

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You
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The Garden Gate

A Communication of the Kanawha County Master Gardeners Association

Volume 13, Issue 2

WVMGA Annual Conference Wrap-Up

Thank you to all the KCMGs who worked so hard to make the 2008 WVMGA Conference a success. Our members worked on the steering committee, sold program ads, presented workshops, stapled programs, stuffed packets, begged for free stuff from local businesses, introduced speakers, prepared our registration and program materials, worked the registration desk, sold drink tickets, led tours, assembled decorations, counted evaluations, monitored workshops, and much more.

Thanks also go to Bridget Brissette, Administrative Assistant at the Kanawha County Extension Office. She picked up a lot of the detail work for us and helped with loads of photocopying!

Over 200 Master Gardeners from all over the state registered for the event and nearly every one gave us high marks for our efforts. We learned some things to pass on to next year's crew, but most everything went smoothly.

We overcame a few glitches. Our keynote speaker was grounded in Atlanta due to bad weather, but arrived safely—if hours later than expected. A workshop presenter failed to show up on Sunday, but our hero, State Master Gardener Coordinator John Jett, flew to our rescue with a program he had prepared for an upcoming meeting in Morgantown!

Thanks, too, to our partners in madness, Putnam County MGs. They did a great job in all kinds of ways, but most especially with the Gardeners' Market. Myra Simmons and Gene Burkett led their group on the steering committee and did a wonderful job!

Once again, many thanks for all your help with the Conference. It was lots of work, but lots of fun, and without YOU, would not have been possible.

Jennifer Soule
Conference Coordinator

Garden Humor

The best way to garden is to put on a wide brimmed straw hat and some old clothes. And with a hoe in one hand and a cold drink in the other, tell somebody else where to dig.

Gardening Rule: When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.

Gardening requires a lot of water — most of it in the form of perspiration.

New gardeners learn by trowel and error.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad

A good compost pile should get hot enough to poach an egg, but not so hot it would cook a lobster.

Fresh Water For Wildlife

Sue Pryce, KC Master Gardener 2007

Birds, chipmunks, squirrels, raccoons—even a red fox—enjoy a source of fresh water at our home.

The dehumidifier in our downstairs recreation room generates considerable water during summer months and we were emptying it at least once a day. Last summer, my husband Jim devised a plan to put this water to good use. He had been looking for a simple way to keep fresh water for birds and small animals that frequent our backyard.

He attached 20 feet of plastic tubing to the drain on the dehumidifier and filed a small notch on the doorsill of the outside door. He ran the tubing from

the dehumidifier through the notch and into a shallow 15-foot trench, then camouflaged it with the displaced gravel and mulch. A shallow level shelf at the top of a sloping garden bank was dug on which a 19” plant saucer was placed. The tubing terminated at the rim of the saucer and was secured so the water could flow into it. Any overflow nourishes the surrounding plants. To give it a more natural look, small river gravel and stone was used in and around the “pond” and flat rocks were placed around the rim to hide the man-made material. Small river gravel and a rock or two were placed in the bottom of the saucer.

The birds and other little critters enjoy the water, we don’t have to empty the dehumidifier and Jim has great subjects for his photography. Sometimes simple ideas can be so rewarding.

Life’s a Garden – Dig It!

Company’s Coming and the Garden’s a Mess

You don’t have time to watch the grass — or anything else — grow. Here are six big tricks to make your garden look great right now.

1. Use pots right in your garden beds Colorful containers are instant medicine for a bored gardener. You may know they’re great on decks and patios, but did you know you can put them right into the middle of garden beds to add height and color?

2. Clean up It’s amazing how great a garden looks after a quick grooming. The job is instantly satisfying because it makes things look so “pulled together.”

3. Use quick-fix plants If you can’t wait for flowering plants to put out blooms, get instant satisfaction from colorful foliage plants like coleus.

4. Add structure Great gardens rely on structure: unchanging elements such as trees or garden

sculpture, screens and fences, birdbaths, carefully placed groups of big rocks, arbors or free-standing columns. Even artfully placed garden furniture or salvaged garden or farm equipment can instantly bring life to a landscape.

5. Go for seasonal zip When you buy flowers — for pots or garden beds — look for the newer, heavy blooming varieties.

6. Don’t garden, decorate For those who want truly instant results, forget sowing seeds, digging holes and clipping hedges. Instead, think like an exterior decorator. Suggestions for fast, fun results might include: **Water features**— instant atmosphere; **Indoor-outdoor rugs**— Just roll them out to create an outdoor living space; **Outdoor fabrics**—Bring color to a dull garden or patio; **Lighting**—you’ll be able to enjoy your garden until after dusk.

