



LOUDOUN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MONTHLY MEETINGS

FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC Unless noted, meetings are held at the Virginia Tech Extension Office, 30B Catocin Circle SE, Leesburg at 7pm

April 2, Loudoun Water Aquary
- Meeting located at 44865 Loudoun Water Way, Asburn. Tour the new state-of-the-art facility and hear a talk about water stewardship. This facility has been designated an official Certified Wildlife Habitat.

June 4, Creating an Urban Oasis, Mary Stickley, Gardens and Grounds Manager for the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, will speak on using design and native plants to create mini habitats for birds and insects.

July - No Meeting Scheduled

August 6 - Native Plants for Birds and Bees, Kim Strader, Curatorial Assistant at Blandy Arboretum, will speak on native plants we can use to provide year-round care for our birds and bees.

For more Information about these meetings and other events, please visit our web site:
<http://www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org/>

Trumpet Vine

Knowledge for the Community from the Loudoun County Master Gardeners

Spring 2009

Volume V, Issue 2

www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org

Leesburg Flower and Garden Festival

The Annual Leesburg Flower and Garden Festival, April 18 and 19, has become a must attend event. The blush of spring is certainly in the air, and people are eager to begin adorning their flowerbeds and patios, and eyeing the displays of vegetable plants. This is the 19th year for the event, and it's bigger and better than ever. This year, as in the previous year, the area encompasses the Historic District from Loudoun Street to North Street, and from Church Street to Wirt Street. Parking is available in the City Parking garage off of Loudoun Street, and also in the County Building at Loudoun and Harrison Streets. Shuttle service is available as well to other parking areas. Check the website at www.idalee.org for more information.

Vendors vary from lawn ornaments to every imaginable type of Basil. Speaking of vendors, each year the Loudoun County Master Gardeners operate a booth where we sell our very favorite tomatoes, peppers and herbs. Preorder sales of these plants are offered on our web site (<http://www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org/> - click on Plant Sale). Order forms, with payment,, are due by Friday, April 2nd, so hurry! We also offer potted divisions from our Demonstration Garden at Ida Lee Park as well as those from our own gardens. We strive to provide only plants that thrive in our climate.

Here are some veggie planting tips for our area:

St. Patrick's Day - Remember the Green - it's time to sow your peas!

Mother's Day - This is the earliest you can put in your tomatoes and peppers. Putting them in the ground before this date will not yield any growth and may adversely impact your plant if we have a frost. If you purchased these plants at the F&G Show, keep them in a sunny window, or under a grow light (keep the light right at the top of the plant). Keep them moist but not soggy. You may begin to see flowers before planting! When planting tomatoes in the ground, remove the bottom set of leaves and plant right to the next set. Roots will grow along the entire planted stem.

Grow Your Own Veggies in 2009

Bountiful Produce from the Demonstration Garden at Ida Lee Park, August '08, Picture courtesy Denise Palmer, LCMG

Many homeowners may be considering growing their own vegetables this year for reasons such as the economy, nutrition, or food safety concerns.

Home gardeners starting their own vegetable transplants for their garden need to keep four points in mind: 1) time plants are needed (or seeding dates), 2) soil mix, 3) light, and 4) temperature.

1. Most vegetable transplants except the cucurbit family (cucumbers, cantaloupes, squash, and watermelons) need about six weeks from seeding until plants are ready to set out in the garden. Cucurbits only need three weeks and may even be seeded directly in the garden. It's not difficult to calculate the proper time to start seeds. For example, it's safe to set out tomato plants in our area around May 1-15 (depending on weather). So tomato seeds should be sown indoors about the last week of March to April 1. This will provide a young, actively growing transplant, not overcrowded in the container that has a root ball still expanding and growing downward (not completely encircling the outer surface of the potting soil).
2. Commercially available potting soils are lightweight, free from plant pests and soil-borne diseases, and drain very well. They provide superior performance compared to garden soil when placed in cell packs or other small transplant-growing containers. Choose types without added fertilizer. Diluted fertilizer can be used after the new plants form their first true leaves.
3. Unless you have a solar room with overhead sunlight or a greenhouse, chances are your window light, except for brief periods on sunny days, is too shady. To do the job well, home gardeners can use fluorescent lights placed about 12 inches above the seedling tray. The lights should be on a timer to provide 16 hours of bright light each 24-hour period. Dual fluorescent tubes provide stronger and more uniform light than a single tube. One cool-white and one warm-white fluorescent tube provide an excellent balance of useable light for photosynthesis. As plants sprout and grow under lights, the tubes should be raised so as not to produce too much heat too near the tops of the plants.
4. Fluorescent tubes emit a lot of warmth. To compensate for this warmth, keep plants growing on the cool side to promote stocky versus succulent growth. The best results may be accomplished by turning off or down all other heat in the room where your plants are started to 55° F. A cool basement is an excellent area for starting plants under lights. The only exception to this rule is the germination process. Temperature requirements for germination are quite different from "growing" temperature. After good germination at 80° F, 60° F is preferable for growing out most vegetable transplants to keep them stocky and healthy.

