



LOUDOUN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MONTHLY MEETINGS

FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

APRIL 6

"Picture Your Garden" — Hints for Garden Photography

Dr. James Adwers is sharing his love of photography and giving us some helpful hints. Please join us at 7 pm in the Extension Office.

MAY 4

"Container Gardening"

Wally Reed, Curator of Tropical Plants at the US Botanical Garden and Director of Operations at Endless Summer Harvest in Purcellville, is speaking about selecting containers, proper planting, and suggestions on color and impact. Please join us at 7 pm, Extension Office.

JUNE 1

"Urban Forest and the Effect Green Areas have on our Mental Health"

Kelley Wagner, County Forester with the VA Dept. of Forestry is speaking at our Ida Lee Demonstration Garden, 7 pm.

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the Trumpet Vine

Knowledge for the Community from the Loudoun County Master Gardeners

Spring 2006

Volume I, Issue 1

www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org

America's Anniversary Garden

Loudoun County Master Gardeners (LCMG) have adopted the America's Anniversary Garden theme for 2006 – 2007 in honor of the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the Americas.

The Virginia Cooperative Extension developed the theme to help individuals, communities, and groups with signature garden planting featuring red, white, and blue.

As you drive through Virginia communities in the next two years, you may notice many have planted red, white, and blue themes in their corridor and entrance gardens.



Featured Plants

You can use your imagination and creativity when deciding what plants to use in your America's Anniversary Garden. Any plant having a part (stems, leaves, flowers) that is red, white, or blue can be included. Some easy to grow plants that fit the color scheme are:

- ☼ Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* 'Red Velvet' has beautiful bright red flowers that bloom for many weeks in the summer. Yarrow is easy to grow, prefers full-sun, and is somewhat drought tolerant.
- ☼ *Salvia farinacea* 'Victoria Blue' is an erect, densely branched annual with blue flower spikes. It likes well-drained, moist soil and tolerates heat. Deadheading encourages blooming.
- ☼ Garden *Phlox paniculata* 'David' grows to about 3 feet and has white fragrant blooms for many weeks during the summer. Phlox prefers full-sun to partially-shaded locations with evenly moist soil.
- ☼ Fringe tree *Chionanthus virginicus* is native to Virginia and has beautiful white blooms in the spring, followed by blue fruits (on the females) in the late summer and early fall. They prefer full-sun to partial-shade and wet to evenly moist soils. It grows up to twenty feet tall.

Enjoy your beautiful America's Anniversary Garden for years to come! To learn more about the America's Anniversary Garden, including planting plans and plant lists, at: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/americasgarden/>.

Contact Master Gardeners at the Extension Help Desk at 703-771-5150 or ex107mg@vt.edu, or stop by with samples for diagnosis at 30-B Ca-toctin Circle, SE, Leesburg (Wachovia Bank Building). To learn more about Loudoun Master Gardener Volunteers visit their website: www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org.

Upcoming Gardening Events

Apr 6	"Picture Your Garden" — Hints for Garden Photography —7 pm, 30-B Catoctin Circle, Leesburg
Apr 22	Arbor Day celebration
Apr 22 – 24	Leesburg Flower & Garden Festival — visit the LCMG booth
May 4	"Container Gardening" — 7 pm, 30-B Catoctin Circle, SE, Leesburg
May 6	Oatlands Garden Fair — visit the LCMG booth
May 13 - 14	Blandy Garden Fair — visit the LCMG booth
May 20-21	Spring Farm Tour — visit us at the Ida Lee Demonstration Garden
June 1	"Urban Forest and the Affect Green Areas have on our Mental Health" —7 pm, Ida Lee Demonstration Garden, 7 pm
Every Tues	"Lunch & Learn in the Garden" — join us at the Ida Lee Demonstration Garden every Tuesday throughout the summer beginning May 17 to hear speakers and see the latest gardening techniques, noon. For specific topics, see our website.
Every Sat	Leesburg Farmers Market — bring your questions, plants, even pests to our Gardening Clinics for diagnosis and recommendations, beginning May 20
3 rd Sun	Cascades Farmers Market— another opportunity to speak with Master Gardeners
Check our website — www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org — for additional details and latest information.	