Submit CE and Volunteer hours on the Web site at:

kanawhamastergardeners.homestead.com

or by mail to Keith Morgan, 521 Sheridan Circle, Charleston, WV 25314, or email to Keith.Morgan@afnetwork.com

Yellowing Plants?

If your acid-loving plants (azaleas, hostas, etc.) located near a cement block wall or in a foundation planting are yellowing, check the ph of your soil there. Watering and rain can leach minerals out of the

cement and change the soil to alkaline. An application of sulphur can help correct the ph, or you might need to replant with more alkaline-tolerant plants.

Garden Gate Contributors Needed

The *Garden Gate* is always looking for Master Gardener volunteers to contribute articles and other material. You don't have to be a professional writer, or even a "good" writer. The important thing is to share your know-how and enthusiasm for gardening. If you don't want to write an article, you can contribute other material, such as lists of gardening tips or short filler items. If you need help, the MG volunteers who produce the *Gate* can lend a hand. And remember, you can get volunteer credit for your efforts!

The following are criteria to keep in mind:

- Article length varies, depending on the topic. Generally, in-depth articles should be a minimum of two pages, double-spaced (approximately 500 words). Longer articles can be split between two issues. Articles can be submitted via email in MS Word or text format, on disk or as a print out.
- Before you begin writing or researching a topic, contact the chair of the *Garden Gate* editorial committee, Don Cook, to discuss your idea. The committee reviews all topics for approval and scheduling in upcoming issues. You may get a suggestion to consider other topics, because your idea has already been published in a prior issue.
- If your article requires research, be sure to cite your sources, including information on the web. If you quote sentences directly, or even paraphrase them, you must credit the source, or it is considered plagiarism.
- Try to use several sources to get a balanced viewpoint. And if you search the web, make certain that the source is current.
- Articles of personal reflection on gardening are also welcome. Reminiscence is an important ingredient in gardening literature.
- Volunteer credit (maximum of eight [8] hours) is given based on the honor system. Of the eight hours of volunteer credit, you may earn up to three (3) hours of continuing education credit by researching

(internet, publication or interview) a completely new topic. You know best how much time it takes to research, think about and write your article.

- Our local garden centers are our friends. They help us with lectures, discounts on plants and numerous other benefits. Therefore, we request that you do not promote mail order or internet retail sites in your articles.
- All plant names should be in the correct format (please use botanical names, correct capitalization, italicized, etc. Common names can be confusing and inaccurate. If in doubt, an excellent resource is the *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* by Michael A. Dirr, Stipes Publishing LLC. In the introduction he includes a section on the "Methods and Rationales for Naming and Classifying Plants."

You can contact Don at 344-0813 evenings or e-mail don.cook@wvsto.com. For ideas, you can read past issues of the *Garden Gate* on the Kanawha County MG website:

<http://kanawhamastergardeners.homestead.com>

Got Gardening Tips?

WJYP, a St. Albans radio station, has asked KCMGA to provide gardening tips through July. Each day's new tip can run up to two minutes long. WJYP has provided a template for the script to be typed in and each tip should be at least a couple of paragraphs long. Topics already submitted include basic gardening tools, soil testing and herb gardens. Tips can be on keeping deer and other animals out of the garden, lawn care or any gardening subjects. Anyone that has tips, please forward to Leslie Fitzwater at lcfitzwater@aol.com.

Message from our President: Leslie Fitzwater

The Kanawha County Master Gardener Association has much to be proud of this spring. With the help of the Putnam County Master Gardeners, we hosted a very successful state conference this past April at Blessed John XXIII Pastoral Center in Charleston. The center's grounds are well kept, and lovely spring-flowering trees and flowers greeted the more than 200 master gardeners who participated in the conference. Indoors, the speakers were well received and the conference evaluations were overwhelmingly positive.

This success could not have been achieved without a massive amount of hard work by our volunteers.

Leading our efforts was Jennifer Soule, who chaired the conference committee, making sure everything went smoothly and that even the tiniest detail was not overlooked. Of course, Jennifer couldn't do it all alone and her entire committee showed great dedication by spending many, many hours to get every task completed. Everything from the registration process to the table decorations was outstanding.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this conference a success!

Upcoming Association Meetings

Tuesday, August 12, Riverside Pavilion, Coonskin Park, 6:00 PM

Covered Dish and Business Meeting

Tuesday, November 18, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 6:00 PM

Business Meeting and 1-hour CE Class (TBA)