When plants are about four inches tall, they are an excellent size for the least transplanting shock and for faster regrowth in the garden, as opposed to plants that are 10 to 12 inches tall. When your plants have reached four inches in height and are well-branched and stocky, they should be "hardened-off" by reducing watering frequency and moving plants to an outdoor porch or cold frame for the final week or two before going into the garden. This will toughen them to the effects of wind and outside temperatures, and to the natural light/dark cycle. If an unexpected frost is forecast, move the plants back indoors under 16 hours of light, but keep the temperature at 55 to 60° F if possible.

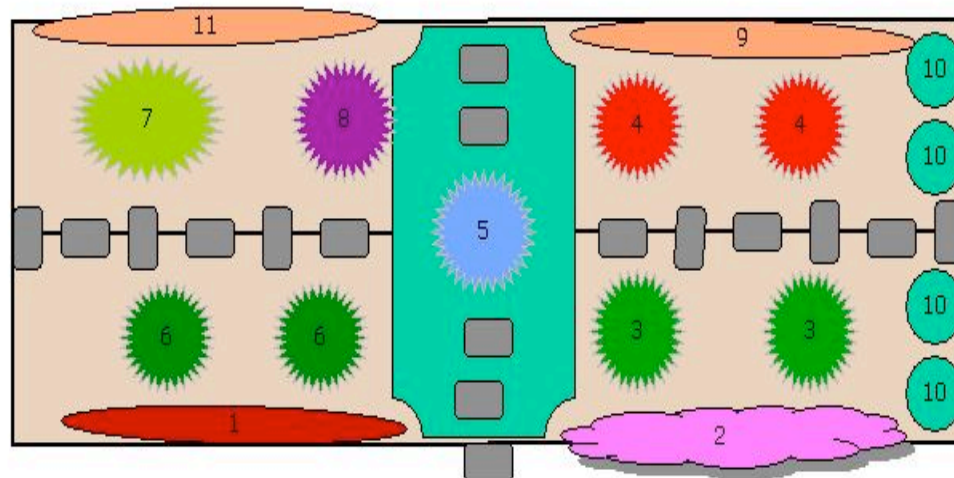
Visit the Virginia Cooperative Extension webpage www.ext.vt.edu to download a copy of publication 426-331, Vegetable Planting Guide and Recommended Planting Dates.

Debbie D. Dillion, Urban Horticulturist, Loudoun County Extension

Last issue I talked about general garden design and how to get started. This issue I have developed two vegetable designs. This first one incorporates veggies into my front yard flower beds. I have added several spots that could be filled in with vegetables and/or herbs as talked about in the previous article. In the key box I list some options - don't let this restrict your ideas! If you like the idea of using veggies in your front yard use this design to get your ideas flowing and have fun with it.

Suggestions for veggies in the front yard:

Now, not being a veggie gardener this might raise some eyes but I think I have given the plants plenty of space and this is a garden for me - a single person. I have made it a formal garden - easier to get in and out of and I love the looks of formal vegetable/herb gardens. I have dressed it up with a trellis in the middle that would have Hyacinth Beans along with either Moon Flower or Morning Glory on it. I have also added some companion plants along side of the main vegetable in each area. The bed measures 4'x12'.



