

IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

June 2010 Monthly Newsletter
Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners' Association
www.ramga.org



"I garden, therefore I am." Anonymous

PRESIDENTIAL THOUGHTS By Nancy Smith

Is it just I, or do the plants seem more vibrant and the blossoms more brilliant to you too than in past years? The size and fullness just seem to be and the colors more intense than I can ever remember. Certainly this season's gardens are amazing sights to behold. Perhaps such beauty is a gift of the record-breaking snow we had this winter. Hmmm. Trying to make up for some of the damage it did along the way. Well, for whatever reason I am grateful.

So the Master Gardener Plant sale was a great success. In spite of the winds, the always-intrepid MGs sold more plants than ever, and made a profit of over \$3800. We have all the dig-and-dividers and plant sitters to thank for the multitude of garden goodies that will now grace the yards of the

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Presidential Thoughts.....	1
No Bail Out Needed Thank You - Plant Sale and Clinic 2010 .	2
Calendar	4
Did You Know.....	4
Educational Calendar	5

entire Rockbridge County community. What a great job Ted Jenks and his team did in organizing the event, before, during and after the sale! Thanks to all for your efforts.

The 23rd Annual Master Gardener College is being held June 22-27 at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. As in years past, this conference promises to be chock-full of valuable information and useful tips, enlightening tours and insightful discussions for all the participants. This year's special emphasis is the Water Stewart Training course. Registration for the full conference is \$150.00. For more information and a description of all the workshop and activity offerings, log onto: <http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener> and then click on the "MG College" in the top banner.

The registration information is online so be sure to look over all the college offerings and sign up for the whole conference or for the days that interest you most. Not only will your knowledge and expertise be enhanced, you will also be fulfilling a boatload of educational credit hours.

Speaking of hours, Kip Brooks has served as the *Volunteer Coordinator for Continuing Education* for several years now. The task of that position consists of gathering information on credit-worthy workshops, seminars and other educational events for each month, inserting them into the existing calendar format and submitting them to Sherry Smith for the Newsletter.

Kip has enjoyed her tenure, but has to admit her work and other commitments seem to be

taking up an inordinate amount of time these days. So I am happy to announce that Liz Gordon, newly minted intern of the 2010 MG class, has agreed to taking over the position.

We welcome Liz and know she will do a great job for us all.

Happy Gardening!



**NO BAILOUT NEEDED, THANK YOU:
PLANT SALE AND CLINIC 2010
By Jim Davis**

Maybe gardening is even more important than we thought. In the midst of recession, anyway, we witness substantial spending on plants when elsewhere other commodities aren't moving off the shelf. Yes, another successful plant sale by the Master Gardeners. Notice the change of name, however: *Master Gardener Plant Sale and Clinic*. In keeping with our mandate to teach, we provide help to the gardener along with new plants for the garden. The clinic enjoyed a busy morning, I'm glad to say, thanks to Karen Orrison, assisted by two regular team members and two of our interns.

But as we all know, the real if unstated purpose of the entire sale, is to promote and sell compost. Folks thronged to the compost truck also.



If you ask Ted Jenks, though, as team leader for the sale he'll tell you that true credit for success goes to our entire membership. He has repeatedly commented on their high level of support and enthusiastic participation. It was, indeed, rather inspiring to see MGs and interns running about, clearly eager to get the job done well and expeditiously, from an early morning start til way after time they'd rather be sitting down to lunch. We tout the event partly as social, and somehow it is. However, you won't see folks standing around chatting when there's work to be done.

Our usual allied features, such as native plants, orchids and orphan pets, were present and popular. There were new things, too, all sound contributions. Foremost was the quality of plants. Ted emphasizes that to keep our good reputation we must improve every year. Accordingly, Mary Adkins and Tracey Smith-Oliver, dig and divide leaders, this time potted plants in the fall, so that customers would be greeted with fresh spring sprouts when they shopped in May. Well over half the inventory was in that category. Meanwhile, they continue to experiment to see which plants are best dug in the fall and which can wait till spring.

In addition, a greater number of species and colors were evident, with thirty or forty new plants this year. Next, we can surely brag that Master Gardeners took over the tool-sharpening demonstration and service. KB was unable to attend, but she tutored Greg Lemmer and Linda Davis and lent them the necessary apparatus. Greg and Linda studied and practiced and were, well, sharp. Finally, Sondra Bateman from the county's recycling office was on hand to answer questions. She displayed state-of-the-art rain barrels, for sale at cost, around \$60.00 (a very good price).

I've been unable to mention so many names of folks who worked so hard. But members of Ted's standing team worked hard and also long, and must be listed. In many meetings they offered advice and helped plan—and more. They are Mary Adkins, Tamara Cummins, Heather Marion, Tracey Smith-Oliver and Penny Wilson.

