



# Over the Fence ... and Crossing County Lines

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## Board News

The West Virginia Master Gardener Association Board met May 1st, 2009 at Ramada Inn, Morgantown.

Highlights of the meeting include:

- The Fiscal Planning Committee had a continued discussion regarding the current economic impact on Foundation Funds. The Board approved a motion to invest the first \$2,000 from state conference proceeds in the Foundation Cash Account.
- The Conference Committee met on April 22, 2009, at Jackson's Mill for a work session on conference policies and procedures.
- The Education and Continuing Education Committee is considering "lifetime member status", advanced Master Gardener courses and Associate Master Gardener status.
- All state committees met for one hour as part of the Board Meeting. Please check the WVU Master Gardener website for details.

**The annual Board of Directors meeting** was held on May 3, 2009, at the Ramada Inn in Morgantown. A detailed treasurer's report was presented by Jan Hargate and accepted. Committee reports were given and President Polly Reynolds reminded the group that a host county is needed for the 2012 conference. This county will also be responsible for the 2010 conference auctions. The following subjects were also discussed:

- Diana Higginbotham reported that the WVMG cookbook, a project of Harrison County Master Gardeners should be available at the June board meeting
- Delores Barber presented the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference report. She relayed that the Finance Committee is actively working, a Program Committee has been formed (Eastern Panhandle Group) and other committees will be identified and formed in the coming months. She further stated that the WVMG trade show booth at the Las Vegas International Conference was very well received.
- Lee Reger shared that the Monongalia County Master Gardeners donated \$2,500 to the 2011 International Conference in memory of Thomas McCutcheon. Lee encouraged all counties to make a contribution in support of the upcoming International Conference.
- The election of state officers was held. New officers are:

President Karen Toothman (Preston)

Vice President Kim Van Rijn (Wood)

Treasurer Jan Hargate (Kanawha)

Secretary Donna Straley (Harrison)

*(For details on the above meetings, please check the WVU Master Gardener website: Google Master Gardeners West Virginia; double click on Master Gardeners West Virginia to open website; double click Favorites on the web search bar; click Add to include the website on your favorites list.)*

## **FIVE-YEAR PLAN UPDATE**

Public Relations and Communication Committee:

Chair Diana Higginbotham reported that the goals outlined for 2008 and the first quarter of 2009 have been met.

Fiscal Planning Committee:

Chair Jan Hargate reported that her committee has met three of five established goals. The budget has been established and policies and procedures for management of conference funds have been developed.

Conference Committee:

*Chair Willa Izzo reported that the committee is finalizing the conference policy and procedure manual.*



## **Spotlight on the WEST CENTRAL Master Gardeners**

The West Central Master Gardener Association includes the counties of Jackson, Roane, and Calhoun. The association was formed following the completion of the WVU Extension Service's Master Gardener Program course work and volunteer requirements in the summer of 2008. A second group has completed the classes and will be honored at a reception on June 30, 2009. Extension Agent Brandy Brabham serves as the adviser for this association and under her leadership the program is dynamic and successful.

The service projects we have focused on thus far include the following:

- At Camp Sheppard, the Roane County 4-H Camp, we improved the flag pole area, the focal point of the center circle in front of the Assembly Hall, by draining the existing bed, filling it with river gravel, and building a low retaining wall to enhance the area, which encompasses 3 flag poles erected by an Eagle Scout and memorial monument. We created flower beds in front of four new cabins. Five hundred daffodils, black-eyed Susan seeds, and 24 knockout roses along with various annuals and perennials were planted. Beds were edged with stone from the foundation of the original historic cabins.
- Adopted an existing bed that had fallen into disarray at the Committee on Aging in Spencer. In the summer of 2008 the herb/vegetable garden was restored and the community was invited to enjoy the harvest. A \$1,700.00 Green Thumbs, Healthy Joints Grant was received in June 2009 and used to raise the bed and add additional soil to make it more accessible. Tools and equipment will also be purchased to allow senior citizens in the community easier access to the joys of gardening.
- Volunteer opportunities at WVU-ES' Energy Express in Calhoun County, the Calhoun County Farmers' Market FRESHitval, the West Virginia Black Walnut Festival, and later this summer at the State Fair of West Virginia.
- In the fall of 2008 our Master Gardeners completed training on how to teach the "Meet the Plants" curriculum to school children. Collaboration with Patch 21, a school enrichment program, provided opportunities for interested Master Gardeners to teach "Meet the Plants" during after-school programs.
- Taught Gardening 101 class at 4-H Camps in Calhoun and Roane Counties this summer.
- Collaborated with a local church, the Calhoun County Family Resource Network, and the community of Grantsville to develop the Grantsville Community Garden, which provides plots for planting garden crops to interested community members and local organizations free of charge.

