



Trumpet Vine

Knowledge for the Community from Loudoun County Master Gardeners

Spring 2012

Volume VIII, Issue 2 www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org

LOUDOUN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER LECTURE SERIES

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

UNLESS NOTED, LECTURES ARE HELD
AT THE VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION OFFICE, 30B CATOCTIN
CIRCLE SE, LEESBURG, AT 7PM

April 5. *Vertical Gardening*,
Linna Ferguson, Certified
Square Foot Gardener

May 3. *Grapes and Vineyards*,
Sebastien Marquet, Doukenie
Winery

June 7. *Edible Landscaping
and Permaculture Design*,
Michael Judd, design
consultant

July 12. *Hydroponic Farming*,
Mary Ellen Taylor, Endless
Summer Harvest (Offsite)

August 2. *Basic Landscape
Design Principles*, Judy Brown,
Landscape Architect

For more information, please
visit our web site at
loudouncountymastergardeners.org

Visit us on Facebook:
Master Gardeners of Loudoun
County, Virginia.

Spring is for Gardeners!

Gardeners are usually ready for their gardens before the gardens are ready to be tilled and planted. There are a variety of activities that will allow you to ease into spring and get into the gardening mood while your garden soil warms up and dries out.



The 3rd Annual Gardening Symposium, to be held at the Holiday Inn Leesburg, will fill you with ideas and inspiration. It will be two great days of authoritative and entertaining speakers on many areas of gardening and the landscape. The full agenda is available at our website (loudouncountymastergardeners.org), as well as online registration.

Please come join us!

2012 SPRING PLANT SALE

Tomatoes, peppers, and herbs, oh my! Give your vegetable garden a wonderful head start, selecting plants from tried and true varieties of our favorite veggies, grown lovingly by—yes—our own Master Gardeners! Again, ordering information is on the above website. All plants are \$3.25. Orders with payment must be received in the Extension Office by Friday March 30. Pre-paid orders are filled on a first-come, first-served basis and may be picked up at the Extension Office on Saturday, April 14 from 9am to 1pm. See order form attached on the last page.

22ND ANNUAL LEESBURG FLOWER & GARDEN FESTIVAL

Once again the streets of downtown Leesburg will be in full bloom April 21st & 22nd, when over 150 vendors will be featuring plants, gardening supplies, landscape design ideas and more. Be certain to find the Loudoun County Master Gardener booth to purchase our great garden gloves and tools, books, decorative planters and any plants you might have forgotten to pre-order at the plant sale above! (Saturday: 10am - 6pm; Sunday: 10am - 5pm)

What? How? When? HELP!!

Master Gardeners to the Rescue!

Garden to Table encourages Loudoun residents to establish their own sustainable fruit and vegetable gardens no matter how big or small the space available.

- Present public seminars on vegetable gardening topics.
- Advise groups interested in starting community gardens.
- Contact us at loudounmg@vt.edu



Grass Roots help Loudoun homeowners maintain a vigorous, attractive lawn without risk to the environment through the use of either too much or too little fertilizer.



- Prepare an individual Nutrient Management Plan tailored to the needs of each homeowner specifying the type and quantity of fertilizer to use, when to spread it, and how to spread it. Likewise, it specifies how much time to use, when and how to spread it.
- Offer advice on weed control, aeration, and composting
- Contact us at loudounmg@vt.edu

Help Desk/Plant Clinics educate and provide gardening information to the public with research based information from Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and improve horticultural practices used by the public in order to improve and protect the soil and water quality in Loudoun County.

- **Help Desk:** Weekdays 9am-noon, 30 Catoctin Circle, Suite B, SE, Leesburg (in the Wells Fargo building and across from the Post Office). Call: 703.771.5150 , Email: loudounmg@vt.edu
- **Gardening Clinics in the Community**
 - Leesburg Farmers Market Saturdays 8:00-12:00, May 7-September 24
 - Lowe's in Sterling, Saturdays 8:00-12:00, April 2-September 24
 - Southern States in Purcellville, Saturdays 8:00-12:00, April 2-September 24



Saturdays in the Garden with experienced Master Gardeners on hand to answer questions on vegetable gardening, ornamental gardening, diseases, pests and more.



- May 5, June 2, July 7 and August 4
- 10AM to noon at LCMG Demonstration Garden, Ida Lee Park, Leesburg (across from the pool, next to community plots)
- Free and open to the public, no registration necessary

Tree Stewards provide education to the community regarding the environmental benefits, appreciation, planting and proper care of trees.

