



Over The Fence ... and Crossing County Lines

West Virginia Master Gardener Newsletter
Issue 2, May 2003

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BOARD NEWS: The West Virginia Master Gardener Association Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting on April 5, 2003 at the Oak Hill Holiday Inn during the Annual Spring Conference. Some highlights were:

- The application for nonprofit status for the West Virginia Master Gardener Association is 90% complete. President Delores Barber asked that all Counties report back to her as soon as possible if they desire to come under West Virginia University's umbrella policy.
- The 2004 Annual Spring Conference will be May 14 - 16 in Parkersburg, hosted by Wood County
- An ad hoc Education Committee has been formed and is still in need of members.
- John Jett reported that Kanawha, Mercer, Mineral and Upshur Counties are without Ag agents. Morgan is without an Economic Development agent and Lewis, Marion, Randolph and Logan are without 4-H agents.
- Leanne Moorman reported on surveys being prepared by WVU to be sent to members at random. If you get one, please fill it out and send it back in.
- Greenbrier County agreed to coordinate a Master Gardener Exhibit August 8-16 at the State Fair, and needs volunteers from other counties.

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- New officers for the 2003-2005 term were elected and are as follows: Delores Barber-President; Jane Lunblad-Vice President; Lee Reger-Treasurer; and Polly Reynolds-Secretary.
- Our sincere appreciation to Mary McCormick, who served as Vice President, and Eileen Snyder, who served as Treasurer, for their dedication and many hours served in their respective offices. THANKS!

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY WEST VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENERS! OUR PROGRAM
IS NOW 10 YEARS OLD!**

OUTSTANDING MASTER GARDENERS - 2003

Berkeley - Judi Collison	Morgan - Pat Hickok
Hancock/Brooke - Ilene Davis	New River-Fayette-Rick Rutledge
Harrison - Rebecca Exeix-Chong	New River-Raleigh-Dinah S. Radford
Jefferson - Maggie Keeler	Ohio - Cathy Damron
Kanawha - Gladys Kuhn	Preston - Beverly Stemple
Marion - Jean Dawson	Wayne - Kathy Berry
Marshall - Jill Dolen	Wood - Jud White
Monongalia - Frank Saus	

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

Youth Category: Outdoor Classroom: Growing Mini Herb Gardens by the Kanawha County Master Gardeners

Melissa Dennison from Lewis County and her "Growing can be easy" project

Master Gardener Awareness: Weirton Christmas Parade - "12 Days of Christmas" by the Hancock/Brooke Master Gardeners

Innovative Project: "Reminiscence Therapy" for residents of five different long-term care facilities is from Kanawha County

Workshop or Presentation: Two public lectures on Native Plants were coordinated by the Kanawha County Master Gardeners

Community Service: Save Our Natives From Invasive Plants (SNIP) by the Jefferson County Master Gardeners

Laura Jackson of Berkeley County Master Gardeners with the "Old School, New Look!" project

General Accomplishment: The Butterfly Corner Workshop that was part of Coonskin Park Plant Sale by Kanawha County Master Gardeners

Variety Trial Record Keeping: Three Master Gardeners are being recognized this year for their outstanding record keeping while participating in the Vegetable and Flower Variety Trials. They are: Cathy Damron of Ohio County, Susan Frick of Marshall County, and Rebecca Eneix-Chong of Harris County. Becky will receive a sticker for 2002 since she received this award last year as well.

CONGRATULATIONS !!!

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!

To all who participated in the Auctions at the 2003 State Master Gardener Conference, we extend our thanks and appreciation. Items poured in - as we were told they would--hand made, hand grown, hand selected and hand delivered! They were then purchased silently and actively in a friendly and spirited competition. With your help, we were able to add approximately \$2,500.00 to the scholarship Fund.

Many thanks from the Wood County Master Gardeners and future scholarship winners!

Master Gardener Conference - 2003. This year's conference was held in Oak Hill, WV, hosted by the New River Master Gardener Association. Our hats are off to the hosts; the facilities worked out well, and the speakers were awesome. In particular, Dr. Ozzie Abaye, Virginia Tech, gave both a stirring and informative keynote address followed by a super presentation during the first hour. The subject of the keynote address focused on research Dr. Abaye has been involved with on grasses for "disturbed site reclamation"--something we are all aware of here in West Virginia, only we call it mine reclamation. Dr. Abaye followed this with her workshop presentation, one dealing largely with research into grasses and other plants which can be used to remove contamination such as heavy metals. A number of plants show great promise, removing as much as 4% of their bio-mass of some metals by absorbing the metals, and translating them into the upper plant structure. This has great promise for use as Master Gardeners who can now see possibilities in the use of bio-solids (sewer sludge) as both an organic additive and fertilizer.. Dr. Abaye participated for the remainder of the day Saturday, and through the evening festivities.