How about the money? At \$5,600, it was a better gross than last year. Owing to the one-time expense of classy new identifying signs, though, the net was a bit lower. Never mind. Travel to the Extension Office and look at the financial statement posted there monthly. You'll see that we've not only supported our projects but have, moreover, set aside a nice reserve fund. Suppose the plant sale (and clinic) should be rained out one year? How would we fund our projects without a reserve? Our continued success assures their future. Congratulations go to all of us.



<i>June</i>	<i>CALENDAR</i>
4,5,6	Coalfields Folk life Festival*
5	Taking a Successful Plant Cutting*
5	Pruning Practices for Woody Ornamentals*
8	RAMGA Board Meeting - 2pm
19	Daylily Day Trip*
22-27	Master Gardener College*
24	Cabinet Cures and the Garden Gurus Who Come Up With Them*
26	Ancient Herbs*
<i>July</i>	<i>CALENDAR</i>
10	Natural History of Trees*
13	RAMGA Board Meeting - 2pm
24	Herbaceous Plant Propagation*
* See Educational Events Calendar in this issue	



DID YOU KNOW.....?

PEE BALE

Male gardeners at Wimpole Hall in Royston, Cambridgeshire, in England, are being encouraged to urinate on a bale of hay instead of using the loo, according to a report from BBC News. The urine in the so called "pee bale" naturally activates the composting process, says Phillip Whaites, head gardener at Wimpole Hall. "It's totally safe and a bit of fun, too," he adds. Why only male gardeners? The less obvious reason is that, according to Phillip, "the male stuff is apparently less acidic." Another benefit of the pee bale is that Wimpole Hall expects to reduce its daily water use by up to 30%.

INVASIVE ALERT

Fine Gardening has these plants listed on their website for invasive plants at www.invasive.org/weedus/index.html for Virginia - who knew? I have most of these plants in my garden!

Crape Myrtle, Giant Reed, Japanese barberry, Miscanthus, Perilla, and Spirea.





Calendar of Educational Events ~ June 2010

Date	Event/Credits	Content	Location/Contact
June 4, 5, 6 Cost: Free	Coalfields Folklife Festival <i>Credits: ***</i>	This festival is a celebration of life in the regions of Southwest Virginia, Eastern Kentucky and Southern West Virginia.	Buchanan County http://www.bcbirdclub.org/folklifefestival/Index.htm
June 5 9:00–11:00 am Cost: \$30	Taking a Successful Plant Cutting <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i>	Garden Horticulturist Laura Sullivan discusses how to take cuttings, how to handle them to ensure rooting, and which plants are best for this technique.	Richmond, VA Lewis Ginter http://www.lewisginter.org/events/event_detail.php?event_id=486
June 5 9:30 – 11:30 Cost: \$10 Reservations required	Pruning Practices for Woody Ornamentals <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i>	Few horticultural practices are as misunderstood as pruning, particularly for shrubs. Learn how to make a proper pruning cut and enhance the natural growth habit.	Monticello http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays .
June 19 9:00am–2:00pm Cost: \$65	Daylily Day Trip <i>Credits: 5 hrs</i>	Join this rare opportunity to visit two fabulous gardens that boast vast collections of rare and unusual plants at the Norfolk Botanical Garden.	Norfolk, VA http://www.norfolkbotanicgarden.org/programseven/calendar/events/353
June 22 – 27	Master Gardener College	Visit the site to see the offerings! http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener/newsletter/InSeason_Spring2010.pdf	Blacksburg VA
June 24 6:00–7:30pm Cost: \$20	Cabinet Cures And The Garden Gurus Who Come Up With Them	Take a look at some popular garden remedies from the cabinet: Does it work? Why?	Blacksburg, VA http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html
June 26 9:30–11:30am Cost: \$10 Reservations required	Ancient Herbs <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i>	Study first-hand the many culinary, medicinal, and fragrant herbs used in American kitchen and dooryard gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries.	Monticello http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays.html

LOOKING AHEAD

July 10 9:30 – 11:30 Cost: \$10 Reservations req.	Natural History of Trees <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i>	Learn to identify about fifty species of trees through an understanding of their ornamental, cultural, and historical character.	Monticello http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays .
July 24 9:30 – 11:30 Cost: \$10 Reservations required	Herbaceous Plant Propagation <i>Credits: 2 hrs</i>	Learn the principles of seed sowing—timing, stratification, and soil mediums—and review the fundamentals of asexual propagation.	Monticello http://www.monticello.org/calendar/saturdays .
On-line courses available for credit	Department of Plant Pathology, Ohio State University	Various on-line courses available.	http://plantpath.osu.edu/extension/outreach/online/index.html
Credits *** Contact Kip Brooks for credit questions: kipb@rockbridge.net or 462-6160			

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IN AND OUT OF THE GARDEN

Editor-in-Chief Sherry Smith
 Managing Editor Jeanne Eichelberger

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The newsletter may also be viewed at www.ramga.org

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