- Develop and implement programs to meet the needs of Loudoun County residents.
- Work with the Arbor Day Committee, the Leesburg Tree Commission, the Purcellville Tree Commission, Loudoun Water and Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve.
- Contact the Tree Stewards at loudounmg@vt.edu.



Barb Bailey, Master Gardener

Starting Vegetables from Seed Part II: Growing and Transplanting

In the last Trumpet Vine issue we wrote about how to get seeds started. If you missed that article or misplaced your publication, click this link to access it on our webpage: <http://loudouncountymastergardeners.org/trumpetvine/11-12%20Winter%20TV.pdf>. It is just about time to start sowing your seeds! Remember to count back from Mother's Day (last frost date in the local area) to pinpoint when you should start the seeds. Peppers are 7 to 8 weeks and tomatoes are 5 to 6 weeks to grow. Translation: Get peppers started week of March 18th and tomatoes week of April 1st. All you need are the seeds, growing medium, containers, plastic wrap and growing lights.

Lighting: As soon as seedlings emerge, they must have light. Without adequate light, plants become tall and leggy.

- Use a combination of cool and warm 40-watt fluorescent lights, or full-spectrum lights made for growing.
- Hang lights from chains so you can move them up as necessary.
- Bulbs should be very close to the plants, about 3" from the top foliage, and left on for 14-16 hours a day. You may want to use a timer for this.



Watering: Keep the plant moist but not soggy. Too much moisture retards root growth and leads to disease problems - maybe even rotting the seed.

- Letting the soil dry a little between watering helps prevent mold and fungus. You'll see the mix get lighter. If leaves droop and shrivel, they are too dry.
- Water with room-temperature water. If your water is chlorinated, let it sit overnight so the chlorine dissipates.
- Seedlings also like air to be circulating. A small fan helps keep fungus or disease from growing.

Fertilizing: There are no nutrients in the soilless seed-starting mix, so once seedlings get their 1st set of true leaves; it's time to begin fertilizing them.

- "Baby formula" for new seedlings is ½-strength fertilizer, what you use for house plants is fine.
- Or use an Organic solution of fish emulsion and water. (**Warning:** it is smelly!)



True Leaves

Transplant to Bigger Container: You'll want to transplant your seedlings so the roots don't get overcrowded after the 1st set of *true leaves* appear.

- If you started your seeds in a 2" cell, transplant to a 4" pot.
- Water your seedlings about an hour before transplanting.
- Try not to tear the roots or break the stem. Hold the plant by its leaves. Turn the container upside down or squeeze the bottom so the seedling pops out.
- Plant at the same level or slightly deeper in the new pot - except tomatoes that should be planted as deep as possible.

- Lightly firm soil around seedling.
- Water and keep lights 3 to 4" from top of the plant. Move lights up as necessary.
- Keep lights on 16 - 18 hours/day.
- Use a fan to keep the foliage aerated and prevent fungus.



The Trip to Outside: You will need to 'harden off' your seedlings prior to placing them in the ground. Remember last frost date in this area is Mother's Day.

- Gradually expose your plants to the outdoors at least a week prior to planting outside.
- Begin reducing the amount of water and fertilizer.
- Put plants outside in a protected place 1 hour the 1st day, 2 the 2nd, etc.
- Begin to put them in a sunnier spot.
- Plant outside on an overcast, calm day.
- Water well so roots get good soil contact.
- If a late frost hits, cover your plants.



Barb Bailey, Master Gardener
Excerpts of article from Barbara Arnold, Master Gardener

Soapy Water and a Pail

Garden walks can be a great way to ease into the day or evening, especially with a cup of coffee or glass of wine in hand, a pair of pruners in the back pocket and a pail of soapy water nearby. Can be just a small plastic tub from the recycle bin or large bucket, all depending on what's happening in the garden. The soap is just a squirt or two of dish soap, nothing fancy.

I have not met an insect, bug, or slug that does not sink when put into this pail. No chemicals, no squishing bugs, and for most, no touching involved.

All these chewers and suckers have to slow down and take a snooze, thus these early and late hours are the best times to capture pests on the plants they love. Japanese Beetles galore on that rose bush, no problem, they sleep hard! Asparagus, Potato, Flea, Cucumber and Bean Beetles, Harlequin Bugs, all hang out and are usually visible to shake or brush into the pail. Squash Bugs and Stink Bugs are the exception; they are fast and like to hide, so you may have to capture them first before the toss (or spray the young ones with insecticidal soap). And slugs, which are ending or beginning their day, are easy to spot near the lettuce bed or on the pepper plant. Just pick them off with gloves on and throw them in.