I must say at this point that the theater seating in the High School auditorium was good, but in truth I had forgotten how hard the seats in a High School class room are; and yes, I could not slide in and out as readily as I did ?? years ago.

The annual meeting of the State Master Gardener Association was important to all of us--several projects, including the adoption of the Federal Tax Exemption 501(c)(3) status were reported. The Federal Tax Exemption status will allow handling of monies with fewer tax considerations; more importantly, the status opens doors for grant applications to fund future state wide projects. Another significant action now underway is the rewriting of the handbook we all know and love--and all understands needs updated.

The banquet was preceded by the awards this year. Kanawha County captured a good share of the awards this year--our hats must be off to the hard work. We had the live auction during dessert; a fast talking auctioneer (really one of our own --Mr. Jim Simms the extension agent from Harrison County. His gift for fast speech and pointing drew \$2,500.00 into the fund for the scholarship. In all it was a great evening!

John Griggs, Monongalia County

GROWING GRASS!

Dr. A. Ozzie Abaye, keynote speaker at the recent State Master Gardener conference, gave an informative and often humorous presentation on rehabilitation of disturbed mining sites using native grass species. An Associate Professor of Agronomy at Virginia Tech working in the area of alternative crops, Dr. Abaye was born and raised in Ethiopia and has lived in the United States for the last 23 years. Prior to moving to Virginia Tech for graduate work, she worked for Rodale Research Institute on projects dealing with sustainable agriculture. Working in a field of research strongly dominated by men, as an African woman, with a strong accent and an occasional misunderstanding of English, she related the story of transporting numerous bags of grass samples from a research site and being stopped by a suspicious police officer inquiring about what she was doing. Her response that she was transporting “grass” immediately led to a thorough search of her car, whereupon it was soon evident that she really meant grass.

As she presented research results demonstrating the success of such native grasses as big and little bluestem, Indian grass, switch grass and buffalo grasses among others in restoring disturbed sites, it was evident that she has a great love of the function and beauty of native grasses and a real dedication to environmental restoration. Connecting to gardeners of all persuasions, she feels we are all environmentalists if we love the land, but we don't always know the right thing to do for the future, when we are pressed by the demands of the present.

Dr. Abaye made it clear, however, that teaching is her real passion, relating in word and photo, the education of undergraduates in field research when students camped at remote sites to gather data on grass survival and success. She said that you can never fully know what the student will appreciate about you as a teacher until it emerges later. While expecting grumbling, but requiring thorough and quality work, she would often have students return later expressing their appreciation of what they had learned. Conference attendees seemed to appreciate her teaching as well, emerging from the keynote address and subsequent seminars with a fuller appreciation of the relation of her work to environmental restoration.

Larry Lower,
Morgan County Master Gardeners

Meet Greenbrier County: We are a large county located in the southeast corner of the State. We presently have 7 certified Master Gardeners who completed the first Master Gardener program under the leadership of Extension Agent, John McCutcheon. Our next Master Gardener Classes will be held in September and again in January. This summer we will have a weekly column in our local newspaper for gardening articles and also promoting the Master Gardener Program. August 8-16 are the dates for the Annual West Virginia State Fair in Fairlea/Lewisburg. West Virginia Master Gardeners will have a designated area next to the West Virginia Extension booth in the West Virginia Building. We are also negotiating with the State Fair Board for a permanent location on the fairgrounds for a demonstration garden. Since we are small in number, we hope Master Gardeners throughout the State will assist us with ideas and volunteer hours in the Master Gardener booth. It will be great exposure for the West Virginia Master Gardener program. Please e-mail us if you can help.

Pat & Willa Izzo - wilpat@stargate.net

“Simple Stretches Can Enhance Garden Work”

Gardening is enjoyed by many individuals and is an excellent method of mental stress relief. What a lot of people don't consider is the stress that can be bestowed on the body before, during, and especially after routine garden chores. Why spend an enjoyable day in the garden setting if your wake all night with sore and aching joints?

A few simple stretches before and after gardening can ease a lot of tension on the muscles throughout the day and after you have put your tools up and set back to watch the garden grow. By stretching you simply warm up the muscles in a controlled environment and will enable them to be more flexible and eliminate undue stress. The stress is caused by using muscles that are not commonly used throughout the week or working in positions that are not typical of your day-to-day work environment.