In addition to course work, monthly business meetings, and volunteer hours, members visited two local green houses in April where owners discussed growing techniques and production. Field trips to a local winery and a farmers' market are planned. As Master Gardeners, we enjoy new friendships, sharing mutual interests in horticulture, and reaching out to our communities to build, beautify, and teach. For more information about our association, you may contact one of the following officers:

President Cathy Flashman, Gay, WV, [fiberhappy@yahoo.com](mailto:fiberhappy@yahoo.com), Vice President, Mary Jo Ashley Spencerrrr, WV, [mjashley@suddenlink.net](mailto:mjashley@suddenlink.net), Secretary, Roylene Moore, Spencer, WV, [danroy@wirefire.com](mailto:danroy@wirefire.com), or Treasurer, Larry Stinn, Millstone, WV, [stinn@frontiernet.net](mailto:stinn@frontiernet.net)

**From our President, Karen Toothman:**

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As the new President for the WVMG I would like to introduce myself.

My name is Karen Toothman. I have been a Master Gardener since 2002. I am a Preston County Master Gardener. As part of the host committee of the 2009 WVMG State Conference I would like to thank you for your attendance and participation.

We have more exciting things ahead of us. The first is the 2010 WVMG State Conference. It will be hosted by the Harrison County Master Gardeners. The dates are April 16-18 2010. It will be held at the Bridgeport Conference Center. The theme will be "Homegrown for Health and Happiness".

The next big event is the 2011 Master Gardeners International Conference. It will be held in Charleston on October 11-14, 2011. The theme will be "Color It Green In a Wild and Wonderful Way" As you already know it is proudly being hosted by us, the WV Master Gardeners! What a wonderful venue to showcase our MG program and our beautiful state! As you know it will be a cooperative effort by all our MG programs.

I would like to close, for now, with a little "gardening" humor. These were created by MG from around the country. It just illustrates how MG think alike.

You might be a Master Gardener if. . . .

-you deadhead plants any place that you are and discreetly slip the seeds in your pocket.

-your husband brings you one dozen of long stemmed roses and you ask where the roots are.

- you buy corn for your neighbor down the block so he can keep feeding the deer to keep them away from your yard.

Karen Toothman, President

West Virginia Master Gardener Association

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**OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER PROJECTS – John Jett**

Presented at the 2009 Master Gardener Conference

**Demonstration**

**Raised Bed Project**

Greenbrier County Master Gardeners

**Description of Project:** The Raised Bed project was created through the award of a "Green Thumbs Healthy Joints" grant sponsored by West Virginia AgrAbility in the early summer of 2008. Green brier Master Gardeners constructed a combined raised bed/vertical garden and a series of three planter boxes with benches in the Demonstration Garden at the West Virginia State Fairgrounds. The beds were designed to demonstrate and teach the ease of gardening to individuals with disabilities. A raised bed with vertical lattice was built to allow access by individuals in wheelchairs as well as those who experience pain or discomfort from bending to tend normal ground level beds. A vertical planting area attached to the back of the raised bed allows vine crops to be trellised above the bed and tended from front or the back with ergonomic tools. In another area of the Demonstration Garden a series of three planter boxes with benches were built to accommodate people with kneeling disabilities to sit and garden.

