother's Day gifts for my wife and daughter have gotten better and better. I tell folks that I became a Master Gar-

dener to keep up with my grandson!"

"As a communications director, I understand how important it is to tailor your message to different audiences. One of the projects that I am really proud of is leading a team of Master Gardeners to develop a xeriscaping manual. We had separate sections for children, teens, adults and seniors. Working with the Boy Scouts and our 55 Plus club, we installed six xeriscapes around town, including three elementary schools, library, senior center and the town hall. It was wonderful seeing different age groups working together for our community.

"Today I am going to show you three kid-friendly gardening projects. They each take less than an hour to complete. Most of the materials are probably lying around your house. I have a lot to show you so let's get started!"

Imagine you're in an elevator with Bill Gates. When he asks "Tell me a little about yourself.", you're ready.

Shaw Mansion A Connecticut Historic Garden

By Susan Munger, MG Coordinator, New London County



The New London County Historical Society owns the Shaw Mansion from 1757, in New London. For many years Master Gardeners, both certified and interning, have helped maintain the gardens. Several years ago a Five-Year Plan was written, with the idea of creating a series of period gardens to reflect the site's history. These periods are the Colonial, the 19th century up to the Civil War, and the Victorian. The building reflects these periods, which gives us more latitude than if we had to be true to just one period. Upcoming events on the grounds will commemorate the War of 1812 and the Civil War. For this reason we will concentrate on the 19th century portion of the gardens for the immediate future. Eventually we hope to install paths and signage to help interpret the property.

This year we created a new herb garden in front of the root cellar; fortunately all the plants survived the drought. Another feature of the gardens is an ancient boxwood. I know it is a slow growing variety because a cutting I took from it at least ten years ago is barely a foot tall now. Could the box at the Mansion have been planted by the Shaws prior to the Revolution? In the 1940s, Christopher Tunnard, a landscape architect and garden designer at Yale, created a plan for the grounds, several features of which still exist.

At least twenty Master Gardeners have worked on the gardens, some continuing to do so year after year, which as we all know is essential to keeping a garden beautiful. A few years ago the site was selected to join 13 other gardens called Connecticut's Historic Gardens.

Lorraine's Picks

Website Recommendations from
Lorraine Ballato, Advanced Master Gardener

SLOWER BOLTING LETTUCES

When you get those seed catalogs, remember how hot this past summer was and how quickly your lettuce bolted. Then, go to this web site from Colorado State University and follow their lead. They did some worthwhile research on the bolt resistance of various lettuce varieties. To be specific, they tested 50 different cultivars of six types of lettuces, along with their susceptibility to tip burn and other problems. Green leaf lettuces 'Concept' and 'Envy' held well while red varieties 'New Fire' and 'Red Salad Bowl' were good performers in their class. 'Green Forest' green romaine, 'Rouge d'hiver' red romaine and 'Lochness' butter lettuce all performed well, while Batavian type lettuces in general stood out as most resistant to bolting. The other point to note is that the research concluded that early day picking yielded better tasting lettuce. The lab results yielded higher sugar content at 7 a.m. than at 2 p.m., yet another reason to be in the garden before it heats up. The entire study, "Lettuce Bolting Resistance Project" is available at:

http://www.specialtycrops.colostate.edu/scp_exp_demo/lettuce_bolting.htm



Veronica 'Heraud'

VERONICAS TO THE RESUCE

The Chicago Botanic Garden does an enormous amount of horticultural research and this time they are helping me select the best veronica. And just in time, too. As if there weren't enough already, every time I go to a garden center, there seems to be more new introductions. This particular study has been going on for at least 4 years for some cultivars and as long as 6 years for others, all in zone 5. They reviewed 61 different species of speed-well and gave them tough love: full sun and minimal care. Ratings were based on flower production, plant health, growth habit and winter hardiness. The judging was tough. Although none reached the top 5 star excellent rating, several earned a 4-star good and 7 got 4 ½ stars. Look for 'Fairytale' with pale pink flowers, 'Giles Van Hees' a darker pink-flowered beauty, *V. austriaca* 'Ionian Skies' with pale blue flowers; *V. longifolia* 'Blue John' with purple-blue blossoms; the *V. spicata* cultivars 'Baby Doll' with pink flowers and 'Ulster Blue Dwarf' with purple-blue; and *V. wormskjoldii*, also with purple-blue flowers. All of these plants have an upright growth habit. The study also evaluated seven cultivars of the architectural culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*), with 'Apollo,' 'Fascination,' 'Lavendelturm' and 'Pink Glow' receiving "good" ratings. You can read the entire report on this (Comparative Studies of Veronica and Veronicastrum) by going to:

