



Volume 4, November 2003

Over The Fence ... and Crossing County Lines

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Board News:

The West Virginia Master Gardener Association Board met October 18, 2003 in Morgantown. Some highlights were:

- Nineteen Master Gardener volunteers from Greenbrier, Kanawha, Mercer, Monongalia, Wood and New River donated 80 hours of volunteer service at the Master Gardener Booth/Demonstration Garden at the West Virginia State Fair, and we have been invited back next year. We appreciate the Izzos and Greenbrier County for all their hard work!

MARK YOUR CALENDERS NOW...

- The Wood County Master Gardeners will be hosting the 2004 Annual Conference May 14, 15 & 16 in Parkersburg.
- The 2005 Annual Conference, hosted by Morgan County, will be held at Cacapon State Park.
- The 2006 Annual Conference, hosted by Hancock/Brooke and Marshall Counties, will be held at the Mountaineer Race Track in Chester, West Virginia.
- David C. Hardesty, Jr., President of West Virginia University, visited the Master Gardener Booth/Demonstration Garden at the State Fair and invited all Master Gardeners to tour the President's Gardens at the University. Look for more details in further issues of the newsletter!

Robert's Rules of Order tip:

Whenever someone makes a motion and it is seconded, the president or chairman should **immediately** and **distinctly** state the motion to the assembly.

After a vote is taken, the president or chairman should announce the results (ex.--the ayes have it...motion is carried).

CHOCOLATE ALERT

The cacao tree was given the name *Theobroma* "food of the gods" by Swedish botanist Linnaeus in 1753. The plant is native to the equatorial American forests. It grown in a narrow band within 18 degrees north and south of the equator from South America and the Caribbean to West Africa, East Asia, and the Islands of New Guinea and Vanvatu with Africa growing 70% of the world's crop.

Global demand has farmers producing record cacao crops. Pests, disease, and soil exhaustion are constant threats. An article in *Discover* magazine, August 2002, discussed the problems at length. Sustainable farming and bio-diversity--good ideas and practices for all types of growing--are well laid out there.

Some of the experts protest cacao is an "orphan crop". It is under-researched and certain varieties of the cacao bean may be lost. The fragile beans provide the subtle flavoring of the finest chocolate. Industry funding for research projects is sorely needed.

Is this important to our economy. Imported cacao is essential to an \$8.6 billion domestic confectionary business that also sustains the country's dairy and nut production. Twenty percent of our dairy products go into candy production as well as 20% of our peanuts and 40% of our almonds. The USDA is earmarking \$40 million for cacao research as of 2002. Visions of sugarplums indeed!

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Seasonal Justice

There is nothing that so epitomizes the real nature of gardening
as the creation and enjoyment
of the herbaceous border

In failure or triumph
they tempt, challenge, exasperate and reward the gardener,
always generously
but always, with even-hand justice,
according to his desserts

GARDEN HINTS/FACTS FROM MYRA SIMMONS, PUTNAM COUNTY:

Deer deterrents: The most effective are deterrents with rotten egg products in them. Another way to keep them out of your flower beds: Use 20-30 lbs. fishing line wrapped around stakes out from the deer's eating range. Wrap first strand about one foot high and the second strand about two feet up from the first.

Hosta spray for slugs or snails: 1 part ammonia; 2 parts water. Apply to new emerging leaves to shrivel both recent invaders and any of the tiny slugs that hostas commonly harbor over the winter months.

Sticky traps: make your own out of cut colored poster board. Yellow for aphids and white flies; blue poster board for thrips and white poster board for flea beetles. Cut into 3"to 6" strips and apply non-toxic Tangle-Trap.

Homemade insecticidal soap: 2 T. dish detergent to 1 gallon of water.

Powdery Mildew deterrent: 1 t. baking soda and 1 t. liquid dish detergent (used as a surfactant). Add to one quart of warm water and mist plant leaves.

Tool disinfectant: Mix 1 pt. chlorine bleach to 9 pts. water. This mixture will reduce the risk of spreading infection to other parts of plants during pruning and dividing of plants.

Did you know...

- 1 inch of rain is equal to 10-12 inches of snow based on the temperature and moisture.
- Iron phosphates in slug bait are not as poisonous as other baits.
- Cutworms feed at night and hide in the soil during the day. Adults are night flying moths.
- Zebra grass (*miscanthus sinensis*) does not get its horizontal gold bands until the weather gets hot.
- Dividing Perennials. The rule of thumb is to divide spring flowering perennials in the fall, and fall flowering perennials in the spring. Bearded iris and oriental poppies are two prominent exceptions. Both of them are best divided during summer dormancy. In areas where the ground freezes, it is risky to divide perennials any later than mid October.
- Nematodes are not insects but slender unsegmented roundworms that are barely visible to the naked eye. You have root and leaf (foliar) nematodes. Organic matter (compost) in the soil helps control root knot nematodes because it benefits the fungi and bacteria which feed on the nematodes. Also, compost in the soil helps the vigor of the plant to withstand them.