1. Radishes
2. scallions or chives
3. Peppers
4. Tomatoes
5. Trellis with thyme
as ground cover
6. 'Honey Bear'
Squash
7. hill of cucumbers
8. 'Gretel' eggplant
9. Carrots
10. 'Boxwood' basil
11. nasturtiums

(continued)

Culinary Combinations

Create entire gardens in containers using wooden half-barrels or large, 24-inch-diameter pots. Grow the ingredients for your favorite sauces and for your favorite vegetable dishes.

Salsa Garden: Bush-type tomato, jalapeño (or hotter) pepper, and cilantro. Sow the cilantro seeds around the edge of the container. If you want onions in your salsa, plant them in a separate, deep planter.

Pesto Pot: Basil, garlic, and (optional) parsley.

Rainbow Planter: Any red, patio-type tomato, a purple or white eggplant; a couple of decorative yellow, orange, or purple sweet peppers; green- and purple-leaved basil around the edge.

Fines Herbes Box: Tarragon, chives, parsley, and chervil. Set the first two perennials toward the rear of the container, so you will not disturb their roots at the end of the season when you pull up the other herbs.

Bouquet Garni Bonanza: Plant chervil or parsley, thyme, and marjoram around a centered sweet bay tree.

Stir-fry Selection: Chinese (narrow) eggplant, any hot pepper, snow peas, and bok choy. Sow snow peas and bok choy in early spring and again in mid-to late summer for a fall harvest.

Salad Bowl: Patio tomato and sweet pepper (in center of a round container or at each end of a rectangular one), one or two cucumber plants near edge (let them spill over, without support), radishes and red- and green-leaf lettuce in middle spaces.

Soup Mix: Lemon grass, thyme, parsley, chives, chervil, and scallions.

Pizza Sauce: Bush tomato, sweet green pepper, onions or scallions, and oregano.

Seasonal Garden: Spring leaf lettuce followed by summer beans on a tepee succeeded by fall peas. Set up tepee when you plant lettuce seedlings. Sow beans while lettuce is still growing; plants provide lettuce with a bit of shade from the hot sun. Sow peas in late summer where lettuce was and while beans continue to produce.

Kids' Corner: Radishes, tomato plant, bush beans, basil, and carrots. Set tomato plant in center. Alternate clumps of basil and bean seeds in a circle around tomato. Mix seeds of radishes and carrots together and sow around outer edge; radishes will be pulled before carrots need more space to grow.

At A Glance: Vegetables for Containers:	
Patio/Bush type tomatoes	Garlic
Leaf lettuce	Cucumbers – at edge to spillover
Jalapeño or sweet peppers	Bush bean
All Herbs	Radishes
Beans on a tee pee trellis	Onions/scallions
Small Eggplants varieties	Parsley, chervil, cilantro

Becky Phillips, Loudoun County Master Gardener

Ask The Hardscaper

Ed Note: This is a new column for the Trumpet Vine. If you have any hardscaping questions, please submit to editor: linda@shotton.com.

Question:

How do I build raised beds for my vegetable garden? What materials should I use, and where can I find them?

Dimensions:

- ❖ Accessible soil for a vegetable bed needs to be 12-18 inches deep. The height off the ground can vary according to taste, necessity, or other design consideration.
- ❖ If you have a bad back or want the garden to be wheelchair accessible, heights ranging from 2'-3' can be used.
- ❖ No more than 4' wide if you have access from both sides, but as long as you want.
- ❖ You can use simple squares or rectangles or you can be creative and more elaborate. Try a cross, triangles, or other geometric shapes in your design using single or multiple beds.
- ❖ Avoid making the garden too big or too small. If you are unsure how much space you will use, start smaller and add more beds as needed.



- ❖ Recycled Plastic Lumber- long lasting, eco-friendly, and a little expensive. Look for kits on-line.
- ❖ Stone, brick, and block can be mortared or dry laid and stacked depending on the height you want. This is probably the most labor-intensive choice, but the result can be beautiful.
- ❖ Use your imagination- just think of it as a large container garden, use a livestock tank, old claw foot bathtub, wagon, etc.- decorate the outside to taste. Just make sure that the materials have drainage and do not leach toxins into your vegetables.
- ❖ Speaking of toxins: Avoid the use of pressure treated lumber and rail-road ties.

