

THE GARDEN GATE

A Community Newsletter by the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners

OCTOBER 2022



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Welcome, everyone, to the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners' community newsletter. Each month we will be bringing you relevant seasonal horticultural information for Rockbridge County. If you enjoy this newsletter, please pass it on. Subscription information is on the last page of this newsletter.

In-Person RAMGA Programs Start up Again...

Join us Saturday, October 22nd at 10:30am in the Piovano Room, Rockbridge Regional Library in Lexington for a free presentation about Mushrooms. The presenters, Vicky and Chris Vacher, are two of the 12 people approved to certify and sell wild mushrooms in the state of Virginia. Join these two experts to learn about the basics of the kingdom of fungi while also learning how to identify wild edible and poisonous mushrooms common to our region

GARDENING EVENTS

Thursday, October 6, 7:00pm – 8:00pm. Free webinar: “The Right Tree for the Right Place: Selecting Ecologically Valuable Native Trees” with Matt Bright, Conservation Manager of Earth Sangha, hosted by the Loudoun County Master Gardeners.

www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org

Saturday, October 15, 9:00am – 2:00pm. 2022 Fall Plant Sale at the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, 1354 Tufton Farm, Charlottesville. Credit card only. All plants will be 20% off.

Saturday, October 15, 2:00am – 4:00am. Garden Basics: Love Food, Hate Waste” sponsored by the Piedmont Master Gardeners. Trinity Episcopal Church, 1118 Preston Ave., Charlottesville. RSVP here:

<https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/garden-basics-love-food-hate-waste/#rsvp-now> .

Tuesday, October 18, 11:30am – 1:00pm. Blue Ridge Prism presents webinar “Homegrown National Park” with Doug Tallamy. www.blueridgeprism.org Register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/blue-ridge-prism-presents-doug-tallamy-zoom-registration-399576472987>

Wednesday, October 19, 7:00pm. Zoom presentation: “Alternatives to Mowed Grass Lawns” with Wren Fure of the Valley Conservation Council. Sponsored by the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council. Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/ztLqd-ihqz4rH922kiRUI3Vvv-LVUjw2L4_6

Saturday, October 22, 10:00am – Noon. Fall Woods Walk with the Virginia Master Naturalists at Montpelier, 11350 Constitution Highway, Montpelier Station. Register here:

<https://18927altru.blackbaudhosting.com/18927altru/tickets?tab=2&txobjid=722a053f-b5d6-435b-ad1c-50e4fd613d86>

****Saturday, October 22, 10:30am, Piovano Room, Rockbridge Regional Library. Mushroom program including basics of the kingdom fungi and the identification of wild edible and poisonous mushrooms in our area by Chris and Victoria Vacher of Enchanted Nature Tours. Sponsored by RAMGA.**

Thursday, October 27, Noon – 1:00pm. Zoom Presentation: “Native Alternatives to Replace Invasives in Your Garden”. Smithsonian “Let’s Talk Gardens” series. Free. Register here:

https://smithsonian.zoom.us/webinar/register/5416624900851/WN_lk3VyFtiRCesWShyeCldOQ

Want to Be a Master Gardener?

Each year, Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners recruit and train a new group of Master Gardener Volunteers. The course work includes online modules in key areas of gardening ranging from soil nutrition to landscape design. Central to the instruction is the importance of native plants and pollinators. Part of the training involves hands-on labs where a trainee has the opportunity to work in a problem-solving team atmosphere. This prepares the trainee for volunteering to educate the community in all-things horticultural. RAMGA maintains multiple demonstration gardens and sponsors several school teaching gardens throughout the area. The next training class will run from January through June of 2023.

TO LEARN MORE Go to www.ramga.org . Click on the JOIN US tab. Under the registration tab, complete the “class information request” form.