There are many rewards for these garden walks. If you catch the first asparagus beetles in the beginning of spring, you will likely stop a season long infestation. Or better yet, while on your hunt, you may be fortunate to find beneficial insects taking care of business for you, such as a tree frog sitting on dew laden basil leaves waiting for breakfast. What can be better?

Sharon Harris, Master Gardener

GROW PEAS THIS SPRING!

Peas (*Pisum sativum*) are just one of an ever-increasing selection of vegetables grown in the home garden. We have gone quite far from the days of home gardeners limiting themselves to tomatoes as their only venture into growing vegetables. More and more, depending on available land, community plot, or a sunny spot in a balcony, the home gardener has steadily ventured out to growing herbs, salad greens, zucchini ... whatever is easy, or as usually suggested, whatever a family wants to eat. Well and good, and really good! So why peas?

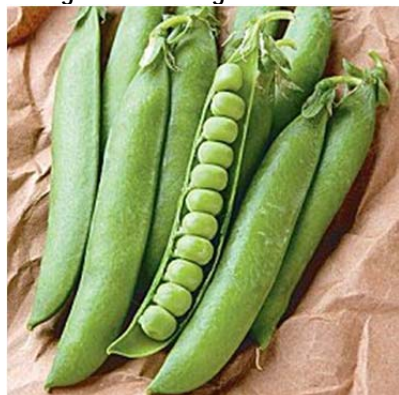
Right about February when the home vegetable gardener starts longing for what awaits outside, just to be stopped by a not-so-encouraging temperature, many may not be aware that peas present a most possible path to instant gratification in the garden.

To those who have not had any experience in growing spring peas, note this: In Virginia's USDA Zones 6 and 7, President's Day is an accepted signal that it IS time to plant the peas. This year, that was February 20! This timing is not hearsay among impatient gardeners; Virginia Cooperative Extension's (VCE) Planting Dates Chart (http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-331/426-331_pdf.pdf) supports this. Calculations show a range beginning in mid-February through late March for early planting of peas. And, as you may have heard, another signal for getting peas in the ground is St. Patrick's Day. That is March 17! Both dates fall within VCE's range.

So to those in the know, have you planted your peas yet? And to those who did not know and are now learning that for the first time, well, what are you waiting for? If it is March, then there is no need to wait another day.

Have you not been twiddling your thumbs counting the days when the soil can be worked and you can already confidently put something in the ground? Yes, it is earlier than you think. Thanks to peas — snap peas, snow peas, English or shelling garden peas.

English/Shelling/Garden Peas



<http://gurneys.com>

Snow Peas



<http://www.gardenfresco.co.uk/growing-vegetables/peas>

Snap Peas



<http://www.jungleseeds.co.uk>

A casual search on the Internet will return much information about growing peas. The details may be overwhelming, but for a newbie with an inspired desire to experience pea-growing and all the wonderful benefits that follow, it is really not all that complicated. Of course the home gardener may choose any of the spring peas to grow, but why not grow all three?


Types of Peas


English or shelling or garden peas are the kind that needs to be shelled to reveal what is most familiar—those round little bright green berries we mostly encounter canned, frozen, or processed in some way. Ever wondered how they taste fresh out of the pod? The bliss of shelling plump pea pods one grew oneself and having those little jewels right out of the vine, on the palm of your hand, and to your mouth is something to experience.

Snow peas (edible pods) are those crunchy bright green flattish pods one usually gets only when eating Asian. It is still considered an ethnic vegetable with an only-when-I-eat-out reputation. Imagine harvesting it from your own garden and deciding how you would make a dish out of it. It does not even have to be cooked if you enjoy snacking on the pods freshly harvested. Crunch away knowing it is good for you.

Snap peas (edible pods) are those sweet, tasty plump pods you bite into that says spring, freshness, health, and good-for-you satisfaction. In the spring, instead of snacking on pretzels or cheetos, bite into a handful of snap peas fresh out of your own garden and see if you'd still want the cheetos. Consider it one of life's simple pleasures worth trying. You may have done it with a tomato. Try it with a snap pea and see how you like it.