http://www.chicagobotanic.org/downloads/planteval_notes/no33_veronica.pdf



Veronica gentianoides
'Pallida'

LONGWOOD GARDENS RESEARCH

While researching some writing assignments, I stumbled on a great resource we can all use. Through generous underwriting support, Longwood Gardens (Pennsylvania) has been doing worthwhile research for years on plants like cannas, vitex, camellias, ninebark, buddleia, etc. This research has been reported in trade magazines like Greenhouse Grower, American Nurseryman, and the publication of the American Camellia Society.

Those organizations have also granted Longwood permission to upload those same articles to the Longwood website for the rest of us to read and learn from. To read any and all of this research, go to:

<http://www.longwoodgardens.org/PublicationsFromourExperts.html>

Suggestion: If you don't want to type these long web addresses, highlight them, copy, and then paste into your web browser. This can be done from the CMGA Website version of *The Laurel* at www.ctmga.org

The Laurel Calendar

By Richard Shaffer, Advanced Master Gardener

Date and Time	Event, Location, Contacts
1st Tuesday of every month 10AM	CMGA Board Meeting at various locations. Contact Diana at diana@ringelheim.com or 203-372-8498 for details.
11/6/10 9 am	Closing the Rose Garden Workshop. Elizabeth Park, West Hartford, Ct. Info at www.elizabethpark.org or 860-231-9443.
11/9/10 2 pm	Ct. Invasive Plant Council Monthly Meeting. Ct. Agricultural Experiment Station Valley Laboratory, Windsor, Ct. Info at www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/ipc .
11/13/10 10 am	Closing the Iris Garden Workshop. Elizabeth Park, West Hartford, Ct. Info at www.elizabethpark.org or 860-231-9443.
11/18/10 7:30 pm	Life Lessons from the South, North, and My Father: presented by Lee May. Ct Horticultural Society at Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford. Info at www.cthort.org .
11/23/10 All Day	6th Annual Ct. Forest Conservation & Research Forum. Univ. of Conn. West Hartford Branch. Info at www.ctwoodlands.org/forest-forum-2010 .
12/8/10 All Day	NOFA Organic Land Care Update Course. Sturbridge, MA. Info at www.organiclandcare.net or 203-888-5146.
12/15/10 7 pm	Why I Love My Job: New Plants, Old Plants & The Stories I Tell: presented by Kevin Wilcox. Ct. Hardy Plant Society at the Solomon Welles House, Wethersfield, Ct. Info at www.cthardyplantsociety.org .
1/19/11 10 am	Wildflowers in Winter Workshop. Ct. Botanical Society at Lockwood Farm Cottage, Hamden, Ct. Info at www.ct-botanical-society.org and click on 'Field Trip Schedule'
1/20/11 7:30 pm	Our Strange Relationship with the Soil: presented by Michele Owens. Ct Horticultural Society at Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford. Info at www.cthort.org .
1/20/11 10 am—12 pm	Plants Make Places: presented by Michael Van Valkenburgh at the New York Botanical Gardens, Bronx, NY. Info at www.nybg.org/AdultEd or 718-817-8747.

Calendar notices must be for events open to the public and of interest to Master Gardeners.

If you have items for the Calendar, please contact the editor at www.diana@ringelheim.com. or 203-372-8498

Deadlines for publication are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1

Getting Depressed About the End of the Gardening Season?