Loudoun County Master Gardeners are once again participating in Leesburg's big Spring event: the Flower & Garden Festival on April 22nd and 23rd. We are continuing our tradition of selling tomatoes, peppers, and herbs grown especially for the festival. We also have flowering plants donated from various Master Gardeners' flowerbeds.

This year is our first to offer America's Anniversary Garden items, including red, white, and blue hanging baskets. Master Gardeners have been busy making wreaths from grapevines donated by Elk Run Vineyard and decorating them in rustic red, white, and blue items that colonists would have had: berries, dried flowers, etc.

If you want to get a start on America's Anniversary in your garden, patio, or home, please stop by and visit our booth. Master Gardeners will be available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank You Southern States!

A BIG, BIG THANK YOU goes to the **Purcellville Southern States** for donating 20 bags of:

- Composted leaf mold
- Potting soil
- Composted manure.

These supplies are going to be used in the creation of a Container Garden at the Ida Lee Demonstration Garden.

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Heirloom Garden Planned

LCMG is planting a portion of its Ida Lee Demonstration Garden with flowers, vegetables, and herbs found during the time period the colonists settled at Jamestown in honor of America's Anniversary Garden. Also, there are red, white, and blue cutting beds planned. Visit us at the Ida Lee Demo Garden this summer to see the plan and learn about horticulture from the past.

Facts about Flowers

Spring Bulbs

The snowdrops have come and gone and many of the early crocus bloomed through the snow. The daffodils are blooming now with tulips soon to follow — all without having to do any work in the garden. No wonder we love spring bulbs!



But not all bulbs are low-maintenance, heavy-bloomers. Perennializing or naturalizing — planting bulbs that come back and bloom every spring — requires selecting the right bulbs in the first place and then providing the right growing conditions.

Snowdrops, bluebells, crocus, and daffodils are good for naturalizing. They should have a niche in your garden where they can remain undisturbed after blooming.

Once you plant the right bulbs, the second key to successful naturalizing is what happens between the time they come up and when the foliage yellows. This determines next year's flower crop.

As soon as the shoots break through the ground in early spring apply soluble 10-10-10. Do not fertilize spring bulbs while they are flowering. This encourages the development of bulb rot and can shorten the life of the flowers. Remove spent flowers from daffodils and tulips so energy can be channeled into forming large bulbs. If you do not remove spent flowers, the bulbs get smaller every year. Smaller bulbs such as grape hyacinths can set seed and self-sow.

DO NOT remove bulb foliage until it has turned completely yellow. Also do not tie up or braid the foliage. This hinders the amount of sunlight that the leaves can get and hinders bulb growth. Leave the foliage on ALL bulbs undisturbed until it yellows and dies on its own. If you have naturalized bulbs in a grassy area, which is mowed, do not mow for 6 to 8 weeks after the bulbs flower. Regular mowing and aeration benefits bulbs and the grass.



Most bulbs flower very well in their first year regardless of where they are planted because of the storage reserves present in good quality bulbs. The second year is a reflection of the new planting site. If flower production is poor in subsequent years, it may be due to age. Daffodils should be able to go several years without being divided. When dividing, dig up the clumps in the fall or any time after the foliage yellows.

Master Gardener Carol Ivory

Easter Lilies

Every holiday has symbols that bring joy, comfort, and continuity from one generation to the next. Easter includes decorated eggs, chocolate bunnies, bonnets, and, of course, the Easter Lily. This beautiful plant with trumpet-shaped white flowers symbolizes innocence, hope, and life — the essence of Easter.

For the longest period of enjoyment, look for plants with flowers in various stages of bloom. For example, the best selection would be a plant



with just one or two open or partly open blooms, and three or more puffy, unopened buds of different sizes.