Getting Started

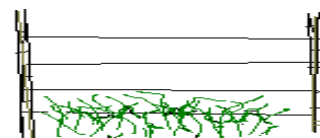
 Just as I did when I first set out to grow peas, **find a planting space that gets full sun (6 hours a day)**. Now, I say planting "space" because the lack of garden square footage or acreage is not enough to quash a desire to grow peas at home. The planting space you have affects only how much peas you get to plant and harvest. When I moved to a new home and could not prepare a planting spot for the peas I really wanted to plant that spring, I got wood crates from the crafts store, lined them, and filled them with organic potting soil.


 Peas grow over a foot and have clinging tendrils that would need to hold on to something. **Try to figure out how to provide some kind of support for the pea tendrils**. There are, however, dwarf or compact varieties that can be grown closer together so they can twine around each other for support.



I say "some kind of support" because this should not be seen as undue extra work. For a first-time pea-growing venture, "makeshift" works fine. You may have heard of pea sticks. Usually they are twigs, brush, or small branches found around the yard. Whatever else you can stick in the soil to provide vertical and horizontal guidance to the twining pea tendrils could work. You can be creative here.

If you are up to the challenge, consider creating a trellis or climbing structure, even a crude one. Try this: Pound 5-foot bamboo poles into the pea planting area. Attach nylon netting or chicken wire from pole to pole. For less expense, thread twine horizontally from end to end to create a climbing trellis. Get creative!



 To either avoid or take on the challenge of providing pea supports, **choose varieties of peas based on what you want to grow (shelling, snap, snow), making note of their eventual height**. The easiest start is to choose dwarf varieties that would not need support as they can cling to each other as they grow. It is still good to provide some support to get seedlings to start growing upward rather than rambling, but it is not necessary. Now, if you have a sturdy support all figured out, then choose taller varieties that can grow to six feet.

For our region, VCE suggests the following: *(In italics are other choice varieties)*

DWARF/ COMPACT	Shelling	Knight, Green Arrow, <i>Little Marvel, Maestro, Miragreen</i>
	Snap	<i>Cascadia, Sugar Ann, Sugar Sprint</i>
	Snow	Dwarf Gray Sugar, <i>Oregon Sugar Pod II</i>
TALL/ CLIMBING	Shelling	Wando (provide support for higher yield, but optional). Heat-resistant and still produces in warmer temps.
	Snap	<i>Amish, Sugar Snap, Super Sugar Snap</i>
	Snow	<i>Mammoth Melting Sugar, Oregon Giant</i>



<http://chat.allotment.org.uk/index.php?topic=17702.0>

🌱 So, you have a sunny planting site, have figured out support needs, and have pea seeds in hand. Now, with just the following extra details in mind, go out there and get those pea seeds in the ground. It should be fun!

- Soil should be generally suitable for planting, with organic matter, and not compacted or waterlogged. Unless it is totally unsuitable, the spot you have chosen to grow vegetables should be fine. To be sure, you may work compost into your soil or as a last resort, add purchased organic garden soil to it.
- Peas are legumes, meaning they fix nitrogen in the soil, so no fertilization is needed. But for peas to make the best use of nitrogen from the air, an inoculant (available commercially) may be dusted on dampened seeds before planting or the inoculant sprinkled in the holes where the seeds will go (usually furrows 1-2 inches deep).
- Peas do not transplant well, so they should be planted directly in their growing spot. But, for a head start or if you will be delayed planting in an already workable soil above 45-deg F, you have about five days to get the pea seeds germinating indoors. Yes, indoors!

Pre-germinating peas

One method: Moisten sheets of paper towels. At one end of a towel, lay a row of pea seeds an inch or so apart. Then roll that end until the first row of peas is covered and loosely snug in the roll. Repeat with another row, until the paper towel is fully rolled with rows and rows of pea seeds. Make as many of these rolled paper towels as you need. Put in a sealed container, such as a clear plastic bag to keep seeds moist. Put in a warm place. After a few days, check. Germinated pea seeds may be planted outside.



- Usually for dwarf varieties that have only one flash of peas for harvest, you can continue planting seeds 2-3 weeks apart until April, even through May. Peas languish and stop producing pods when heat sets in. The shelling variety 'Wando' is one that can continue producing in hot weather.

After your first year growing peas, no matter how much or how little of a pea harvest you get, you will know if you will plant them again the next year. If you decide you will, most likely you will take it a step further because by then you will want a really nice, reliable harvest. It is almost certain that no longer will anyone have to command you to eat your peas.

Did you know?

- English peas were given much space in Thomas Jefferson's Monticello vegetable garden. It was believed they were his favorites. He also had fun with pea growing contests with his neighbors.
- Michele Obama's White House Kitchen Garden has a dedicated Jefferson section inspired by Monticello ... planted with peas, of course.

