

THE GARDEN GATE

A Community Newsletter by the Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners

June 2024



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Area Happenings, p. 2
- June Garden Chores, p. 2 - 3
- Planting Raspberries, p. 4
- Volunteering & Aging Gracefully while gardening, p. 5
- Chelsea Chop: Perennial Pruning, p. 6

RAMGA Plant Sale at the Sam Houston Ruritan 2024 Barn

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.

AREA FARMERS' MARKETS

Wednesdays, Lexington Farmers Market. 8:00am – 12:30pm. MCrum's Parking Lot, S. Jefferson St.

Thursdays, Buena Vista Farmers Market. 3:00pm – 6:00pm. Camden Field, corner of 10th and Magnolia Ave.

Saturdays, Glasgow Farmers Market. 9:00am – 1:00pm. Corner of 10th St. and Kanawha St.

Saturdays, Kerrs Creek Farmers Market. 9:00am – noon. 2766 W. Midland Trail

Saturdays, Rockbridge Baths Farmers Market. 9:00am – 11:00am, Rockbridge Baths Volunteer Fire House pavilion.

AREA HAPPENINGS...

This week is National Pollinator Week (June 17-23). Check out this article from the Virginia Tech News: <https://news.vt.edu/articles/2024/06/ext-virginia-pollinator-week.html>

JUNE GARDEN CHORES

General

- Continually pull weeds from beds
- Work organic material such as chopped leaves or compost into garden beds
- Continue to mulch garden beds 2 to 3 inches deep with an organic material. This will keep moisture in the soil and will also help keep the weeds down
- Newly planted perennials, trees and shrubs will generally need 1 inch of water each week – either from rain or irrigation
- Don't bag your grass cuttings. Instead let them fall back onto the lawn where they will add organic matter and nitrogen to the soil

Insects:

- Keep an eye out for Japanese Beetles. We usually see them the end of June here in Rockbridge County. If you are going to use traps, be sure and place them far away from the plants you want to protect
- Watch for squash bugs on your squash. Monitor for eggs on the undersides of leaves and scrape them off

Fruits and Vegetables:

An excellent and useful VCE publication organized by climate zone (Rockbridge, for the most part is zone 6B heading towards 7) is "Virginia's Home Garden Vegetable Planting Guide: Recommended Planting Dates and Amounts to Plant", <https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-331/426-331.html>

The Piedmont Master Gardeners have a very good, very thorough guide to tomato diseases with lots of photos: <https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/article/tomato-diseases/>

Stop cutting asparagus by mid to late June. Don't cut the foliage until the fall as the fronds feed the asparagus roots during the summer.

The following vegetables can still be planted as a first crop or a second crop until the following dates. I'll include the dates for planting fall crops in the July/August newsletter.

- pole beans until June 20
- lima beans until July 15.
- cucumbers until June 20
- eggplant until July 10
- peppers until July 1
- pumpkins until July 1
- winter squash until July 1
- summer squash until June 20 (a second crop of summer squash often evades squash bugs)
- sweet corn until July 1
- sweet potatoes until July 1
- watermelon until July 1



Don't pull your fall-planted garlic yet. In Rockbridge, it is usually ready to be pulled in the first week of July. But do cut the scapes and use/saute them as you would use a spicy scallion.

Flowers:

- Deadhead perennials and annuals to keep them blooming.
- Consider cutting back your fall perennials by about a third to keep them from having unsightly dead foliage at the bottom of the plant in fall.
- Don't remove spent daffodil foliage until it is completely withered. That foliage is feeding the bulbs. Remove it too soon and you may not get any flowers next year.
- Do succession plantings of zinnias or other annuals quick to germinate so you will have some extended blooms in the fall.

Trees and Shrubs:

If you are planting new trees and shrubs, remember to consider hardiness, light requirements, soil drainage, wind tolerance, mature size, insect or disease problems, maintenance levels, etc. when choosing your plant. Remember the "right plant, right place" rule. Here is another good Tech publication, "How to Plant a Tree", <https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/SPES/SPES-226/SPES-226.html>

- Prune roses to an outward facing bud

Pruning:

- Prune spring flowering shrubs after flowering is completed.

FRUIT OF THE MONTH – RASPBERRIES

RASPBERRIES

Not much tastes better than homegrown raspberries, especially compared with the expensive mushy one you can get at the grocery store. Raspberries don't have that inner core that holds a blackberry together, so they are very fragile. Raspberry plants have perennial roots and crowns, but the canes only live for 2 years so they are biennial.

There are two types of raspberries. In the first year, on **summer fruiting types (floricane)**, the canes only produce leaves and then go dormant. Fruit will be produced in June and July. Fruit only appears in the second year on these canes. **Everbearing** raspberries (**primocane**) will produce fruit on the tips of first year canes and can produce fruit from July until October. They can also produce a second crop on the second-year canes if they are cut just below the area where they stopped fruiting in the fall.



Regular garden soil will work for raspberries, especially if compost is added. Raised beds are preferred because raspberries don't like wet, soggy, soil, but a corner of your vegetable garden should do. Raspberries should be planted 3' apart.

Virginia Tech advised the following varieties: 'Caroline' (P), 'Heritage' (P)', 'Himbo Top' (P), 'Joan J' (P), 'Josephine' (P), 'Killarney' (F) and 'Nova'(F). P and F designate **P**rimocane or **F**loricane.

Raspberries will definitely sucker. In late winter or early spring, thin the summer fruiting canes before they start to grow. Keep the strong canes so they are 4-6" apart. Remove the spent canes at the end of the harvest, but keep the new shoots, leaving 3 or 4 of the new canes per ft. of row. Trellising is recommended. Here is an excellent guide: <https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-news/planting-and-trellising-raspberries> . If your berries are trellised, head the canes to 5'. If not, 3'. Lateral branches should be cut to about 10" in length.