Materials:

- ❖ Wood: Cedar and redwood are good rot-resistant choices but they are a little expensive, depending on the dimensions this stock may not be on hand at the lumber store and will need to be ordered. Rough cut oak is rot-resistant and a less expensive choice, you can obtain these from area sawmills but call ahead to make sure they have stock on hand as sometimes the wait can be several weeks. Also, be prepared to spend a little time picking through the lumber to find pieces as straight as you need them to be- and depending on size they can be very heavy so bring help. You can also use pine that is readily available from lumber yards and box stores- get #2 grade to save some money if you go for this choice- it won't last as long the other woods but it sure is cheap. When using milled woods, attach the pieces with deck screws- the longer the better. Remember to pre-drill pilot holes and you can use metal brackets for extra support (you can place these on the inside to hide from view). You could also use split or whole logs and secure them together with spikes or rebar cut to length (this is an ideal solution if you have a downed tree or large limbs that need to be re-used, you can also order these from a saw mill).

Building:

- ❖ Ensure you have proper drainage for your raised bed- if you will be putting it directly onto a lawn, ensure you strip the sod (or smother it with plastic) and turn the soil and mix some of it into the soil you will be adding. This ensures the water can drain through the bottom of the bed and not sit on top of the old sod and rot the roots of your vegetables. This also mixes the beneficial micro-organisms from the native soils with the sterile topsoils that come from the store.
- ❖ Attempt to level the bed so water erosion does not become a problem.

Helpful Web Sites	
Container and Raised Bed Gardening:	http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-020/426-020.html
Planning the Vegetable Garden:	http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-312/426-312.html
Intensive Gardening Methods:	http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/envirohort/426-335/426-335.html
Adaptive Gardening:	http://www.ext.vt.edu/departments/envirohort/factsheets2/landsnurs/aug93pr5.html
More Links for Adaptive Gardening and Supplies:	http://www.agrability.ext.vt.edu/Papers/ABLE_GARDENER.pdf

Seth Walton, Loudoun County Master Gardener

Spring '09 Introductions



***Veronica prostrata*
'Goldwell'**

Cute, erect flower spikes of soft blue-purple in May and June; leaves rich green edged in gold; 4" x 18" ; full sun; well-drained soil; use front of borders; containers; edging; fairly pest/disease free



***Daphne x transatlantica*
'Eternal Fragrance'**

Fragrant, white flowers with blush pink coloring after cool nights; blooms in spring, irregular summer and fall; 3' tall and wide; Full sun; well-drained soil; use as focal point in landscape; foundation plant



***Campanula* 'Pink Octopus'**

Repeat bloomer with Japanese lantern buds that open to pink, octopus-like flowers; more than 50 blooms on upright branches; compact mound; 15" x 18"; full sun to part shade; use as groundcover; borders; containers; aphids, snails/slugs are possible; root rot in poor drainage



***Abelia* "Mardi Gras"**

Dark pink stems; fragrant, pink flowers from May until first frost; dark green leaves with creamy white edges; dark pink to red fall color; low, spreading; 3' x 4'; sun; moist, well-drained soil; mass plantings; foundation plantings; no known pest/disease problems



***Columbine* - Pagoda "Rose and Ivory"**

One in series this columbine is listed as deer resistant by the grower; partial sun; 14" x 12"; great for early spring color. Several other colors in series



***Huchera Dolce* "Peach Melba"**

Peach to orange foliage changes colors with the seasons; very cold hardy; deer resistant; plant in sun or shade; 16" x 14"; use in container or landscapes



***Coral Baxter*
*primula***

Great for early spring color and as a pot crop; listed as deer resistant; partial sun; 12" x 10"



***Scentropia*
*silver Heliotrope***

Beautifully scented, large silver blooms; another that is listed as deer resistant; heat tolerant; full sun; 14" tall; hardy to 25°F; use in containers, hanging baskets; landscapes



***Salvia nemorosa* 'Sensation Rose'**

Blooms freely from May - August; 10" x 12"; full sun; good for an easy-to-grow container plant; perennial borders; excellent addition to a wildlife garden.



