

# IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

## The July 2010 Monthly Newsletter Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners' Association [www.ramga.org](http://www.ramga.org)



"What a man needs in gardening is a cast-iron back, with a hinge in it." Charles Dudley Warner, 1871



### PRESIDENTIAL THOUGHTS By Nancy Smith

Happy July! In a few days, we'll all be saying Happy 4th of July to each other. Another time for celebrating our independence is upon us. I love spending this day in Lexington. There are the festivities on the parade grounds, the children's bicycle parade in town, the hot air balloon rides and I think we have a fireworks display that could rival that of many cities twice our size.

I got to thinking what fun it would be to create some special floral displays to celebrate the day. Think about it - a burst of flowers all in hues of red, white and blue to honor the glory of the day. Picture a

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playful smattering of red, white and blue (well, purplish...I did say "hues") petunias in a straw basket or a graceful urn filled with red roses, white daisies and blue balloon flowers or a generous bunch of bee balm, Queen Ann's Lace and long stems of lavender gathered in wide grosgrain ribbon and set upon the picnic table. I could go on and on in my own imagination. But you can just step into your gardens and design the perfect bouquet for your celebration.

At RAMGA, we have something exciting to celebrate. Molly Brown, (co-inspiration and initiator, with her husband, of that garden way back in 1995), and Heather Marion made a presentation at the June Board meeting requesting that the Roots and Shoots Program be an official MG Project. As many of you know from experience throughout the years, MGs have often been a part of the Roots and Shoots Program but not always in a formal manner. Following their conversation with the Board, Molly and Heather completed the Project Application form. The Board discussed the proposal, and agreed the Roots and Shoots Program would be a valuable addition to our mission as community educators and gardening proponents. The application was given to Jon Repair for his approval and signature, which he provided within days of submission.

Molly has donated two copies of the teaching manual and one copy of the DVD, which she developed for the program at Waddell, for use by any MG who may need them. They can be found in the office.

Molly and Amy Scheuer, our VP and Project Coordinator, will work together to place people at Waddell. If you are interested,

please contact Amy at [ASCHEUER@EMBARQMAIL.COM](mailto:ASCHEUER@EMBARQMAIL.COM) or call her at (540) 464-1818.

**More news:** The Fair is coming up SOON!!! Maureen Becker would like LOTS of you to help out with the set up for the flower show on Tuesday, July 20, and for the registration on Wednesday morning, July 21. If you can help, please contact Maureen at [MBecker@wlu.edu](mailto:MBecker@wlu.edu) ASAP. She'd love to hear from you. Join in; it'll be great fun.

May I be the first to wish you Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July! Enjoy the celebration!



### **HORT SHOW ALERT!** **By Maureen Becker**

The annual Rockbridge County Fair is coming up in July and RAMGA will sponsor the very popular Horticulture Show. It is one of our fine community outreach programs and one that attracts much attention and visitation during the event. It is also lots of fun as volunteers are able to meet fellow gardeners in the area and see what botanical marvels they are growing. To make this event happen, we need a core volunteers to set up, take down and register entrants and help them identify plants on entry day. We'll need help as follows:

**Location:** Virginia Horse Center/Anderson Coliseum - Upper Mezzanine

**Tuesday, July 20** - 1:00pm - two people to help set up and drape tables

**Wednesday, July 21** - 10:00am - 12:30pm

**Entry Table** - Hand out entry tickets to exhibitors and help them fill out correctly. (2 volunteers)

**Classification** - Give assistance to exhibitors if they are unable to identify the plant material they want to enter. Whoever does this usually brings along a plant encyclopedia. (2 volunteers)

**Registration** - List exhibitor's name and address. (1 volunteer)

**Recording Table** - List each exhibitor's entry by class. (2 volunteers)

**Runners** - Check entries to be sure the entry tickets have been filled out completely, there is enough water in the display bottles, and the exhibit is sturdy and upright in the bottle. Place the exhibits in the correct location on the display tables. (2 volunteers)

**Clerks** - Place ribbons on exhibits after the judges have made their decisions. Record ribbons won next to exhibitor name on the master list. (2 volunteers from 1:00 - 3:00pm)

**Sunday, July 25** - 11:00am - Two volunteers are needed to help break down, stack tables, and cloths.

This is a relaxed several hours and a great opportunity for some of the new interns to work with some of our "old pros!" We really need your help to make this event a success. Please e-mail me at [mbecker@wlu.edu](mailto:mbecker@wlu.edu) if you'll be able to join us. Thanks so much!



## THE ELIZABETHAN GARDENS By Diana Losche



A beach vacation on the outer banks is not complete without a tour of the Elizabethan Gardens on

Roanoke Island. Every visit is special, a treat to be savored. There is always a new plant or flower to see, a different angle on a piece of sculpture seen out of the corner of your eye.

The Gardens were built in honor of the Elizabethan heritage of Roanoke Island; a memorial to Sir Walter Raleigh's legendary lost colony of 1587 where settlers lived and then vanished. The garden is built on that site.