For the everbearing raspberries, prune the canes after harvest to the point below where they produced fruit that first year. The lower part of the cane will produce another crop the next summer after winter chilling. In late winter, select and tie three to four new canes to the trellis and prune the rest of the canes to soil level. This lets the new canes grow for the first year's harvest while last year's canes produce the second later harvest. Prune and remove the canes after the second harvest to let new canes grow.

And enjoy your harvest!

Resources: *Fernandez, Gina. "Raspberries in the home garden". NC State Extension Publications, 1996.*

Samtani, Jayesh; Reza Rafie; Tony Wolf; Alison H. Smith. "Small Fruit in the Home Garden". Virginia Cooperative Extension Publications and Educational Resources, 2022.

<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-840/426-840.html>

Volunteering and Aging Gracefully While Gardening

By Karen Carlton

I recently attended the annual Virginia Master Gardener College at Virginia Technical University. I have loved going to Master Gardener College since I first became a Master Gardener in 2010.

There were two separate sessions I attended that informed me how volunteering and gardening can help one age gracefully. The information I gathered lead me to look at how volunteering as a Master Gardener in my sunset years may be the ticket to enjoying life as I grow older.

When I was young and had other interests, gardening was not on my top list of fun things to do. It was when I was newly divorced from my 10-year marriage that I found I needed to do something productive, and to see the results of my efforts to produce something beautiful: a garden with healthy plants. I found that I wanted to know more about gardening; I wanted to know why a plant failed when I planted it in my garden.

I then moved to Virginia and was fortunate to be able to join the Rockbridge Area Master Gardener Association. It was just what I was looking for and I am continuing to learn about how to grow plants in Rockbridge County.

Now, you may be wondering why I went to the trouble of writing about my journey to become a Master Gardener and how it relates to gardening gracefully as we age. I promise the two points of information, volunteering and gardening to help age gracefully will come together.

First, volunteering is a wonderful way to connect with others and it brings a sense of purpose to one's life. It provides a need for yourself, for others and for the community in which you live. I learned in the volunteering talk that Laurie Fox gave at the most recent VMGA college was that the University of Maryland has a Do-Good Institute. The research they did found that if you put a monetary value on how much a volunteer would earn by volunteering it would be \$31.80/hr. The information blew my mind. The work one does in volunteering their time, sweat and even their own money is a huge savings to their communities. So, as we age and volunteer,

we really are gold in our golden years.

Now, as we age our bodies are not as young and supple as they once were, and we need to adjust to our volunteering gardening. One needs to garden differently to accommodate the aging body. This could be with the tools designed for those with arthritic wrists, or learning how to get up and down to weed the garden beds or maybe building your garden beds up so you don't have to bend down. The information that other older gardeners can give to one another in terms of what works for them is invaluable.

Garden with ageless enthusiasm and bring the golden years the joy it deserves!

Resources: Talk at the 2024 VMGA by Laurie Fox, Virginia Tech Hampton Roads AREC

Books

Eddison, Sidney. *Gardening for a Lifetime*

Cassidy, Patty. *Illustrated Practical Guide to Gardening for Seniors; The Age Proof Garden: 101 Practical Ideas and Projects for Stress-free, Low Maintenance Senior Gardening*

Gattone, Toni. *The Lifelong Gardener*

Bills, Jan Copola. *Late Bloomer*

Companies with adaptive tools for senior gardeners

Greenworks

Senior Select-tools

Gardener's supply

Radius Garden

Corona Tools

I originally included this in last year's June newsletter, but with so many more subscribers this year, I feel it is worth a second printing.

The Chelsea Chop – Perennial Pruning

By Faith Vosburgh

Do your asters and goldenrod bloom in the fall with an unsightly leggy stretch of dead leaves at the bottom 6-8" of the stem? The chop is a way to prevent that from happening. Or you can cut them back in uneven chops if you want a staggered season of bloom. Pinching chrysanthemums throughout the summer is another form of the chop. The chop makes the plants bushier with more flowers.

So why 'Chelsea'? Chelsea refers to a famous garden show in England in late May which corresponds to when plants should be pruned in England. Late May or early June is best for the chop here in Rockbridge County. I will be pruning my plants a bit later this year because our crazy up and down spring temperatures have delayed the growth on many of my fall bloomers. The deer and the rabbits

have already pruned many of them. I'll cut the goldenrod and asters back by about a third. My summer blooming balloon flowers tend to flop, so I'll cut them back by about a third, too. Depending on how tall my Maximillian sunflowers are – and they look quite tall right now – I'll cut them in half. The 'Gateway' Joe Pye weed will get a third lopped off. Phlox, Beebalm, Yarrow, Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan's, Sneezeweed, Catmint and Shasta Daisies are other perennials that can benefit from a chop. There really is not that much of a delay in flowering if one cuts back now. The plants recover quickly. To extend the season of bloom rather than delay it, another option is cutting only half the stems back.

Your garden will look neater later in the season and your compost bin will benefit from all the fresh cuttings, so chop away.

Note: This year (2024) is not all that different from last year in my garden – except maybe the animal damage has been worse. We have two does that are dumping their fauns in my garden beds continually. You'll probably see an article in the future about the new improved fencing my husband is installing as I write this addendum!



Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.

The Garden Gate, a monthly newsletter by the
Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners, www.ramga.org

Editor: Faith Vosburgh, fvosburgh@gmail.com

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