***Weigela* "My Monet"**

Colorful green, cream and pink foliage with long blooming bright pink blooms in spring; 12 x 24" wide; requires little to no pruning; partial shade; front of the perennial garden; use in mass for great drifts of texture and color.

Becky Phillips, Loudoun County Master Gardener

Top Ten Environmentally Beneficial Plants

Your space is limited but you want to use plants that are native and will provide food for beneficial insects, birds and small mammals. What are those high value natives that you should try to include? Here's a selection of perennial flowers, shrubs and trees of various sizes that you might consider.

Serviceberry *Amelanchier (sp)* This small tree is an early bloomer that produces a highly edible berry that is popular with people as well as 58 wildlife species, 35 bird species providing an important early summer food source.

Red or Black Chokeberry *Aronia (sp)* Reminiscent of photinia in habit, this shrub is not evergreen but provides brilliant fall color. Both the red and black chokeberries provide late fall food for birds and animals. The antioxidant value of the berries is currently being studied.

Milkweed *Asclepias (sp)* Swamp milkweed, common milkweed and butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa* are all native to this part of Virginia. The flowers provide nectar for many insects but most notably the foliage hosts several butterfly and moth larvae including the monarch.

Asters *(sp)* Asters are late bloomers, adding a beautiful blue to your October garden. They provide important fall nectar for bees and butterflies and are also butterfly larvae host plants. An added bonus — they're deer resistant.

Hickory trees *Carya (sp)* These large nut-bearing trees provide food for squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, and birds. They are also host plants for butterfly larvae. The mockernut hickory provides exceptionally good fall color.

Dogwood *Cornus (sp)* Whether as trees, *Cornus florida* and *Cornus alternifolia* or shrubs, *Cornus amomum* and *Cornus racemosa* these native provide high wildlife value. The berries provide food for 43 bird species as well as mammals. Dogwoods also host several butterfly and moth larvae.

River Birch *Betula nigra* This small tree hosts several hundred species of moth and butterfly larvae and produces seeds and flower buds that are important food for songbirds and small mammals. The exfoliating bark provides nooks and crannies for insects in the winter months and therefore food for woodpeckers when they need it the most.

Oaks *Quercus (sp)* All oaks provide acorns for mammals and birds and also host hundreds of butterfly and moth larvae.

Coneflower *Rudbeckia (sp)* Coneflowers, including black-eyed Susans, host dozens of butterfly larvae species in addition to providing nectar for bees and butterflies. They also provide food for birds in the form of seeds.

Viburnum *(sp)* Native viburnums such as arrowwood viburnum provide understory nesting spots for birds, they are host plants for several butterflies and their berries are good food sources for birds and small mammals.

Carol Ivory, Loudoun County Master Gardener

Green Walls – An Eco-Friendly Alternative

Everyone has heard of “Green Roof” movement. Establish a garden on your roof to provide insulation, air cleansing properties, and water cleansing and trapping. But, what about the old standard of green walls? Not everyone has a flat enough roof to host a garden - or even squares of moss or sod. Look at old pictures of buildings draped in ivy and what do you see (forget for the moment the mortar damaging aspects, please!). You see walls that are insulated by living greenery. In the summer, walls are cooler, in the winter, warmer. You also see habitat for nesting birds, flowers for butterflies. The foliage does its bit to help clean the air and take up water from around your house.

The old standard of English Ivy is not an acceptable “Green Wall” today. The ivy damages mortar and/or paint, and the plant is on the invasive list. However, there are several vining plants that work very well to help shelter your house and provide a beautiful accent to your architecture.



One of the standby wall-trained plants is Pyracantha (pictured left). This is a wonderful option, but must be grown on a trellis. One must also note that it has horridly sharp thorns. Thorns aside, the plant has flowers in the spring and beautiful red, orange, or yellow berries, loved by cedar waxwings, in the fall. Also, because of the thorns, this is a useful plant to protect windows from illegal entry. Some versions of this plant can grow to as large as 20 feet, though most are seen in the 10 foot range. It can be grown in poor soil but prefers a sunny location. This is also a fast grower! This plant does require yearly pruning to keep it to its trellis - so if you choose Pyracantha, consider a decent pair of gloves a must!