Community Service

**Big Trees from Little Acorns Grow**

Wood County Master Gardeners

**Description of Project:** This project reclaimed the 12-acre Edison School Arboretum as an outdoor learning center for Wood County school students and the public. In 1962 Superintendent E.S. Shannon proposed a hilly portion of the school ground be set aside for us as an arboretum. With the help of state agencies, school maintenance staff, teachers, and volunteers a 12-acre fenced outdoor laboratory with a locked gate was constructed. Among the school activities held there was Edison Field Day for county fifth graders from 1968-1972. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders ID'd trees, studied wildlife, soil types, soil erosion and water quality in activities set up by DNR, WVU Extension, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Department of Forestry. Over the years use declined. Vandals tore out a large portion of the back fence and ripped off the side gate. The trails became rutted from ATV use and eroded from poor drainage. In 2002 Wood County MGs learned of the arboretum and thought restoring it would be a good project. School authorities thought so too but could not give any funds. In April 2002 we began to look for money and to clear the 3035 feet of fence of years of vine growth which was so thick in some sections birds nested on top. Reclaiming the arboretum has turned a haunt for vandals into a resource for the entire community. The project was not simple but could be replicated elsewhere. Having the support of the development committee was the key to the success of this project. The individuals on the committee helped us set goals, gave us practical project ideas, provided actual labor, and helped us apply for funding. These strategies could be used in other communities where an abandoned property with potential is located.

The arboretum is just inside the city limits and has accessible parking. The health department is emphasizing wellness—walking the trails is good exercise. Restoring the arboretum has given citizens a nice place for a “walk in the woods.” MGs have developed friendships while working together. We learned many things: how to identify some less common native plants, how to restore a woodland, how to apply for grants and how to mobilize community support. We gained valuable practice in seeking grants and fulfilling grant requirements. We honed our presentation skills through soliciting support from other groups. Thanks to our labor and the help of the development committee local students gained the opportunity to do outside learning projects while the public has a nice wooded spot to ▶

get exercise. By accepting our help the school board has been able to open a natural area to students and citizens. We MG took the lead but many groups have assisted in the community effort, providing guidance, information, and ideas. The school board provided the property and school maintenance staff have cut hazardous trees. With the addition of many volunteer hours from us a woodland area is available to anyone who wants to use it.

The restoration has become a larger project than we anticipated in 2002. In fact, sometimes it has seemed overwhelming. But with the guidance of the extension agent, the arboretum committee and the support of the school system the long neglected arboretum has become an asset to Parkersburg. The Wood County Master Gardeners contributed only \$1441.87 of their own money (raised through plant sales and garden tours) to the project—the rest of our contribution was sweat equity through our labor. The remainder of the monies came from a variety of local, state, and federal sources.

Total budget \$47110

## **Innovative Project**

### **Collection of Horticultural Publications onto a Compact Disc for Distribution to General Public.**

Cabell County Master Gardeners

**Description of project:** Several hundred horticultural publications were downloaded from the websites of 8-10 University Extension Services and were stored as pdfs files on a compact disc. The publications were organized into files and folders and were indexed for easy identification. In addition, two index files, one in pdf format and the other in WORD format were included to assist a user in quickly finding information. A list of references was provided at the end of the index files. Two hundred CDs were burned from the Master Copy. An attractive label identifying CCMGA was prepared and attached to each CD. The CDs were placed in individual colored jewel cases for protection and display. They were distributed to the general public via the Home and Garden Show and provided to Cabell County Master Gardener students at the conclusion of their training.

## **Horticulture Therapy**

### **Peterson Rehabilitation Hospital and Geriatric Center**

Ohio County Master Gardeners

**Description of project:** . We took a lot and broke it down into areas. Each MG member took an area and created a spot such as a shade garden or butterfly garden. Each area is different and has the personality of each member. The garden is free to the public. It can be as simple or as

elaborate as the members wish All you need is a plot of ground, small or large and creativity of your members.

All it takes to create this garden is to have a small group of people sit down and dream up a garden. With the help of people in the community, schools, businesses you can achieve your dream. The garden is open to patients, their families, friends, neighbors and community. It is open to anyone who would like to come and enjoy the flowers, birds and butterflies. Some of the patients have been able to weed and water the plants or supervise the gardeners. Some of the families and friends have offered help or plants. The garden has the following areas: butterfly garden, shade, conifer, vegetable, herb and a few other areas. In the future we hope to have a colonial medicinal herb garden and wildflower garden. Many of the patients have had gardens and they are free to come help or just sit and enjoy it. We have taken a grassy area and made it into a beautiful garden that can be enjoyed by many people.