Also check out the foliage: an abundance of dark, rich green foliage is not only attractive, but a vital sign of good plant health. The foliage should appear dense and plentiful, all the way down to the soil line, a good indicator of an active, healthy root system.

Easter Lilies prefer moderately cool temperatures, around 60° to 65° F in the daytime and slightly cooler at night. Avoid placing plants near drafts or exposure to heat. Lilies thrive near a window in bright, indirect natural daylight, but avoid glaring, direct sunlight.

Water thoroughly when the soil surface feels dry to a light touch, but avoid over-watering.

After the last bloom, you can plant your lily outside to enjoy for years to come. Good drainage is the key for success with lilies. They also like their roots in shade and their heads in the sun.




Plant the bulbs 3 inches below ground level and 12 to 18 inches apart. Mulching helps conserve moisture, keeps the soil cool and loose, and provides a fluffy, nutritious medium for the stem roots.

Easter Lily bulbs are surprisingly hardy even in cold climates. Provide winter protection by mulching the ground with straw, pine needles, or leaves. Next June or July, your Easter Lilies bloom again.

Master Gardener Janette Sawyer

Early Harbingers of Spring

Are you like me? Can't wait until spring? Do you start watching for the first signs that spring is here? Below are some of the early harbingers of spring. If you're looking for a new addition to your garden — check these out at your local nursery. You might find a new favorite!

- Eastern redbud — *Cercis Canadensis*. Anyone who has driven down Rte. 15 in early spring has seen the beauty of this tree. A small to medium size native tree, the Redbud's vivid colors are hard to beat. Plant in full-sun for best flowering, but redbuds can handle partial shade — and they are drought tolerant. 
- Tulip magnolia — *Magnolia x soulangeana*. This medium to large tree is covered with tulip-like flowers in shades of pink to maroon. Plant in full-sun and protect from strong winds. The danger with this beauty is that late frost turn the flowers to a black mess. 
- Star magnolia — *Magnolia stellata*. A shrub or small tree, star magnolia also blooms before it leaves out. The name comes from of the strap-like petals of the flowers that give the appearance of stars. Plant in full-sun and protect from strong winds. 

Help Desk / Gardening Clinics





Now that spring has arrived, our fearless Help Desk Heroes are ready to diagnose and recommend solutions for your gardening problems.

LCMG provides the Help Desk to disseminate information that is approved by the Cooperative Extension Office in response to your horticultural questions. The Help Desk is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to noon. You can reach us at:

703 771-5150 or
ex107mg@mail.vt.edu

In 2005, our Help Desk received 989 calls, visits, and e-mails with problems or requests for information.

We also have an information booth each Saturday at the Leesburg Farmers Market, and the third Sunday of each month at Cascades.

- Camellia — *Camellia japonica*. Camellias are an early bloomer. The flowers are tightly set up against the evergreen simply stunning blooms, color to bright don't want to miss the blooms, plant camellias where you can see them. They need well-drained, fertile, acid soil and protection from the hot sun and winter winds. 
- Daphne — *Daphne x burkwoodii*. A low, acid loving shrub, daphne blooms in late-winter or early spring. The creamy-white to pinkish flowers are intensely fragrant. Plant daphnes in rich, well-drained soil with partial shade. 'Carol Mackie' has creamy margins on the leaves and seems to do better in our zone. This is not a plant for the faint hearted as despite all efforts it can unexplainably die and leave you wondering what you did wrong. 
- Spring heather — *Erica carnea*. This is a wonderful group of low growing shrubs. Clay soil and summer heat are their enemies. Plant in full-sun with well-soil. They make great rock garden edging along a garden path. Their flowers are tiny, bell-shaped, long-blooming and come in a range of colors. 
- Winter jasmine — *Jasminum nudiflorum*. An erratic bloomer, with bright yellow clusters of trumpet-like flowers, jasmine is a sight to behold. needs well-drained soil and water during dry spells until it gets established in the garden. Give it full-sun for best flowering results. 