Climbing Rose - an English garden staple! Who doesn't love the look and fragrance of a beautiful bough of roses stretching over a doorway? Roses can grow to an amazing 30 feet in height - covering the expanse of your front porch. Or, they can be a bit more modest at 6 to 10 feet. The main consideration for a rose grown next to a building is that it be in full sun and have adequate circulation to prevent fungal diseases. Be sure to find a disease resistant cultivar - our summers can be pretty humid. As with the Pyracantha, roses offer thorny protection to windows. Check out this web site for some great varieties (note that this is a California publication, but most selections will grow well here): <http://www>.

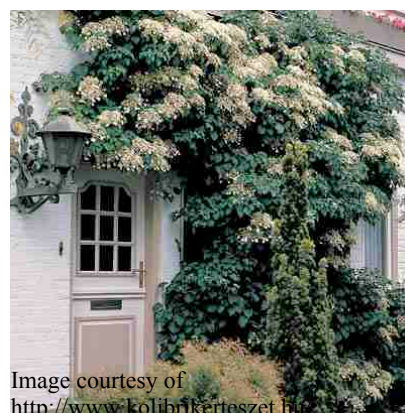


Image courtesy of
<http://www.kolibrikerteszeti.hu>

Climbing Hydrangea (shown at right) is not the fastest plant in the bunch, but it is worth the wait! Growing over 25 feet, this plant has large, shiny, heart-shaped dark green leaves in the summer, lacy capped white flowers in the fall, which dry to provide winter interest along with peeling bark in the winter. This is one which grows using aerial tendrils. Not the perfect plant for a wood sided house, but not damaging to mortar. After one or two years of slow growth, this plant will take off and grow 2 to 3 feet a year.

Linda Shotton, Loudoun County Master Gardener

Hose Woes



Do you remember last year stringing that 100-foot length of hose out to your veggie patch every day and accidentally knocking over some of your prized tomato plants in the process? Or maybe it was dragging the hose around the house to water the flower beds and having to stop every 10 feet or so to deal with a new kink? Take heart, pilgrim, there is a solution to your hose woes. You can install a water source near your veggies or elsewhere around the yard at little expense and with only erector-set skills.

The central element of your solution is an outdoor water hydrant, such as the one pictured below. You can purchase one at your local garden center for less than \$30, and they install easily. Simply dig a hole about 18 inches deep, place the hydrant upright in it, and then pour around it the dry contents of a 40-lb bag of pre-mix cement (less than \$5). Depending on the diameter of the hole, you may not have to use all 40 lbs. Pour water gradually over the dry cement mix.

As the top of the mix becomes moist, tamp it with a blunt instrument (unless your spouse hid them all after that last tiff). Once the top is smooth and moist, use a level to make sure the hydrant stand is plumb. Next tamp the cement again so it slopes gently away from the stand, and let it sit for about 24 hours. Then cover the hardened cement with soil to make it look tidy, and you're in business.

"Wait," you say, "how do we get the water to the hydrant?" Well, you have two options: first, you can simply string a hose above-ground from the new hydrant to the existing faucet. "Why would I do that?" you ask. "I am trying to get rid of the hose. It's unsightly and at our age you can trip over it and break a hip." That gets us to the second option: underground PVC pipe. It's not much more difficult than installing the hydrant.

Start by getting out your trusty mattock and digging a trench 4-inch wide and 4-inches deep, from the new hydrant to the existing faucet. Dig in straight lines, using 45- or 90-degree angles where you have to change direction. Measure the length of each segment, then go down to your local hardware store and buy enough $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter PVC pipe to cover that distance. It comes in 10-foot lengths (about \$2.50 each), so you may have to get a bit more than you actually need. Also buy a PVC pipe cutter (about \$8), a can of PVC glue and a companion can of cleaner (less than \$10 for both). Also buy enough non-threaded (smooth) connectors and 45- or 90-degree elbows (from 30 cents to \$2 each) to join the various segments together.