Even though this was an extremely challenging growing season with the drought and heat, I for one am unhappy that it's over. Prior editions of *The Laurel* included short bits about my unexpected success with tomatoes in the shade and I would love to hear about other people's successes, or failures, with all the curve-balls Nature threw this year. We can almost learn more from failures than successes! Please drop me a line and we'll advise each other in the Winter edition of *The Laurel* as we plan and prepare strategies to engage in the gardening battle for the 2011 season. Email at diana@ringelheim.com or call 203-372-8498. Thanks so much, Diana.

UConn's New Certification Policy for Master Gardeners

In August, 2010, UConn announced revisions to the Master Gardener certification policy, which includes ongoing volunteering in Extension Offices, outreach activities, and annual attendance at a Hot Topics class. The exact nature of the new requirements are still being developed. A copy of the August letter and the most recent communications on this matter are available at the CMGA website: www.ctmga.org.

If you did not receive notification of the changes in the mail, you are probably not on UConn's mailing list. Please contact the MG Coordinator in your county to make sure you receive the latest information on how to maintain your status as an Active Certified Master Gardener. The names, telephone numbers, and email addresses for the Cooperative Extension Center Coordinators appear on page 2 of *The Laurel*.


**Whether you are an Active Certified Master Gardener or an Alumni Master Gardener,
you will always be eligible to join the CMGA.
Membership in the CMGA is open to all Master Gardeners.**

CMGA Membership Renewal

Your membership in the CMGA is based on a calendar year—from January to December. Please send your membership form and dues as soon as possible to insure an uninterrupted link to the family of Master Gardeners.

Reasons for renewing:

- ◆ The biggest bargain in Connecticut horticultural circles - Dues are staying at \$20 for another year, at least.
- ◆ The discount for members for the symposium fee is equal to the membership dues!
- ◆ Membership includes a minimum of four (4) newsletters (*The Laurel*) per year. Read about outreach and gardening activities by fellow Master Gardeners, Interns, and hopefully, yourself!
- ◆ Semi-Annual Meeting and Summer Garden Safari - busses provided by the CMGA leave from a UConn Cooperative Extension Office and travel to local gardens of extraordinary interest and appeal.
- ◆ Speakers Bureau - helping Master Gardeners go into their communities to spread the word about the latest and most responsible gardening techniques. Classes to help Master Gardeners with public speaking and organizing presentations are being prepared.
- ◆ Maintain the strong bonds of the Master Gardeners in the state of Connecticut.

Please copy or use the form on page 11 and bring your dues to the Annual Meeting on November 20th, or mail it in as soon as possible. Thank you for your continued participation and support. 

Congratulations to 2010 Graduates!

The names of the 2010 Certified Master Gardeners are usually published in this edition of *The Laurel*. However, time constraints have made that impossible. The CMGA has decided to mail *The Laurel* Winter 2011 edition to the Class of 2010, so that you all may be honored in writing for your achievement! We hope that you will join the CMGA as regular members and keep your Master Gardener community together!

Election of the Members of the CMGA Board of Directors

The CMGA adopted new By Laws in 2010 that required the election of members of the Board of Directors to three-year terms. At that time, existing members of the Board were randomly assigned terms of one, two, or three years to stagger the number of people up for election each year. All the one-year members of the Board from 2010 who wanted to remain are up for election as three-year members for 2011 along with any new Board members (please see page 1). The two-year members from 2010 automatically become one-year members for 2011 (Sterling Andrews, Kathy Baechle, Billy Baxter, Marge Bingham, John Carlson, Roger Gregoire, Ellen Morse). And the three-year members from 2010 automatically become two-year members for 2011 (Jay Beausoleil, Fran Maynard, Diane Ostheimer, Bill Overton, Diana Ringelheim).

If you would like to join the Board this year, you would be elected to a three-year term. Please contact any of the 'Elected Official' listed on page 2 of *The Laurel* and they will happily assist you. If three years is more commitment than you are willing to make at this time, please consider becoming a Board of Directors Intern: a non-voting participant who can become more active gradually (circle that activity on your membership renewal form, page 11).

The Connecticut Master Gardener Association is becoming stronger every year and that can only be accomplished and maintained with the full participation and support of its membership. Thank you, and let's come together for another year of success.

The Laurel

CMGA
 C/O Kathy Baechele
 6 Christmas Tree Hill
 Canton, CT 06019

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