

IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

The July 2009 Monthly Journal
Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners' Association
Volume 13, Number 7



"The trouble with gardening is that it does not remain an avocation. It becomes an obsession." Phyllis McGinley



THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN By Barbara Thomas

Ahhh, summertime is here, as is that horrible, high humidity. Isn't it wonderful to work outside with the sweat rolling off one's nose? Do you wake up early preparing to work outside and within three minutes are you longing for a blast of wintertime weather? Please remember to drink plenty of water, wear a hat and take care not to get heat stroke while working outside this summer.

Summertime also means the Rockbridge County Fair and our Horticulture Show. The Fair runs from July 15 to July 19 at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington. Master Gardeners are

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The President's Column.....	1
New Annuals	2
A Note from the Records	
Coordinator.....	3
Photograph Your Garden	5
Calendar	6
Educational Opportunities	7

encouraged to pick up a Fair booklet from the Extension Office and to submit entries.

Hort entries should be brought to the Mezzanine from 10:30am to 12:30pm on Wednesday, July 15. Judging will take place on Wednesday, July 15, beginning at 1:30pm.

Several years ago I entered my first 'hort' exhibit and it was a bit daunting, due to my inexperience. In an effort to ameliorate that for other first time MG exhibitors, there is now an official Garden Club book located at the Hotline library which has all the specific rules and regulations (remember that we can peruse books from our library but NOT take them home).

Because the Fair booklet omitted ALL the categories, basically ANY flower, herb, evergreen spray or green vegetation is acceptable. In a nutshell, flowers/specimens must be healthy and placed securely into a clear glass vase. I have learned that one uses wedges of cotton balls, foam or plastic wrap around the stem at narrow point of the vase to hold the stem securely. Narrow necked bottles are a BIG help and one's name should be on the bottom of the containers. After saving bottles for a year, I now have a decent collection of small, narrow necked containers (malt beverage, hot sauce, soy sauce, Worcestershire...). Other useful tips are to use a box with dividers and crushed newspaper to transport specimens and Becky England taught me to use a printed address label where the entry form calls for name and address – what a time saver!!!

Entry forms are available from the entry desk located on the Mezzanine level at the Anderson Coliseum when you bring in entries on July 15th or at the Extension Office beforehand. Other MG's will be there to help that day and to set up the exhibit area. RAMGA members will also help show you how to display and enter your specimen.

Maureen Becker

(mbecker@wlu.edu) is the MG in charge of this event.

It has been a fun experience to enter flowers, vines and herbs and quite a thrill when I won one of the grand prizes last year (a hefty \$75 gift certificate from the Potting Shed). It would be great for all Master Gardeners to exhibit at least one flower or specimen. How about it? See you at the Rockbridge County Fair in July!



NEW ANNUALS

By Diana Losche



Two unusually scented annuals from South Africa are being introduced into the U.S. market. *Zaluzianskya capensis*, also known as night phlox, has small phlox-like flowers on 24" stems. Red buds open to small white flowers with orange eyes and bright maroon undersides. In the evening these flowers smell like a cake just out of the oven and group plantings are often placed close to kitchen or dining room windows. Seeds are currently available from Select Seeds and Thompson & Morgan.

Ceratotheca triloba is a foxglove that can withstand extreme heat and drought and their grey-green leaves have a nutty scent (which also acts as a deer repellent). Dr. Allan Armitage says they are tough as nails. Standing 5-



6' high they have large (2 1/2") trumpet-like pinky-white flowers with violet stripes on the inside and these hang in clusters from mid-summer to fall. Seeds will become available next year from major seed sources.



A NOTE FROM THE RECORDS COORDINATOR

By **Carol Schoner**

RAMGA gardeners have much to be proud of. We maintain several community gardens, demonstrate the miracle of growing plants to school children, answer many plant and garden questions via the help desk and plant clinics, sell some of the best plants around at really great prices, and provide a great read with our monthly newsletter. We put in many volunteer and continuing education hours – but it's just an excuse to get our hands in the dirt, visit with friends, catch up on news, learn new ideas and techniques about gardening, and visit some really great area gardens.

The **Class of 2008** concluded April 2008 bringing with it many new master gardener interns. Since then, twelve of the interns have completed and reported their initial requirement of 50 volunteer hours and are now master gardeners: **Phyllis Fevrier, Pam Gatlin, Ann Gruner, Laura Mattingly, Pat Patterson, Barbara Rollenhagen, Amy Scheuer, Ingrid Sinclair-Day, Tracey Smith-Oliver, Stephanie West, Becky Wilson, and Bee Zwart.** Congratulations to all!