Master Gardener Becky Phillips

Lawn Care

How to "Read" Your Lawn

Using indicator plants to "read" the environment is a common practice, whether or not we recognize we are doing it. Probably the most common use of an indicator plant is "moss grows on the north side of a tree" as this shaded side of the tree trunk is cooler and moister — the kind of environment needed for survival of the moss.

Lawn areas with sparse grass and moss growing on the soil surface may indicate several environmental problems. Heavy shade in the area may be weakening the grass and providing a more desirable situation for the moss growth. If shade is not the problem, moss often is a first indicator that the soil is infertile and too acidic for the grass species. Poor drainage, possibly due to soil compaction, also favors the moss.

Chickweed, ground ivy, and violets are other plants that tolerate areas too shady for good grass growth. When the soil also contains excessive moisture, heal-all and horsetail are common indicators of poor drainage and poor aeration. Without the heavy shade, nutsedge (a grass-like plant but with triangular stem) indicates a high moisture level.

To help identify weeds, visit our Help Desk, Gardening Clinics, or website.

On the other hand, pussy-toes and yarrow indicate the soil is too dry for the grass and of low fertility. The same is true for red sorrel, which also indicates very acidic soil. At moderate moisture levels, very infertile and acidic soils are indicated by orange hawkweed and oxeye daisy, especially when both are present together.

Some lawn weeds are not indicator plants but are only opportunists. They grow in a wide range of environments; all they need is a space to germinate in a weakened turf. Dandelion is a prime example of this type of weed.

Turf specialists always say that the best weed control method for a lawn is to keep the grass healthy. This means to maintain an environment that favors turf competition against the weed plants.

With the correct grass type for the area under proper soil conditioning, fertilization, watering, and mowing, the lawn environment is unsuitable for the indicator plants and the community of grass plants will be dense enough to exclude opportunistic weeds. If weeds are present in the lawn, use them to "read" the lawn environment before reaching for the weed killer.

(Adapted from "What Plants Can Tell Us," by Alan R. McDaniel, Extension Vocational Horticulturist, in [The Virginia Gardener Newsletter](#), Volume 3, Number 8.)

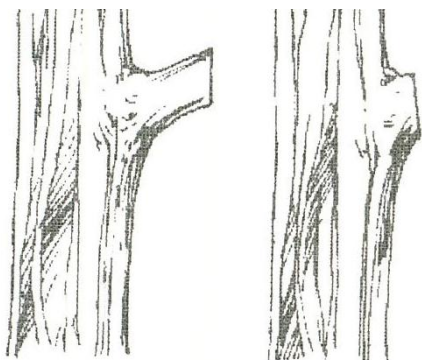
Extension Agent Debbie Dillion

Tips on Trees and Shrubs

Spring Pruning

Spring is not the best time for unabashed pruning, but some pruning is required.

Your first priority is eliminating winter damage. Broken tree limbs should be properly removed before they start to rot and disease enters. Cut just outside the branch collar and do not paint the cut.



too long a stub

correct cut

Spring flowering shrubs such as azaleas and rhododendrons should not be pruned until after blooming.

Vines should be checked for winter damage and tied back to their trellises when needed. To prune and remove broken branches on clematis, prune back to just above a live bud that is starting to sprout. Do any other pruning on clematis after it blooms.

Ornamental grasses, including liriope, should be sheared fairly close to the ground before new leaves start emerging through the dead foliage. Be careful not to cut new leaves as you clean out the old ones.

When trimming dead branches and leaves from perennials, clean out the debris and remove it from the garden as old leaves and dead branches may contain diseases that can infect the new shoots.

Master Gardener Carol Ivory

Information for Tree Enthusiasts

TREE Cookies Etc. is a newsletter dedicated to provide free, unbiased, research-based information, opportunities, and connections for you, produced by the Northern District Department of Forestry and Natural Resources dedicated to providing forest management information and resources.