The areas that need addressed is mainly the legs and back since these seem to be the parts that get somewhat abused during the garden season. The following is just a few of the stretches that may help your garden experience be enjoyable--both mentally and physically.

- 1) ***Shoulder, Arms, & Latissimus Stretch.*** With legs bent under you, reach forward with arms on the floor. You can also do this one arm at a time. You can stretch to the sides, upper back and lower back by slightly moving your hips in either direction.
- 2) ***Calf Stretch.*** Stand with one foot in front of the other. Bend one leg and put your foot on the ground in front of you with the other leg straight behind. Slowly move your hips forward, keeping your lower back flat. Keep your heel of the straight leg on the ground with toes pointed straight ahead or slightly turned in.
- 3) ***Quads, Knees, Back, Ankles, Achilles and Groin Stretch.*** From a standing position, squat down with your feet flat and toes pointed out at approximately 15 degree angles. Keep your heels 4 - 12 inches apart.

These are just a few simple stretches and flexibility exercises that may help to eliminate any discomfort you experience from your work. Just remember to get the muscles activated before rushing into the strenuous physical chores that come with a beautiful yard or garden. Have a good summer and ENJOY!.

Sherry D. Richmond

(Sherry is the wife of WVU Raleigh/Summers Extension Agent, David Richmond, and she is a certified personal trainer employed in the Wellness Department of the National Mine Safety and Health Academy located in Beckley, West Virginia)

"In the night the cabbages catch at the moon, the leaves drip silver; the rows of cabbages are series of little silver waterfalls in the moon."

Carl Sandburg

HYDROPONICS- Agriculture of Tomorrow

Hydroponics is the cultivation of plants in a nutrient solution instead of water. Using the hydroponics method of gardening, you can garden all year long in your own home and/or business. It isn't complicated and you can actually raise more crops by this method than the conventional way of the outdoor gardening in the ground. In some instances it is possible to get as many as four crops a year with hydroponics, which is something that cannot be done in our part of the country using conventional gardening techniques. When using hydroponics crops can be arranged in a way that is no bending involved. This is great for the elderly or someone with health problems, such as arthritis--it allows them to enjoy gardening and have fun working with plants, as it should be. There is no heavy machinery involved, because you don't need to plow, weed or use heavy fertilizing, thus a great savings in the long run. Best of all, there are no weeds to contend with. Naturally there will be less bugs, so heavy pesticides aren't required. The positives of hydroponics are unreal, even the food grown through the hydroponics method is as good, if not better, than the grown outside in the ground.

With all the positives, why aren't more farmers trying the hydroponics method of gardening? To start with, it's new and requires change. For some reason none of us like major changes in our lives. We tend to stay with something we know--like going to a job, even if there is an easier way of doing things. Then too, when a farmer has a large agriculture farm, he/she has a huge investment already put into place with equipment, land, etc. No one wants to discard that type of investment. Let's face facts, with increased population throughout the world and less land becoming available, we need to be thinking of the future of agriculture. Hydroponics seems to be the sensible answer.

I am not suggesting you instantly go out and invest in a major amount of equipment, buy supplies and quit gardening the way you do today. This is food for thought. Many high schools through the country (yes, even in West Virginia) are teaching hydroponics in the classroom. Opportunities to use the hydroponics method of gardening and prosper as a business endeavor are out there and just waiting for interested farmers - young and old alike. In Princeton, West Virginia alone there are two businesses that generate an excessive amount of heat and these business are willing to let an interested entrepreneur use this excessive heat for a hydroponics garden free of charge.

Don't close the door to change! Check out the agriculture of tomorrow and see for yourself what is going on. There are many books on the subject of hydroponics and the internet is chucked full of information. Hydroponics may not be for you, but in all probability the hydroponics method of gardening is going to be the way our grandchildren and great-grandchildren farm. According to the experts, not only is hydroponics practical, it is what the best soil should be, only without soil's disadvantages.

Elizabeth Osborne, Mercer County Master Gardeners

"The lesson I have thoroughly learned, and wish to pass on to others, is to know the enduring happiness that the love of a garden gives"

Gertrude Jekyll

PLANT A ROW FOR THE HUNGRY

All vegetable gardeners share three common traits: They plant too much, they hate waste, and they love to share. These traits lend themselves to a people helping people campaign known as Plant a Row for the Hungry.

Plant a Row for the Hungry (PAR) was started in the mid 1990's by the Garden Writers Association of America. It has gained tremendous nationwide momentum since partnering with Home Garden Television. There are groups working to feed the hungry in almost every state.