We have also had two master gardeners who transferred here from other Virginia Master Gardener Associations. Our two new gardeners are **Angelika Matiuk** from Prince Williams County, and **Liz Maurer** from Virginia Beach. If you meet either of these two, please make them feel at home here in Rockbridge County.

Many of our master gardeners have put in enough hours to reach milestone rewards during 2008; rewards were given to these MGs at the Master Gardener College held at Virginia Tech in June. Master gardeners who reached the **250 hours** milestone are: **Molly Brown** (347),

Gordon Jacoby (316), **Diane Jurand** (264), **David Mims** (250), **Carol Schoner** (411), **Sherry Smith** (281), **Gerri Wenz** (250), and **Penny Wilson** (333). Master gardeners who reached the **500 hour** milestone are: **Margaret Fletcher** (504), **Ann Jones** (500), and **Heather Marion** (674). The master gardener who reached the **1000 hours** milestone is **Mary Adkins** (1123). The master gardener who reached the **2000 hours** milestone is **Barbara Thomas** (2013). These gardeners have joined the ranks of those gardeners who give many hours to further the RAMGA group in our goal to educate the community in good earth stewardship practices.

Reaching a volunteer hour milestone has a reward to the gardeners who put in those hours. Reaching the milestones offers discounts to the Master Gardeners College held at Virginia Tech each June. For this June 2009 college, the discounts include 20% for 250 hours, 40% for 500 hours, 60% for 1000 hours, 80% for 2000-4000 hours off the registration fee; and if you have completed 5000 hours or more, the registration is complimentary.

Most of us don't like the time recording portion of our responsibility. We are gardeners, not record keepers!!! But the statistics that we gather and report are used by funding agencies, such as grant sources and county government, to justify the expenditures of their money. It is important to our RAMGA organization and to the Virginia Tech Extension Office that our records reflect the volunteer hours that our group contributes, the education that we continue to pursue, and the number of nonmaster gardeners (contacts) we educate. Therefore, it is essential that you keep current by turning in your timesheets periodically. Send your time sheets to Carol Schoner, cschoner@comcast.net or leave them at the Help Desk in the Extension Office. **Keep those timesheets coming!!!**

Just to give you a little background on some of the Master Gardeners who have amassed so many hours, here are a few biographies. We'll continue each month with biographies on more of our Master Gardeners so we can all get to know our fellow gardeners.

Katherine Smith – For a short time Katherine trained as a Master Gardener in Henrico County in 1983 and volunteered at the Extension Office there. She dropped out of the pool in 1985. There were no associations at that time and extension agents were our link to Extension at VPI&SU.

Katherine began gardening here in 1988. Since then, she has sold produce locally, been an active supporter of local produce, and also a supporter of master gardeners, which got underway in 1994. Her accumulated hours are those earned here in Rockbridge County in the process of organizing, teaching, and office support. What a continuing education this has been! And, I might add she's an outstanding team leader for the Buena Vista Visitor Center team of Master Gardeners!

She's a native Virginian, but climate zone 7. Her college education was with University of Richmond, and she has an MS in Library and Information Sciences from Drexel. Her professional years were spent in science libraries in the Richmond area. Great fun for 30 years - all of it spent inside buildings! Her really big life change was to wake up to the outside, which is where she spends most of her time now.

Next up is **Jim Davis**. He was born and reared in the deep, subtropical south of Jacksonville, Tampa, Savannah and Mobile, where his mother was never without a garden nor his father without St. Augustine grass. His love of growing things must stem from these influences, though I understand as a teenager he

complained bitterly whenever asked to apply shovel to soil.

After college and two years in the army, he married Joyce and entered graduate school. In Charlottesville he planted his first and best ever garden; ten feet square, it produced an abundance of eggplants, lettuce and bush beans. The tomatoes were elsewhere but were huge, as was the water bill.

In 1964 VMI hired Jim to teach English. A colleague, Rusty Ford's father, gave him space in his garden and plenty of cow manure. He planted leeks (the patriotic duty of a Welshman), corn, cucumbers, winter squash, sugar snaps and tomatoes, with good success. The principle lesson was that he didn't need so many bushels of cucumbers and squash.

For ten years Jim and Joyce lived in Buena Vista where he had several perennial borders. He had advice from Jay Gilliam, an artist friend and an ancient neighbor, and grew Iberis, Iris, Begonias, Hostas and really big Hibiscus. He thought it all looked pretty good. Again, everything got a lot of water.