Maria Daniels, Master Gardener Trainee

The Weeds Are Coming, the Weeds Are Coming!

We've had a mild winter, and it looks like we'll have an early spring. Daffodils are blooming in my yard as I write this, and it's only February 23rd. I expect the rest of the yard will get an early start also - including the weed seeds that have been waiting in the lawn all winter to germinate! Usually that doesn't occur until around St Patty's Day, but if the daffodils are an accurate indicator, we should probably move that up a week or two this year. So it's time to get busy. Early spring may be the best time of the year to cope with those pesky weeds.

As background, it's useful to note that many gardeners divide lawn weeds into two simple categories: "broad leaf" and "grass-like." The former are typified by such weeds as plantain or dandelions, the latter by crabgrass or dallis grass. Broad leaf weeds are usually controlled with a post-emergent herbicide; grass-like weeds with a pre-emergent herbicide. The former is applied in late spring, when the broadleaf weeds have emerged and are growing vigorously. The latter is applied in early spring, before the weed seeds germinate. The best way to deal with any weed is to prevent it from germinating. It's far better than letting it sprout and then killing it. That just creates an empty space where another weed can take its place. In that respect, pre-emergents are more satisfactory herbicides than post-emergents. As it happens, now is the time to apply pre-emergent herbicides, so let's talk about them.



Goose grass, annual weed

Ground ivy



Pre-emergents can be either organic or synthetic. Many homeowners have come to prefer organic products because they provide significant long term benefits for lawns. Unfortunately, the only selective organic pre-emergent herbicide is corn gluten meal, and applying it in the early spring is probably not a good idea. The reason is that corn gluten contains nitrogen -- about nine percent. If you apply corn gluten at the rate usually prescribed for use as an herbicide (20 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.) you will necessarily apply too much nitrogen for this time of year. Feeding a lawn heavily in the early spring promotes a surge of top growth, and in so doing weakens the root system leaving the lawn vulnerable to the rigors of the coming hot, dry summer months. Virginia Tech recommends that spring feeding not be applied until mid-May to mid-June, and even then it should be light -- not more than 20% of the annual total. Heavy fertilizer applications are better done in the fall.

That leaves us with synthetic pre-emergents. For the same reason as it is not prudent to spread corn gluten in the early spring -- too much nitrogen -- it is also imprudent to use pre-emergent/fertilizer combinations, so called "Weed-N-Feed" products. Try instead to buy the pre-emergent product without the fertilizer. They are available, but not as broadly available as the "Weed-n-Feed" variety. Also, don't confuse them with other products labeled crabgrass "killers." Those attack the plant after it has germinated. Benefin and dithlopyr are two common active ingredients used in pre-emergents. Manufacturers claim they produce no harmful effects for children or pets that play on the grass. Pre-emergents will stop most grass-like and many broad-leaf annual weeds from germinating. That doesn't mean your yard will suddenly be weed free. Pre-emergents do not kill perennial weeds (dandelions and ground ivy, for example) that sprouted last year. Those will continue to grow this year, and propagate a new supply of seeds. Plus other seeds will blow in from nearby areas. That makes application of pre-emergents necessary next year, and the one after that, etc.

Do get your pre-emergent down before the forsythia bloom. After that, weed seeds will have germinated and the herbicide will not be effective. Just be sure to know how large your lawn is, and the amount of herbicide/square foot that the label recommends. Use only that much. Also, note that using a pre-emergent means you can't overseed or re-seed your lawn for about six weeks. Pre-emergents prevent all seeds from germinating -- grass as well as weeds.

Jim Kelly, Master Gardener

ABCs of Trees

Botanical Name: *Fagus grandifolia*

Common Name: American beech



Zones: 4-9 native to eastern North America, from New Brunswick to Florida

Family: *Fagaceae*

Habit: Deciduous, but young trees tend to retain their dead leaves through the winter

Form: a medium to large wide-spreading tree with a rounded crown. The trunk is short and lower branches often touch the ground. In the wild, often found in thickets produced by root suckering.