FALL GARDEN TASKS

- Plant your garlic bulbs. Don't use grocery store garlic bulbs as they have often been treated with preservatives.
- Plant cover crops on the bare soil in your vegetable garden.
- If not planting a cover crop, mulch beds so no bare soil is exposed.
- Remove spent annuals and compost them.
- Save seeds from desirable plants. Remember, if the plant is a hybrid, it may not come true.

- Stake mums if needed and continue to water and fertilize
- Lift tender bulbs such as cannas or dahlias after the first frost.
- Finish your planting before the first frost, usually around October 15 in Rockbridge County.
- Divide daylilies, peonies, and iris.
- Fall is usually a good time to plant trees and shrubs.
- Reseed lawn.
- Compost your dead leaves instead of bagging them. Run over them first with your lawn mower so when added to your compost pile, they will break down faster.
- Plant cool weather vegetables such as greens for a late fall, early winter harvest.
- Prune late summer and fall flowering shrubs after they go dormant or in the spring.
- Watch for plant sales. Nurseries usually want to sell down their inventory before winter.
- Male deer scrape their horns in the fall along the bark of young trees to rub the summer velvet off their horns and to mark their territory. Wrap the trunks with plastic tree guards, chicken wire or plastic mesh to prevent deer damage and remove in the spring.
- Check trees and shrubs for bagworms.
- Don't be alarmed if some evergreens begin to shed their yellowing interior needles. This is natural this time of the year.
- Make sure you thoroughly clean under roses and discard the debris. This will help prevent black leaf spot in the coming year.

SPOTTED LANTERNFLY PREDATORS

The Spotted Lanternfly does have plenty of natural predators, but not enough for dependable control.

There are a number of predaceous insects that will feed on the pest, including praying mantis, spiders and assassin bugs. Chickens also have a special fondness for the bug.

The spongy moth parasitoid, *Ooencyrtus kuvanae*, a species of chalcid wasp, introduced to the United States in 1908 to control spongy moth has also been found to parasitize the egg masses of spotted lanternfly. However, the parasitism of the egg masses is fairly low at about 7%



Ooencyrtu kuvanae on a spotted lantern fly in anticipation of a meal of eggs

Work is being done at Cornell University on a fungal pathogen related to the one which helped control spongy moth. This has been somewhat successful in China.

And, of course, we can do our part in the destruction of these voracious pests. This winter keep

your eyes out for spotted lantern fly egg masses, especially on ailanthus trees (tree of heaven). From afar the masses look like a smear of mud, but up close you'll see a tiny arrangement of vertical rows of what looked like caraway seeds. Scrape the eggs off and crush them. And feel good about it.

Source: <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/spotted-lanternfly-ipm/management-predators-and-parasitoids/>

The Fun of Fungi

By Karen Carlton

Have you ever wondered, when looking at a mushroom, whether on a wooded trail or even in your own yard, what are they good for and why are they here? Well, it turns out they're very healthy and good for you and the planet. The more I found out about the lowly mushroom, the more amazing this lowly fungus is and how it helps us and Earth.

There is an excellent TED talk about mushrooms by Paul Stamets that he gave in February 2008. He talked about how the mushroom forms a network that “communicates” with the surrounding plants giving them beneficial nutrients. It also breaks down rocks and organic matter that turns it into soil. The mushroom contributes to the perfect recycling system. The talk is very interesting and not very long.