Jim retired in 1992. For five years he plagued Katherine Smith with questions about fruit trees when she was on duty in the extension office. Probably to keep him quiet, she convinced him that he should take the MG Class. He says he's indebted to Katherine for the pleasure he's derived from his MG friends and the opportunity to continue teaching in a new field.

Lastly, but certainly not least, is **Ted Jenks**. He is a 1967 graduate of VMI (BSEE) and obtained an MSEE from UVA. After serving 4 years in the Air Force he worked for Rockwell International/ Boeing for 30 years managing government research contracts for the company. He became Director of Electrical Engineering for Boeing's Anaheim, California site and retired in 2002 as an executive of the company.

After retirement, Ted returned to his home state and settled in Lexington, Virginia where he and his wife Kate both became Master Gardeners. From 2003 to 2008 he served as an officer on the Board of Directors of the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association and as their representative to VMGA. For several years he has been the Project Lead for the Campbell House demonstration garden, and also supports the RAMGA annual Plant Sale, first by managing the work crews and now by being the Plant Sale Coordinator. He continues as a member of the Board of Directors, and also serves as one of the interviewers for the new MG classes.

In 2004 Ted chaired the VMGA Annual Audit Committee and in 2005 served on the VMGA Finance Committee and Annual Audit Committee. He was the Treasurer for VMGA from 2006 to 2008 and currently is the Chair of the VMGA Finance Committee. In his spare time (??), Ted enjoys bowling, shooting sporting clays and jet skiing.

Next month we will introduce you to more of our members who have donated their time, experience and initiative to RAMGA.



HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH YOUR GARDEN

By Jim Davis

The tips that follow are not for expert photographers like Ellen Ivy, but rather for casual picture takers who would like better results with their garden photos. And there are only a few simple rules to follow for quick improvement. Most everything I say will apply to both film and digital cameras. Both kinds, even the less expensive ones, come with a great variety of settings and abilities, but I don't assume great facility with the camera. If you're

still reading this, maybe you're one who will find my comments appropriate.

Rule 1. Some acknowledge only *three* rules in photography: Light, Light and Light. Like many catch phrases, this one holds much truth, and we can't cover the whole subject here. Be aware, though: the best light occurs in those magic hours of early morning and late afternoon. Then you'll have the advantage of soft shadows and avoid harsh glare that washes out color and detail. The light is often even more effective just after a rain, the wet leaves supplying a richer color. If you encounter unwanted shadows in close-ups, use a reflector to brighten them. White poster board works well; it can be propped up or held by a bored spouse or friend who takes instruction well. I'd avoid using flash, but if you need to fill dark space you should experiment with it.

Rule 2. Sharpness is almost as important as light, so keep the camera steady. If a tripod isn't an option, put the camera on a bench or ladder. If a cable release isn't an option, use the self timer, so as not to shake the camera when tripping the shutter. And avoid shooting on a windy day. Mornings and evenings are often less windy than other times—another good reason for shooting early or late.

Rule 3. Give careful attention to composition. First, fill the frame with interesting matter. Everything you see in the viewfinder or LCD monitor should be worth gazing at and should enhance your overall purpose. Moving in close to the main subject of your shot will likely exclude what you *don't* want, such as parts of the house. Even so, be careful to choose an interesting background. In the process, decide whether to make the photo vertical or horizontal. Most amateurs like us rarely turn the camera for a vertical shot, although to capture height or sometimes length (of a path, say) that format is essential.

Examine these two illustrations and decide which follows the tips in this section better. Finally, for even greater interest, by all means break the eye-level syndrome (whether photographing the garden or people); shoot while kneeling or perching on something. Many stunning photos in gardening magazines, I'm convinced,

would look like weed fields if shot from a careless angle or at eye level.



Rule 4. This is really a special part of Rule 3. It's called the rule of thirds. Divide the image into thirds horizontally, positioning the horizon and sky in the upper third. Then try to make two additional fairly distinct layers for the other two-thirds of the picture. You can, of course, leave out the horizon, allowing the eye to concentrate on details. It's also a good idea to include a diagonal somewhere in the photo. Examine these two illustrations and decide which is the more interesting.



Rule 5. Take several shots of every subject, varying light direction, composition, camera angle and anything else you can. Film, after all, is cheap nowadays.

And now, if a viewer says, "Your camera takes good pictures," smugly remember—it's the photographer and not the camera that gets the good shots.