Height: can grow 50' to 100' tall

Spread: 50'-70' wide

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium



Leaf: alternate leaf arrangement, simple, elliptical to oblong-ovate, 2 1/2-5 1/2" long, serrate leaves, shiny dark green leaf above & light green below, leaves are smooth and glossy on underside with tufts of hair in the axils of the veins & along midrib, 11 - 15 vein pairs, fall color is yellow, dead leaves tend to persist through winter on less mature trees

Flower: monoecious—male flowers borne on globelike heads hanging from a slender 1 " stalk, female flowers borne on a shorter spikes, pollinated by the wind, usually flowers in April or Early May, not ornamentally important

Fruit: nuts that are shiny brown, edible and irregularly triangular, the sharply angled nuts are produced within a bur-like structure comprised of bracts and have less tannin as compared with acorns. Beechnuts can be safely eaten by livestock. They persist into winter.

Bark: silver gray, smooth

Site Requirements: prefers moist, well-drained, acidic soil but can grow in clay soils, does not like excessively wet soils, can grow in shade, semi-shade or sun.

Diseases and Insects: powdery mildew, aphids, canker, and beech bark disease



Landscape uses: naturalized areas, large open spaces, lawns, parks, golf courses

Noteworthy: transplant during dormant season, prune in early summer or early fall, grass tends not to grow under tree because of the dense shade the tree produces. In the wild, tree tends to sucker and form thickets, fruit can be a litter problem if near the house, tree has wide root system with surface feeding roots which also prevents other plants from growing under it. Good beechnut crops are produced every 2-3 years, propagation is by seed which has a short viability; seedlings are slow growing for the first few years and are very susceptible to damage by late frosts. The mast (crop of nuts) provides food for numerous species of animal.

Holly Smith Flannery, Master Gardener, Tree Steward Intern

ABCs of Trees

Botanical Name: *Ginkgo biloba*
Common Name: Maidenhair Tree

- Zones:** 4 - 9
- Family:** *Ginkgoaceae*
- Habit:** Deciduous
- Form:** pyramidal when young, wide spreading with massive branches at maturity
- Height:** 50 to 80 feet
- Spread:** 30 to 40 feet
- Growth rate:** slow to medium (10-15' in first 10 yrs.)
- Texture:** medium in leaf, coarse in winter
- Leaf:** alternate, simple, in clusters of 3 to 5 on spurs or single on long shoots, fan shaped and veined, 2 -3" long and wide, bright green; exceptional fall color—yellow.
- Flower:** Dioecious, male flowers are green, borne on 1" long catkins March - April. Female flowers 1-2 green ovules on 1.5-2" long pedicels.
- Fruit:** Not a true fruit but a naked seed, tan to orange, plum shaped, bad smelling and messy. Found on female trees only. Male trees are preferred for this reason.
- Bark:** Usually grey with brown ridges and darker furrows, very striking silhouette in the landscape.
- Site Requirements:** full sun; pH adaptable prefers deep moderately moist soil, but will tolerate a range of soil types, a pollution tolerant tree for difficult situations.
- Diseases and Insects:** Notably free of pests.
- Landscape Uses:** Excellent city tree for public places but can look out of place in a small residential lot.
- Noteworthy:** Ginkgos are dioecious, with separate sexes, some trees being female and others being male. The sex of the tree is determined by the flowers. The male trees are preferred because of the terrible odor of the female fruit when it drops. It is rare for a Ginkgo tree to flower before it is about 20 years old, some can be up to 50 years old before they flower. Make sure you know the sex of the tree before you purchase it.



Ginkgo biloba is a true gymnosperm, a plant with naked seeds, like conifers and cycads.

Ginkgo is not difficult to root from cuttings. It can be rooted from material from old tree roots. Generally though, cultivars are budded on seedling under stocks in summer. To root from seed, collect seeds in October and sow outside. By springtime, the seedlings are up.

The tree has been widely cultivated since ancient times. It has various uses as a food and in traditional medicine. It is found in the fossil record in North America. Ginkgos are one of the oldest trees, growing on earth for over 150 million years. In modern times it was reintroduced from China in 1784.

The leaves of Ginkgo trees may all fall in a short period of time, sometimes in one or two hours! The sudden falling of the Ginkgo leaves is called "Ginkgo Day." Visit the Ginkgo grove at the State Arboretum at Blandy Farm, Boyce Virginia.



Related Species:

- ✧ *Ginkgo biloba* is a unique species of tree with no close living relatives.

Recommended Cultivars:

- ✧ *Ginkgo biloba* 'Autumn Gold' A handsome symmetrical broad conical form, 50'x30', beautiful clear golden yellow fall color, male, Saratoga Horticultural Foundation of California around 1955
- ✧ *Ginkgo biloba* 'Presidential Gold™' An upright oval form, very densely branched with vibrant fall color, male, Schmidt Nursery.