To receive the newsletter, send an e-mail to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.VT.EDU with SUBSCRIBE Tree_Cookies_Etc in the body (and nothing else). Leave the subject line blank and be sure to turn off any automatic signatures. The electronic distribution of this newsletter has been created with the tightest possible controls. Only the list owner (Adam Downing) can send to this listserv and replies cannot be sent to the list. You may view or download past issues of *TREE Cookies Etc.* by, clicking on <newsletters> at <http://offices.ext.vt.edu/madison>

Vegetable Advice

Planning Your Vegetable Garden

To get the best from your vegetable garden, **rotate your crops**. By moving plant groups each year, the soil is not depleted of particular nutrients that different types of vegetables use. Rotation also helps reduce disease problems. The recommendation is not to grow the same kind of crop in the same position sooner than four years.

To maximize garden space, you may want to use **intensive gardening** methods. One is succession planting, or planting something new to replace spent plants. Planting corn after peas is an example. Warm season crops such as tomato, beans and peppers can follow spring cool-season crops such as broccoli, lettuce and peas. In the fall, you can plant another crop of cool season vegetables and even a winter cover crop.

If you want to grow fresh vegetables but think you don't have room, consider **container gardening**. Certain varieties of cucumbers, peppers, squash, lettuce, and tomatoes can be easily grown in large containers. In order to be successful, you must first choose those varieties that do not grow too large for a container. The seed packet or seedling tag information should include whether or not the varieties are suitable for container gardening. Most varieties with "bush" or "patio" in their name do well in containers.

Visit the Ida Lee Demonstration Garden to see these — and other — methods. Master Gardens are there on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 am to noon and can answer your questions or show you new gardening methods.

Meet Loudoun Co Master Gardeners

Two of Loudoun County's most tenured Master Gardeners — from the class of 1992 — are Judy Lamar and Don Kidwell. They are both still active in the organization; in fact, teaching some of the classes for new Master Gardeners. Just think of the impact they've made with 14 years of education in their respective horticulture areas!

Judy just delivered the class on Vegetables. She clearly has vast knowledge on the topic, plus many humorous anecdotes about her vegetable gardening. She started growing her own after deciding that the vegetables at nurseries looked terrible and had problems (diseases). She joined LCMG to learn more about the soil and organic gardening.



Judy Lamar showing her green thumb to the class of 2006



"Have your soil tested every 3 years!" stresses Don Kidwell.

Don teaches the class on Turf. After retiring from the government, he has been researching the green stuff. Currently, he is investigating deer-resistant turf.

Don has been instrumental in supporting LCMG's educational mission by offering a Gardening Series for many years.

Avoid Gardening Injuries

Most of us would agree that gardening is a very relaxing pastime. But we often forget how physically demanding working in the garden can be. While exercising our green thumb in the spring we are using muscles that have been hibernating all winter. Even a small plot requires digging, raking, bending, reaching, lifting and carrying – the use of the back, legs, shoulders, elbows and wrists. Repetitive motion, awkward positions or postures, and using hands to pound or push on things can cause strains and injuries. We can prevent injuries with a few precautions.



Warm-up with exercises

- Quadricep Stretch — Stand upright and hold onto a sturdy table or chair. Grasp your ankle with your hand and gently pull your heel toward your buttocks. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Repeat and switch legs.
- Bear Hug Stretch — Wrap your arms around yourself and rotate to one side, stretching as far as you can comfortably go. Hold for ten seconds and reverse. Repeat twice.
- Hand Stretch — Hold one hand straight out with palm facing up. Use the opposite hand to gently push back your fingers and wrist. Hold for five seconds, repeat five times on each hand.
- Elbow Twisting Exercise — With outstretched arms, practice wringing out a dry terry cloth with both hands. Repeat 10 times.

Use proper posture

- Keep your hand and wrist in a straight line when you use hand tools. Bending the wrist weakens your grip on the tool, which causes you to exert hand and arm muscles with greater force.
- Avoid bending your back or twisting at the waist. Bend at the knees when lifting objects, pulling weeds, or planting. Stretch your limbs frequently to prevent muscle strain.