This is where it gets like an erector set. Lay out the pipe along the trench that you've dug. Cut the 10-ft lengths of PVC pipe into the lengths you need, join them loosely, without glue, using the connectors and elbows, and make sure they all fit in the trench properly. At either end of the assembled pipe, use a 90-degree elbow to extend a length of pipe vertically about six inches above the trench. That vertical piece of pipe should have threads on the outside.

OK? Got that done? Now it's time to glue. It's best to do this wearing rubber gloves. Starting at one end of the pipe assembly, take apart the first joint that you had loosely fitted together. Brush the cleaner on both the inside and outside surfaces where the two pieces of pipe join. Do the same with the glue. Join the two pieces tightly and that's it. The glue dries in seconds and will last longer than any of us. Repeat this process for the rest of the connections and you should have a watertight pipe from one end to the other.

Now the final steps: cut two 3-ft lengths of hose from that old hose you used to trip over. (Vengeance is sweet.) On one, install a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch female garden hose connector at one end and a male connector on the other. (Blush.) On the other, install female connections on both ends. (Really blush.) Using those hose segments, connect the new hydrant to one end of the pipe and the existing faucet to the other. (OK. The threads don't match where the garden fitting meets the PVC pipe. This is not a perfect world and we have to make do. Just use some teflon tape around the PVC pipe threads and tighten the garden fitting down securely. It will hold.) Then turn on the water and look for leaks. If none, rake the dirt back in the trench and you're done.

There goes your hose woes. You've done it all in one Saturday and at very little expense. When your next door neighbor comes by to ask admiringly if you can do one for him, just smirk and hand him a copy of this article. Let HIM try to make sense of this.

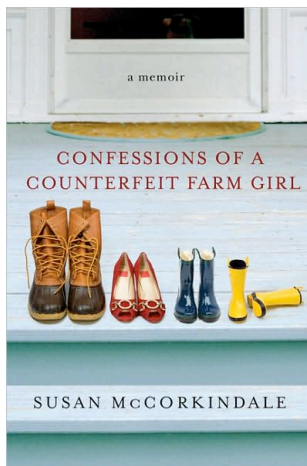
Jim Kelly, Loudoun County Master Gardener

Book Review – Are You Ready for a Good Laugh?

Nothing could be more amusing than reading about a shoe loving, makeup wearing, once-a-week-hair-salon visiting, manicure sporting New York City Marketing Director find herself on 500 acres of prime cattle farm. Especially when the story is written by Susan McCorkindale, a woman with a wonderful self-deprecating humor and wit. Her move into the “sticks” from New Jersey is epic. “*Confessions of a Counterfeit Farm Girl*” isn’t a “gardening book” per se (Susan readily admits she has a brown thumb), but it does illustrate the immense difference of life in a cul-de-sac with city life at the doorstep and life on a 500 acre farm, no less than 25 minutes from the nearest Starbucks.

Susan takes us on her family’s journey from New Jersey suburbs with her high-powered, stressful and salaried job at *Family Circle* magazine to their ultimate farm life outside of Upperville, in Fauquier County.

Though not all can relate to what sounds like a cushy job - how can “delegating” and “power lunches” be stressful? -readers will sense the frustrated undertones of being the Mom at work while her boys spend their days without her. The 9/11 catastrophe was the impetus to lead her husband (nicknamed “Hemingway” due to his literary career) in



the push to leave city life behind. Hemingway’s brother, after purchasing the 500 acre cattle farm had the open position of manager. So, off to rural Virginia they went.

Gardeners, or other transplants such as Ms. McCorkindale, will surely appreciate the culture shock requiring one to don wellingtons or mukluks before heading out the door. *Via Spiga* stilettos won’t do traipsing through the cow do-do (though there are several hilarious attempts to prove they will).

When you started your gardening, was it because you had an overwhelming desire to dig in the dirt or because your husband deemed your new job to be Home Veggie Queen (then going behind your back to produce the largest, most luscious tomatoes imaginable)? Either way, you will enjoy this foray into our Loudoun County way of life - even if you reside in one of our cul-de-sacs, don your stilettos and either drive or catch the County Commuter bus into town.

Susan has a blog on her web site which contains more tidbits of day to day life in Rural Virginia:

<http://www.susanmccorkindale.com/>

**Linda Shotton,
Loudoun County Master Gardener**

Subscriptions

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