## **2009 West Virginia Master Gardener of the Year – Polly Reynolds**

In 1999 Polly graduated from the Raleigh County class taught by David Richmond. It was obvious that she would be a leader . Polly served as Vice President of the New River Master Gardener Association for one year and President for two.

She has served as Secretary, Vice President and President of the West Virginia Master Gardener Association.

Locally, Polly has been recognized for designing, planting, and maintaining garden beds and creating a trellised planter for the Fayetteville Town Park; speaking on wildlife gardening at the New River Master Gardeners' spring 2001 workshop at Tamarack; teaching a 3-hour workshop on gardening to attract birds at the 2003 Neotropical Bird Festival; presenting to Garden Clubs and Ruritan clubs on topics including the West Virginia Master Gardener program, water gardening, spring bulbs, gardening for birds, and how to make hypertufa containers; and working with children and youth in projects that include weed identification, soil testing, and seed germination.

Polly's promotion of Master Gardeners and Extension Service led logically to her appointment to the Fayette County Extension Committee. During 2002 she lobbied effectively with State Legislators and County Commissioners to make sure that Fayette County was provided with a sorely needed Extension Agent. For the recent WVU Extension Day at the Legislature, she mailed the names and contact information of our state representatives to everyone on the Extension Committee, prepared a letter that members of the New River Master Gardeners could sign, and traveled to Charleston to add her support for funding for Extension's valuable services in Fayette County and the rest of the state. People stop Polly on the street and call her at work to ask gardening questions. And they get their answers because she continues to acquire far more knowledge than the Master Gardener Continuing Education hours require. She has taken courses at every state Master Gardener Conference since 1999, plus the 2002 Northeast Regional Conference at Cornell.

Taking the skills learned through the Master Gardener Program, Polly's home gardens have been designated as a "West Virginia Wild Yard" and are registered with the National Wildlife Federation as a "Backyard Habitat". They have also been used to teach other Master Gardeners the basics of habitat gardening.

"The Master Gardener Program has given me the confidence to create my backyard habitat, something I have been wanting to do for several years, but didn't know where to start. The New River Master Gardener Association has become well known and respected since its formation in 1999 by providing volunteer hours to improve and beautify our communities and by offering education--not only to its members, but to the public as well. I am proud to tell others I am one of its members".



## **MARION COUNTY HOSTS 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL TOMATO TASTING FESTIVAL**

**by Paul Long, Marion County**

It's time to nurture your entry for the Marion County Master Gardener Tomato Festival being held on Sunday, August 23 from 1:00 to 4:00 at the Highgate in Fairmont! A \$100 cash prize will be awarded to the winner of the biggest tomato (by weight) contest. So, bring your or another gardening friend's largest tomato and enter the contest. In addition to the cash prize, a trophy will be awarded to the county of origin. This trophy, along with bragging rights, will travel year-to-year to the winning county.

Generally speaking, it is a premiere farmers' market that features a tomato tasting as the main event but there's more. Educational speakers delve into a variety of subjects that are sure to please most gardening enthusiasts. Brian Floyd, the executive chef who heads the local culinary school will speak and demonstrate food preparation using the fresh produce that's on hand from Festival's vendors! An accomplished duo of Appalachian story tellers will entertain us with stories of our West Virginia heritage!

The Festival is a great way to meet gardeners within and outside your community. Last year, the event was attended by Master Gardeners from seven counties. Please join the fun and take the opportunity to meet other gardeners and exchange ideas as you spend the afternoon enjoying the food, speakers and entertainment at the beautiful Highgate in Fairmont.

Directions to the Highgate at 830 Walnut Street, Fairmont:

From I79, take Exit 132 South Fairmont

Turn onto Route 250 N (becomes Fairmont Ave.) and go approximately 3.9 miles

McDonald's is on the right; Highgate is large mansion on left

Parking in the back, in church parking lot and on street

Signs will be posted to help

**BE SURE TO CHECK OUR WEB PAGE FOR UPDATES at <http://sites.google.com/site/tomatotastingfestival/>**

# NATIVE, WOODS-GROWN MEDICINAL PLANTS

*By Dot Montgillion (Lewis County)*

The Appalachian area, comprised of all or parts of thirteen eastern states has the greatest diversity of plants than any area other than tropical rain forests. Four hundreds of years, the natives and, later, settlers relied on this diversity for their food, shelter, clothing and medicines. Today, we continue to rely on many plants for 25% of our prescription medications.