The Garden Club of North Carolina took on the project of this garden in 1951; land was leased in 1953 a year after John Hay Whitney donated a collection of statuary and garden ornaments. The internationally acclaimed landscape firm of Innocenti & Webel designed the garden and it was opened to the public on Virginia Dare's birthday, August 18, 1960.

When we visited last April we were welcomed by a collage of flowers each in a small clear glass water-filled container set in the wall next to the front door. There were about 25 in all, flowers currently showing in the garden. The most impressive were the camellias with dazzling colors and large blooms. Azaleas and rhododendrons were just starting.

The Garden sells plants, some very unusual, that they cultivate in the greenhouse (alas, off limits to visitors!). I purchased a very cunning Rex begonia called "Chocolate crème" which one of the gardeners told me can be propagated using the veins in the leaves to create roots.

This garden is a special place you hold in your mind's eye like a precious jewel or perfect robin's egg held in the palm of your hand. Pay a visit, you'll be enchanted.



**MG COLLEGE 2010: YOU SHOUDDA  
BEEN THERE**  
By Jim Davis

I just don't know how Dave Close does it. Dave, our state MG coordinator at Virginia Tech, produces the Master Gardener College every June, not all by himself, to be sure, but his care and discretion are evident. Consider that topics must be appropriate for experienced MG's and not repetitious of previous years. At the same time, there must be a broad spectrum, including topics to lighten the curriculum, making sure we're able to have fun.

Last year, seven MGs from our unit attended, while this year only two, Barbara Thomas and me. Both of us have been before and we agree that enjoyment is enhanced by having other Rockbridge folks there. But a friend's presence doesn't prevent contact with MGs from across the state. This time I enjoyed gardening discussions as well as small talk with people from places such as Williamsburg, Disputanta and Stafford; and with old MG College friends, including the

inimitable Darryl Pierce from Surry. (Darryl was a volunteer on Dave's staff this year. In various jobs his enthusiasm was obviously genuine and gave everyone a jump start.)

The College always begins on a Wednesday with sessions on leadership, for unit officers and coordinators. Thursday is for workshops (floral arranging, garden photography); walks (insects with Eric Day, trees); and tours (Granny Janney's Hostas, private gardens, Tech's campus, the National Weather Service Center at Blacksburg). I toured Mike Goatley's turf grass research fields, where acres are planted in countless species of Bermuda grass, fescue and many other grasses. Then I witnessed farmscaping, using flowering plants to repel insects and disease. It's not just about marigolds.

The main action takes place Friday and Saturday, though two short, light sessions on Sunday are worth staying till Noon when all ends. The format for Friday and Saturday is ideal. Mornings are devoted to keynote speakers in a large amphitheater (where outdoor temperatures are not felt). These are experts, and not only well informed but also dynamic and interesting. I particularly enjoyed Jeff Gillman on myths about garden remedies. He offered solid evidence on the efficacy of, for instance, hydrogels (water-retaining polymers), deer repellants, gravel for good drainage and beer for slugs (works fine, if the trap is properly set). There was a long line waiting to buy his books throughout the break period.

Afternoons, there's a menu of subjects discussed in small sessions (in cool classrooms). I attended those on pruning fruit trees and brambles, new reduced-risk

insecticides, drainage in the landscape and the history of American landscape design. While questions at the morning sessions are encouraged, small groups in the afternoons allow more of them and often discussions between instructor and class. Nights offer a silent auction of great gardening stuff and a wine and dessert reception.

There are other reasons for attending MG College. Not least is the experience of Virginia Tech, its research facilities, its sprawling, handsome campus, its enormous dining hall where every imaginable cuisine is available. This is a major university, the likes of which many of us have never seen. Most important, however, the whole MG College experience imbues one with the sense that Master Gardening matters, that we have meaning. At the opening session we were welcomed and overwhelmed with thanks by the director of VCE and his boss, the dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. They cited statistics (such as the 5,000 MGs in the state) to prove our worth. This spirit was prevalent over the days. Actually, though, one had only to think about the energy and time that went into an event held just for us. It's enough to make us get down on our knees.



### SAVE THE DATE

On Saturday, October 16, 2010, our unit will sponsor a VMGA Education Seminar at Natural Bridge. The subject, so very appropriate for us here, is successful school gardens and teaching outdoors. This event is one of several held every year by our state-

level organization to provide opportunities for continuing education. Get in touch with Barbara Thomas for further information or if you want to help out. No doubt she'll need volunteers.