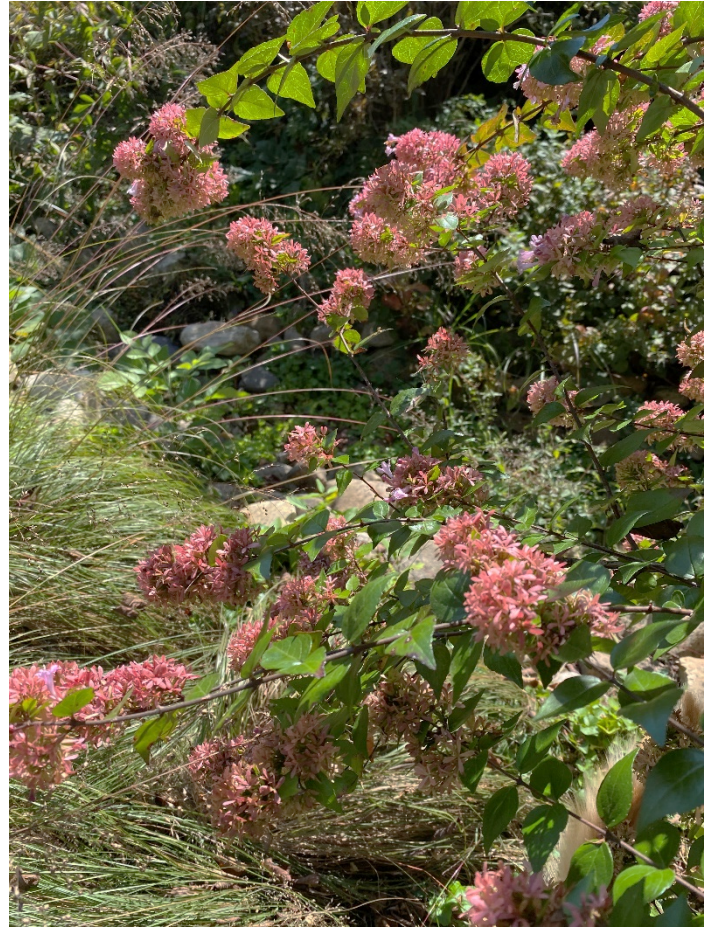
Mushrooms also have health benefits for us. They are good for gut health. They are good for blood pressure because they are rich in soluble fiber and contain beta-glucan. Mushrooms are heart friendly. There is selenium which benefits the brain and your thyroid. The amazing thing about mushrooms is that they can help your immune system. Mushrooms contain many vitamins that we need: B vitamins, Zinc, Selenium, Potassium, Copper and when exposed to sunlight Vitamin D.

Now there is a program on October 22, 2022, at 10:30 A.M. The Rockbridge Master Gardeners are sponsoring for the public this program at Rockbridge County Library. The presenters are Vicky and Chris Vacher, who are two of twelve people approved to certify and sell wild mushrooms in the state of Virginia. The talk is titled: “Presentation with Enchanted Nature Tours”.

So, if you are even curious, as I am, come to the program on October 22nd and find out what kind of mushrooms grow in our region and maybe even find out how someone forages for mushrooms. You might even find a new hobby.

THE ORNAMENTAL GARDEN

This photo is a picture of my favorite Abelia, 'Canyon Creek' (*Abelia x grandiflora*). It was discovered as an open-pollinated seedling of *Abelia chinense* selected through the renowned Michael Dirr's breeding program at the University of Georgia and is a plant that looks good in all seasons. It is semi-evergreen for us if the winter is mild; pink and white flowers all season long that seem to burst into even larger clusters in the fall (those flowers pictured are about 3-4" long) and beautiful coppery pink foliage when the leaves emerge in the spring and again as the foliage changes in the fall. The blossoms are great for cutting and have a subtle sweet smell. The shrub gets to be about 4' tall and as wide but can be pruned easily. As with many abelias, it tends to shoot up a tall branch or two like a stray hair, but those branches can be easily trimmed.



These are many different abelias nowadays. The old standby is 'Rose Creek', the shrubs in front of the Lexington Post Office. I also have 'Kaleidoscope', noted for its bright orange/red foliage and 'Confetti' whose leaves are outlined in white. But 'Canyon Creek' remains my favorite.

For more information on abelias, the Piedmont Master Gardeners have an excellent article on their website, "Abelia – Tough but Beautiful", <https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/article/abelia-tough-but-beautiful/>

To subscribe to this newsletter, click
<https://www.ramga.org/what-s-happening>

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