Use proper equipment

- Always wear gardening gloves to protect your hands against cuts, soil, insect bites, and skin irritants.
- Use rubber gloves when working with garden chemicals.
- Use appropriate tools (shovel or hand shovel) instead of your hands. Buried objects such as tree roots can injure your hand, wrist or arm while digging.

Change activities frequently

Avoid repetitive motions like raking, digging and planting for prolonged periods of time. Vary tasks every 15 minutes and take a brief rest in between.

Don't press yourself to finish all your gardening tasks in one weekend. Spread the work out and enjoy!

Master Gardener Carol Ivory

Gardening Basics

Virginia Gardener Short Course

Sponsored by Loudoun Cooperative Extension

"Learn gardening basics and how to protect our environment and water quality"

Each session is \$10. Registration is due five business days before that class. To register, make checks payable to Loudoun VCE-107 and drop it by the Extension Office. e-mail or phone confirmation of registration will be made.

Apr 3	Woody and Herbaceous Plants
Jul 10	Common Insects and Diseases of an Ornamental
Jul 24	Designing an IPM Program
Aug 7	Turf
Oct 30	Wildlife in the Garden
Nov 6	Pruning Basics

Call 703-771-5838 with questions. Space is limited, so register early. No refunds will be made.

Subscriptions

If you would like to receive The Trumpet Vine via e-mail, please contact us at ex107mg@vt.edu or call 703 771-5150.

Spring Gardening Tips

❖ **Important!** The average date of the last frost in Loudoun County is May 10th. If you plant flowers and vegetables prior to that, be prepared to cover them.

For your lawn:

- ☐ Control crabgrass before it germinates with a preemergent herbicide – not a fertilizer (early April)
- ☐ Get your mower blades sharpened before the season begins
- ☐ Leave grass clippings on the lawn to add nitrogen to the soil
- ☐ Pour boiling water on unwanted grass and weeds in driveways and sidewalks

In the flower bed:

- ☐ Divide perennials and prune roses (April)
- ☐ Plant tender, summer-blooming bulbs (begonias, caladiums, cannas, dahlias, and gladiolas)
- ☐ Start seeds indoors (April) to transplant outdoors (May) after hardening
- ☐ Mix flowers and herbs so pests aren't attracted to one location
- ☐ Fertilize roses once a month with 5-10-5, look for lack spot and apply organic fungicide like sulfur or copper-containing soap
- ☐ Deadhead flowers for continuous bloom
- ☐ Pinch back chrysanthemum until mid-July to promote fullness and fall bloom
- ☐ Control unwanted "volunteers" and weeds with mulch, cultivation or hand-picking
- ☐ Check for signs of disease or insect damage and treat accordingly
- ☐ Pick Japanese beetles off before 8:00 am (when they wake up) and put them into soapy water

For trees and shrubs:

- ☐ Prune twigs and branches affected by winter kill after new growth begins
- ☐ Prune spring-flowering trees / shrubs after they bloom (forsythia, weigla, spirea)
- ☐ Pinch back candles on evergreens to ½ to thicken
- ☐ Look for tent caterpillars bagworms and destroy them
- ☐ Mulch out (**not up**), 2-4" is plenty
- ☐ Fertilize trees if leaves are small, sparse, and / or pale
- ☐ Do not prune summer or fall bloomers
- ☐ Use organic insect and disease control on fruit trees

In the garden:

- ☐ Start seeds indoors (April) to transplant outdoors (May) after hardening
- ☐ Plant and / or transplant strawberries, raspberries, and other small fruits
- ☐ Plant cool crops (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, peas, potatoes, radishes, and spinach)
- ☐ Plant succession crops every three weeks to extend harvest (corn and beans)
- ☐ Keep fruits and vegetables well-watered, mulch with straw to keep moisture and reduce weeds
- ☐ Fertilize crops with manure tea
- ☐ Control pests with insecticidal soap or soapy water

Debbie Dillion is the Urban Horticulturist and coordinator of the Master Gardener Volunteer program in Loudoun County. She can be reached at 703-771-5838.

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