Speaking of Compost....

With the leaves falling all around, now may be a good time to start that compost pile! A Composting Recipe distributed by the Department of Natural Resources is as follows:

Ingredients: (1) **Air**--turn pile once a week; (2) **Water**--keep it moist (like a wrung-out sponge) 50% wet; (3) **Food**--carbon-rich waste ("brown stuff") leaves, straw, coffee grounds nitrogen-rich waste ("green stuff) grass clipping, kitchen scraps

Directions: **Mix it:** either lasagna style (layered) or chili style (mix all together); **Cook it:** pressure and decomposition creates heat. Collective body heat of millions of microbes busy digesting the pile. Microbes thrive at temperatures 70 to 160 degrees (F). When the pile reaches 140 degrees, **Turn it.**

Finished: when the product is dark in color, earthy smell, a bit crumbly to the touch and you can not recognize the original ingredients.

Symptoms

- Strong odor
- Center of pile dry
- Pile is damp and warm in center but nowhere else
- Pile is damp and sweet-smelling but will not heat

Problem

- Not enough air
- Not enough water
- Too small
- Lack of nitrogen

Solution

- Turn pile
- Moisten material while turning
- Collect more material and mix materials into new pile
- Incorporate a source of nitrogen like fresh grass clippings or a nitrogen fertilizer

Waste Facts: What's in Trash?

- 32% Paper
- 30% Organic material
- 11% Glass
- 9% Plastic, ash, wood
- 7% Metal
- 11% Other

Individuals waste = about 8 lbs daily (that's about 200,000lbs over a life span).

About 50% of all waste is generated by business.

Over 75% of all trash can be reduced, reused or recycled.

\$1 of \$10 spent on food is for packaging.

Every item reused - 1lb less for the landfill.

Check out these internet websites:

- Rot Web Home Composting Information Site - http://net.indra.com/~topsoil/compost_menu.html
- Wormworld - <http://www.nj.com/yucky/world/index.html>

MEET THE KANAWHA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION:

Kanawha County, consisting of 913 square miles of rolling hills and valleys, is located in southern West Virginia, and is the home of the State Capitol, located in Charleston. The name “Kanawha,” came from a tribe of Indians that once lived in the area, and is also the name of the river that winds through the valley.

The Kanawha County Master Gardener Volunteer Program began in 1994, without the help of agricultural extension agent and no Master Gardener Programs in adjoining counties. More than 200 individuals have completed the classroom portion of the program and there are currently more than 120 active members.

Kanawha County Master Gardeners have been active in schools with the children’s learning garden and the “Meet the Plants” program; community gardens with a display garden--which is handicap accessible; local libraries by helping to identify needed gardening reference material and then donating funds to purchase books and audio/visual materials; long-term care facilities with reminiscent therapy programs; local county fairs and the county parks; and educational programs for State members and the public. Over the years we have partnered with other volunteer and educational organizations to complete projects and meet goals, such as: West Virginia University Institute of Technology, the Kanawha County Public Library System, Friends of Kanawha County Parks, Inc., and West Virginia State College. In 1998 the Kanawha County Master Gardeners hosted the West Virginia Master Gardener Conference, with approximately 100 members from throughout the State attending.

The purpose of our newsletter, *The Garden Gate*, is “to educate, update and disseminate gardening news to Kanawha County citizens.” It is mailed to more than 240 individuals, including all county Certified Master Gardener Volunteers, the county commission and other interested parties. Kanawha County Master Gardeners won a West Virginia University Extension Award of Excellence for this project in 2001. Other projects that have received this award include the Coonskin Display Garden (2001), Native Plants Lecture Series (2003), Hospitality Committee Project for 2000 Northeast Regional Conference (2001), and Reminiscence Therapy (2003).

The annual KCMGA plant sale is a joint venture with Friends of Kanawha County Parks, Inc. Friends is a local non-profit organization that also depends on volunteers to meet their mission. Plants for the sale are donated by members from both groups. This sale has served as the main source of income for funding Master Gardener projects.

While our membership comes from all walks of life, the common interest in gardening, volunteering to help educate others and community service makes this a cohesive organization. We’ve learned that being a Master Gardener enables us to make a difference in the communities we live in and have fun while doing it.