Glenda Parsons, Master Gardener Tree Steward

Mulch 3 – 3 – 3

The unmistakable smell of mulch is in the air. Unfortunately improperly mulched trees are as common as stink bugs. Beginning in the 1970's over-mulching, known as **mulch volcanoes**, became fashionable. Because trees die slowly people often fail to see the connection between mulch volcanoes and the decline and death of their trees. Mulch volcanoes can kill trees because:

- Piling mulch against the trunk softens the bark of young trees and invites rot, insect and disease problems.
- Mulch piled high against the trunks of young trees may create habitats for rodents that chew the bark and can girdle the trees.
- Thick blankets of fine mulch can become matted and may prevent the penetration of water and air. In addition, a thick layer of fine mulch can become like potting soil and may support weed growth.
- Hardwood mulch repeatedly used, releases manganese into the soil and inhibits a tree's ability to absorb iron, resulting in small, yellow leaves and branch dieback.



Wrong! Don't create mulch volcanoes

Correct mulching



Keep your trees alive and thriving through proper mulching.

A thin layer of mulch applied every two or three years is all that is needed. Last year's mulch can be revived with some raking. Mulch depth should not exceed **3, or at most, 4 inches**.

Tree roots extend beyond the tree canopy and most of the fine, absorbing roots are located within inches of the soil surface. These roots, which are essential for taking up water and minerals, require oxygen to survive. A thin layer of mulch, applied as broadly as practical, can improve the soil structure, oxygen levels, temperature, and moisture availability where these roots grow. So spread the mulch as broadly as possible but at least in a **3 foot** radius from the trunk.

The root flare is the base of trunk where it swells out to become buttress roots entering the soil. The root flare should always remain exposed. Mulch should be kept **3 inches** from the base of the tree.

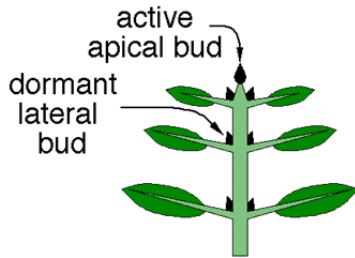
Properly applied mulch (**3 foot** radius, **3 inches** deep, **3 inches** away from the trunk of the tree) increases tree health because it:

- Helps maintain soil moisture. Evaporation is reduced, and the need for watering can be minimized.
- Helps control weeds. A 2 to 4 inch layer of mulch will reduce the germination and growth of weeds.
- Helps facilitate maintenance and can reduce the likelihood of damage from "weed whackers" or collisions with lawn mowers.

Carol Ivory, Master Gardener Tree Steward

The Garden Wonk: * Apical Dominance

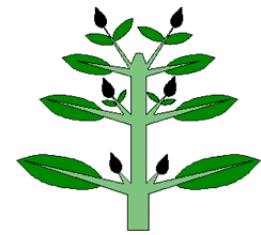
Most gardeners know that they can often achieve a bushier plant if they pinch off the tips. What's going on here and why does it work well with some plants and not with others?



The terminal bud (tip or apex) on a shoot produces a hormone that suppresses the growth of the other buds farther back on the shoot. This is called **apical dominance**. The dormant lateral buds remain as auxiliary buds for a long time and sometimes permanently unless the apical bud is removed.

When the terminal bud is removed (a process often called decapitation!), the hormones that suppress the growth of the lateral buds are removed and the lateral buds begin to elongate. In some plants this process starts within hours of the decapitation!

The plant hormone auxin is present in the apical bud and stimulates the growth of that bud. Auxin interacts with two other types of plant substances, cytokinin and the very recently discovered strigolactone to suppress and then stimulate bud and shoot growth. How all this works is still a topic of research and can affect horticultural innovations. Cut flower varieties and potted plants with either more or less branching may have special ornamental value, while crops with more or less branching may be beneficial in cultivation. For example, tomato plants with less branching can be a benefit in greenhouse horticulture.



Growth of lateral buds

Among herbaceous plant species, there is a wide range of apical dominance from no dominance to strong dominance. For example, coleus exhibit no apical dominance, the lateral buds grow out from the time of their formation. Beans and petunias exhibit intermediate apical dominance with a certain level of lateral bud growth occurring. Sunflowers (*helianthus*) exhibit very strong apical dominance.

Trees

Apical control refers to the relationship between a central leader and the lateral branches. It operates throughout the life of a tree. There is no direct relationship between apical dominance and apical control.



Excurrent

Conifers such as fir, pine and spruce have strong apical dominance and apical control resulting in a form called *excurrent*.