It is difficult to narrow the selection of plants that qualify as native, woods-grown medicinal plants. American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium L.*) is obviously the most researched, publicized and economically valued.

Second in importance is goldenseal (*Hydrastis Canadensis L.*) It was very widely used by several Indian tribes and, later, by settlers. It is still an important medicinal which is being woods grown to augment wild populations which have been over harvested (partly in response to the myth that it masks drug use).

Pokeberry (*Phytolacca peltatum L.*) proponents claim that it is effective in relieving the pain and swelling of arthritis and rheumatism within two weeks. The ripe berries have been ingested by various civilizations for over six hundred years. An ounce of pokeberry wine or four to ten berries a day were common dosages. Herbalists consider the four to ten berries per day as a safe and effective level for adults. Pokeberry has anti-inflammatory effects and is considered safe for extended use.

May Apple (*Podophyllum peltatum L.*) is the source of podophyllum resin for the pharmaceutical industry. Highest activity is found in the rhizomes dug in the spring which the 5% resin requirement. It is used in the treatment of testicular cancer and small cell lung cancer. Due to its poisonous nature, it should only be used by medical personnel. The resin contains about 20% podophyllotoxin which was a "1976 Drug of Choice" for brain tumors and Hodgkins disease.

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum (Nutt.) Nees*) The root bark of this under-story tree is believed to have been the first article of trade from the colonies to Europe. The tree is unique in that the foliage can take on three different forms on the same tree: entire leaf margin, two or three rounded lobes or the noted "mitten shape." The oil of the root bark is used for flavoring various foods. The leaves, gathered just before color change in autumn are the ingredient in Cajun cooking's file gumbo. Medicinally, it is considered a mild blood thinner and a cup of sassafras tea a day was sometimes recommended after surgery to prevent blood clots.

Black Cohosh (*Actea racemosa*) The active ingredient of this graceful, shade-loving plant is cimicifugin. A tea made fro the root has been shown to have anit-inflammatory, sedative and antispasmodic activity. A common name for this plant is "squaw root" since it was widely used for female complaints. Black Cohosh is considered one of the best phytoestrogens and is used for both pre-menstrual and post-menstrual conditions. It is sometimes used as one ingredient in a formula for treating benign prostate enlargement to balance hormone levels.

## **NATIVE, WOODS-GROWN MEDICINAL PLANTS (continued)**

**Blood Root (*Sanguinaria Canadensis L.*)** This lovely spring ephemeral (just had to use that word) grows in rich open woods or in bottom lands along shady streams. Common nicknames are redroot or red puccoon. The juice was used to treat cancer and tumors in folk medicine. It has been found to be very effective in treating dental plaque, sanguinarine being the active principal. Deer never bother this plant of the opium family. When handling the roots, take care as the plant is toxic.

**Jewel Weed (*Impatiens biflora*)** An extract of this plant, also known as “wild touch-me-not” is the active ingredient in prescription poison ivy medicine. Due to its anti-fungal activity, it is also used in some athletes’ foot medications. The juice of the fresh leaves and stems usually prevents poison ivy rash from erupting if applied to the suspect skin areas within four hours. It also relieves the itch of insect bites.

**Yellow Root (*Xanthorhiza simplissima Marsh*)** Also know as shrubby yellowroot, it is medicinally used interchangeably with goldenseal. The yellow cambium layer is indicative of the presence of berberine, thought to give the plant its characteristic taste which deters animals and insects alike. The inner bark is used the same way as goldenseal root; i.e., as an antibiotic, antiseptic, mouthwash and eye wash.

**About the author: Dot Montgillion, a West Virginian by choice, has a degree in botany/agronomy and worked at the USDA research center, Beltsville, Maryland, for eighteen years before moving to West Virginia in 1975. She and her husband, Bob, own and operate a seventy-five acre farm in Lewis County where they grow many of the herbs that are used in their business, Smoke Camp Crafts.**

*Note: This article is for informational purposes only. It is not a recommendation to treat any of the conditions or illnesses mentioned.*