<u>July</u>	<i>CALENDAR</i>
4 - 5	Landscaping Your Property*
8	RAMGA Board Mtg - 2:00pm
8	Shady Lady's Bulb Garden*
9	Organic Pest Control
9,16, 23, 30	Trees & Shrubs for the Home Landscape*
14	Hydrangea Walk & Talk*
15	Edible Flowers*
15- 19	Rockbridge County Fair - Virginia Horse Center
16	Manage Your Vegetable Garden*
17	Continuing Ed Seminar*
25 or 26	Organic Gardening*
29	Bio-Dynamic Composting*
* See Educational Events Calendar this issue	



Calendar of Educational Events ~ July 2009



Date	Event/Credits	Content	Location/Contact
July 4 or 5 1:30 pm Cost: Free	Landscaping your Property for Curb Appeal and Added Value <u>Credits***</u>	All homes and lots can have attractive landscaping that increases their aesthetics, function, and resale value.	Viette's Nursery Fishersville, VA (800) 575-5538
July 8 12:00 Noon– 1:00pm Cost: Free	The Shady Lady's Bulb Garden Brown Bag Lunch <u>Credits: 1 hr</u>	Learn about flowers and bulbs that benefit from shade http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/programs/july09.html	Edith J Carrier Arboretum, Harrisonburg, VA
July 9 6:00–8:00 pm Cost: \$35	Organic Pest Control <u>Credits: 2 hrs</u>	Approaches to organic pest control, including Integrated Pest Management, timing, mulching practices, and more.	Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond, VA http://www.lewisginter.org
July 9, 16, 23, 30 6:00–8:00pm Cost: \$120	Trees and Shrubs for the Home Landscape <u>Credits: 8 hrs</u>	Choose and care for woody plants in your home landscape. Using the Garden's collections, identify your home landscape needs.	Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond, VA http://www.lewisginter.org
July 14 6:00-7:30pm Cost: \$14	Hydrangea Walk and Talk in the Garden <u>Credits: 1.5 hrs</u>	Richard Waiton leads this discussion and walk through the Garden's hydrangea collection.	Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, Richmond, VA http://www.lewisginter.org
July 15 12 Noon– 1:00pm Cost: Free	Edible Flowers Brown Bag Lunch <u>Credits: 1 hr</u>	Learn which flowers to grow in your garden to put on your table!	Edith J Carrier Arboretum, Harrisonburg, VA
July 16 1:30 pm Cost: Free	How to Manage Your Vegetable Garden <u>Credits***</u>	Make your vegetable garden more productive through succession planting, thinning, trellising, and interplanting.	Viette's Nursery Fishersville, VA (800) 575-5538
July 17 8:30 am–3:45pm Cost: \$15 (\$25 with lunch)	Continuing Education Seminar for Master Gardeners – Northern Neck MG <u>Credits: 5 hrs</u>	-Fire Wise Landscaping: Strategies for Protecting Your Home -Identifying and Controlling Weeds -The Trials and Tribulations of Growing Boxwood -New or Underused Perennials in the Landscape	Northern Neck Master Gardeners P. O. Box 400 Heathsville, VA 22473 (804) 580-5694
July 25 or 26 1:30 pm Cost: Free	Organic Gardening <u>Credits***</u>	No information available at this time.	Viette's Nursery Fishersville, VA (800) 575-5538

<p>July 29 12 – 1 pm Cost: Free</p>	<p>Bio-Dynamic Composting Brown Bag Lunch <i>Credits: 1 hr</i></p>	<p>Have all your composting questions answered. http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/programs/july09.html</p>	<p>Edith J Carrier Arboretum, Harrisonburg VA</p>
<p>Credit *** Contact Kip Brooks for credit questions: kipb@rockbridge.net or 462-6160</p>			

2008-2009
Officers
Barbara Thomas, President
Nancy Smith, Vice President
Tracy Smith-Oliver, Treasurer
Secretary
David Mims, Representative, Virginia Master Gardeners Association

Standing Committees
Kip Brooks and Carol Schoner, Volunteer Coordinators
Anne Riffey-Buckner, Helen Smith, and Laura Mattingly, Programs
Stephanie West, Publicity
Ted Jenks – Plant Sale
Sherry Smith and Jeanne Eichelberger, Newsletter

IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

Editor-in-chief Sherry Smith
Managing Editor Jeanne Eichelberger

In and Out of the Garden is published monthly by the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association. Items to be published in the newsletter must be submitted not later than the twentieth of the month prior to publication. Articles, Letters to the Editor, and inquiries about subscriptions may be addressed to the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association, c/o Sherry Smith, 225 Dalewood Drive, Lexington, Virginia 24450 or e-mail resmith575@aol.com.

Subscription rates: \$8.00 per year.

ROCKBRIDGE AREA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Drawer 897
Lexington, Virginia 24450