In Harrison County, the Master Gardeners took on PAR as basically an information and referral service. There are 17 food banks in the county that work together as the *Harrison County Food Chain*. Some, like the Clarksburg Mission, actually cook meals. Others, like the Lord's Pantry in Shinnston, provide groceries to dozens of families every week.

The Master Gardeners put together a pamphlet that listed every food bank, with their contacts and their hours of operation. We included instructions to gardeners on how to get their produce to these sites, and how to help us track the results.

We leave these pamphlets, as well as literature provided by PAR, in a little display that we made out of a flowerpot, at several of the hardware stores, co-ops, nurseries and green houses in the area. We also hand them out at various functions such as local fairs.

We try to involve new gardeners in the project by providing them with free, donated seed and encouraging them to call us if they need any planting advice.

We also engaged a youth group to plant and harvest donated seed potatoes on donated land. This effort resulted in almost three hundred pounds of free food for one food bank!

Plant a Row for the Hungry is a very satisfying and rewarding project. The program, at its simplest and most basic level, is to find willing donors and needy recipients. What could be easier?

Contact the Garden Writers Association at par@gwaa.org for more information. They are very caring, helpful people.

Lee Reger, Harrison County Master Gardener

Interesting fact: "How much does your garden grow?" On average--a 10x15 ft. garden produces 10 pounds of vegetables!

Programs and activities offered by the West Virginia Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status.

Wood County Arboretum Reclamation Project. The Wood County Master Gardeners have established a project to reclaim and re-establish the 15-acre tract that was once Edison School Arboretum as an outdoor learning center and natural preservation site for children and families. The Master Gardeners have initiated a five-year plan that includes clearing, repairing and repainting the surrounding chain link fencing, removal of dead and hazardous trees, clearing brush and undergrowth from existing trails, construction of new trails, preservation, identification and signage of trees and plants, inventory of existing wildlife, improvement and establishment of wildlife habitats and development of interpretative activities including a self-guided trail guide.

The reclamation efforts are intended to contribute to the physical enhancement of the area and the preservation of large trees in the city. The gardeners hope to expand the area as a wildlife habitat and provide ongoing educational opportunity for school children and adults. Additionally, as an outdoor learning center, the arboretum will offer a safe environment for senior citizens, garden clubs, wildlife groups, scouts and other groups to enjoy hands-on outdoor activities that can be practical, educational or recreational.

The group is in the process of raising funds through grant applications and sponsorships, as well as by sales of gardening books and materials. Volunteers are being solicited and welcomed to work with volunteer Wood County Master Gardeners in the development of interactive and educational activities at the arboretum and to provide guidance and assistance in the creating of the printed material available to visitors.

Wood County Master Gardeners have already donated over 200 hours !

At the Spring Conference, the New River Master Gardeners used the “Ladies of the Garden” as sign holders. Several people have asked for the directions to make their own “Ladies”

Head-can consist of a foam ball covered with panty hose or flesh-colored material; or an old Kroger bag stuffed with additional bags or quilt batting

Body: 1- 6-6 ½ foot stake (2x2) (can shorten if you prefer)

Shoulders:1-16” piece scrap lumber (1x1 or 2x2)

Waist:1-14” piece of scrap lumber (1x1 or 2x2)

Arms: 1 piece of household wire 12-2 - 5 to 6 feet long

12 inch nylon or plastic tie down for securing wire to shoulders

Heavy-duty stapler to secure material to frame

Screws for securing frame pieces

1. Attach shoulder piece to body about 4 to 5 inches from top with screws.
2. Attach waist piece approximately 13” - 15” from the top of shoulders with screws
(The bottom of the stake can be cut pointed for easier placement in the ground)
3. Attach wire to shoulders with tie downs. Leave extra wire for attaching gloves, etc.
4. Slit a hole in the foam ball about 5” long and 4” deep. Position head on top of body and push all the way down; secure with staple gun. If you are using Kroger bags--use additional bags to form a ball. Place in outer bag and secure to body with stapler.
5. Use flesh colored material or panty hose to cover ball or Kroger bags. Gather excess material at the neck and secure with staple gun.
6. Draw face on your lady. Use your imagination--yarn for hair, real makeup, etc. Put hat on head last and secure with additional wire or some other means that can't be seen. If you have excess material showing in neck area, cover with shawl or kerchief.

Be creative. Make an entire gardening family! Just increase the measurements for a Dad, and decrease them for the children. Happy Gardening!