<u>July</u>	<b>CALENDAR</b>
7	<b>Hardscape Construction*</b>
7,10, 14	<b>Daylilies: The Perfect Perennial*</b>
10	<b>Natural History of Trees*</b>
10	<b>15<sup>th</sup> Annual Friendly Garden Tour*</b>
10	<b>Night Garden*</b>
13	<b>Plantsmen's Tour of Taiwan's Treasures*</b>
13	<b>RAMGA Board Meeting - 2PM</b>
14	<b>Beneficial Garden Insects*</b>
21	<b>Worms, the Ultimate Disposal*</b>
24	<b>Herbaceous Plant Propagation*</b>
28	<b>Herbs and Edible Flowers*</b>
28	<b>Save the Shenandoah: Make a Rain Garden</b>
<b>* See Educational Events Calendar in this issue</b>	



## Calendar of Educational Events - July 2010

Date	Event/Credits	Content	Location/Contact
<b>July 7</b> 12:00-1:00pm Cost: Free	<b>Hardscape Construction</b>  Credits: 1 hr	Horticulturist - Paul Chumbley	Peggy L. Hahn Garden Pavilion, V. Tech <a href="http://hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html">hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html</a>
<b>July 7, 10, 14</b> 1:30-2:30pm Cost: Free	<b>Daylilies: The Perfect Perennial</b>  Credits: 1 hr	Learn why the daylily is described as the perfect perennial and what other perennials work well with it.	Viette's Nursery Fishersville, VA <a href="http://www.inthegardenradio.com">www.inthegardenradio.com</a>
<b>July 10</b> 9:30 - 11:30am Cost: \$10 Reservations req.	<b>Natural History of Trees</b>  Credits: 2 hrs	Learn to identify approx 50 species of trees and understand their ornamental, cultural and historical character.	Monticello <a href="http://www.monticello.org">www.monticello.org</a>
<b>July 10</b> 9:30 -11:00am Cost: \$12 NBG members, \$18	<b>Night Garden</b>  Credits: 1.5 hr	Melissa Butler, curator of Herbaceous Plants talks about aromatic night blooming plants	Norfolk Botanical Garden <a href="http://norfolkbotanicalgarden.org">norfolkbotanicalgarden.org</a>
<b>July 10</b> Cost: Advance Tickets \$12 \$15	<b>15<sup>th</sup> Annual Friendly Garden Tour Sponsored by the Montgomery County Friends of the Library</b>  Credits: Contact Liz	You will visit 6 gardens in the Blacksburg area and 2 gardens in the Radford area.	SEND A CHECK PAYABLE TO: FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY, WITH A SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED BUSINESS SIZE ENVELOPE TO FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY, P.O. BOX 261, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA 24068, BEFORE JULY 5, 2010.
<b>July 13</b> 9:00-10:30am Cost: Free	<b>Plantsmen's Tour of Taiwan's Treasures</b>  Credits: 1.5 hrs	Mark Weathington looks at garden plants in Taiwan and some treasures we grow here.	JC Raulston Arboretum NC State, Raleigh, NC 919/513-7005 <a href="http://www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum/calendar/calendar.php">www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum/calendar/calendar.php</a>
<b>July 14</b> 12:00pm  Cost: Free	<b>Beneficial Garden Insects</b>  Credits: 1 hr	Learn about the good insects you <i>haven't</i> heard about: Pirate Bugs, Aphidius, etc.	Jan Sievers Mahon Edith J. Carrier Arboretum JMU, Harrisonburg <a href="http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/events.shtml">www.jmu.edu/arboretum/events.shtml</a>

<b>July 21</b> 6:00-8:00pm  Register necessary Cost: \$60 \$50 members	<b>Worms, the Ultimate          Disposal</b>  Credit: 2 hrs	Henrico Va Coop. Ext. agent, Karen Carter, explains how worm bins work. Go home with a completed bin with worms and a manual to start your own composting operation!	Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden <a href="http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=491">www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=491</a>
<b>July 24</b> 9:30-11:30a.m Cost: \$10 Reservations req.	<b>Herbaceous Plant          Propagation</b>  Credits: 2 hrs	Learn principles of seed sowing: timing, stratification and soil mediums. Review fundamentals of asexual propagation.	Monticello, Tufton Farm <a href="http://www.monticello.org">www.monticello.org</a>
<b>July 28</b> 1:00-2:30pm Cost: \$8 FOOSA members, \$10	<b>Herbs &amp; Edible Flowers</b>  Credits: 1.5 hrs	Billie Clifton tells how herbs add to our gardens, landscapes and dinners. Learn to grow and use herbs. Space limited register.	Blandy Experimental Farm 540-837-1758 or email <a href="mailto:fosaevents@virginia.edu">fosaevents@virginia.edu</a>
<b>July 28</b> 12:00pm Cost: Free	<b>Save the Shenandoah:          Make a Rain Garden</b> Credits: 1 hr	Lee Norford, Lowes, tells how to create a rain garden.	Edith J. Carrier Arboretum <a href="http://www.jmu.edu/arboretum/events.shtml">www.jmu.edu/arboretum/events.shtml</a>
On-line courses available for credit	<b>Department of Plant          Pathology, Ohio State          University</b>	Various online courses available	<a href="http://plantpath.osu.edu/extension/outreach/online/index_html">http://plantpath.osu.edu/extension/outreach/online/index_html</a>
Credit *** Contact Liz Gordon for credit questions: <a href="mailto:saddleup4travel@comcast.net">saddleup4travel@comcast.net</a> , 464-4901			

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**IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN**

Editor-in-Chief Sherry Smith  
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*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](mailto:resmith575@aol.com).

The newsletter may also be viewed at [www.ramga.org](http://www.ramga.org)

Subscription rates: \$10.00 per year.

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