When apical control is weak the central leader cannot maintain its superior position. Over time no single shoot maintains a superior position. This form is called *decurent*. Trees such as oak, elm and maple have



Decurrent

strong apical dominance when shoots are first developing but in later years lateral shoots may outgrow the original terminal shoot providing a rounded canopy.

Apical dominance and apical control are both affected by plant vigor and plant stress which helps explain the differences in shape among plants of the same species.

Carol Ivory, Master Gardener

* The Garden Wonk: This is the second of a series of articles on more technical topics

Beautiful Gardens Plant Introduction Program: VT Spirit Daylily Release



The Beautiful Gardens Plant Introduction Program is proud to announce the release of its first new plant, the VT Spirit daylily. VT Spirit is named for Virginia Tech and is a wonderful representation of the school colors of maroon and orange. It is hardy in all Virginia growing zones and boasts a longer than average bloom season for daylilies. This plant was bred by Virginia Tech graduate Linda Pinkham and donated to the Beautiful Gardens program for evaluation and introduction. The VT Spirit daylily is available from Brent & Becky's Bulbs in Gloucester, VA and can be purchased on line or through their catalog.

Flower Color: Burnt orange with maroon eye and ruffled maroon edge above orange throat

Exposure: Full sun for at least 6 hours per day.

Zone: 6-9

Moisture: Prefers moist conditions during the growing season

Size: 23" tall and 18-24" wide

Outstanding Features: flowers appear in late May/early June, re-blooming continues through August
a vigorous grower with evergreen foliage, no seed pods

Beautiful Gardens was initiated in 2004 as a project of the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association to find, develop and introduce exciting new ornamental plants to the public and stimulate expanded production and profits for Virginia growers. A committee representing all facets of the Virginia horticulture industry was formed to guide and participate in the set up and running of the Beautiful Gardens program. Plants were selected for review at evaluation sites strategically located in the different climatic areas of Virginia. Plants are reviewed for several years and analyzed for hardiness to heat and cold, resistance to insects, susceptibility to disease and their visual appeal - beauty. Plants passing these tests are then propagated by tissue culture or traditional methods of vegetative or seed reproduction. When the appropriate method has been selected and it is found that the plant can be reproduced in a timely and economic manner the committee selects that plant for commercial production by a Virginia grower or growers.

Beautiful Gardens program partners include: Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association, Virginia Tech Department of Horticulture, Virginia Department of Agriculture and consumer Services, Virginia Cooperative Extension - Master Gardener Program, Institute for Sustainable and Renewable Resources, Claytor Nature Center of Lynchburg College, Norfolk Botanical Gardens, J.Sargeant Reynolds CC and the support of numerous individuals active in the Virginia horticulture industry. Each has played an important role in creating the research, administration and marketing functions of this business entity. New plants scheduled for introduction over the next several years include azaleas, hellaboers, daylilies and more. A listing of 'plants of distinction' - plants of real value in the Virginia garden but not well known - can be found on the Beautiful Gardens website at www.beautifulgardens.org.

Rick Baker, VDACS - Domestic Sales and Marketing

Edible Plants: Seeds — So Many To Choose From!



Seeds, amazing structures, some tiny, barely the size of the head of a pin, some large like the sunflower or a bean, that produce an almost infinite variety of plants that delight and nourish us.

Let's review a few seed facts:

1. Seeds develop in a flower's ovary, most from flowering plants and some from non flowering plants.
2. It is a miniature plant with a protective cover in a suspended state of development

3. Inside each seed is the genetic information for future growth, a food supply, called endosperm that can be made up of proteins, carbohydrates or fats. Considered nutrition, this food store supplies the world's major foods e.g. cereals, wheat and rice.

[Mother Earth News](#), Dec/Jan 2012 has a great article on "Best Vegetable Seed Companies":

Who made the list and why — briefly:

1. Customer survey for the top 3
2. Seeds with consistently high germination rates
3. Companies that provided detailed variety descriptions, growing advice and interesting stories.
4. All companies listed signed the Safe Seed Pledge.

The Top 15 Vegetable Seed Companies

1. [Johnny's Selected Seeds](#) (Winslow, Maine)
2. [Seed Savers Exchange](#) (Decorah, Iowa)
3. [Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds](#) (Mansfield, Mo.)
4. [Burpee Seeds and Plants](#) (Warminster, Pa.)
5. [Territorial Seed Company](#) (Cottage Grove, Ore.)
6. [Seeds of Change](#) (Rancho Dominguez, Calif.)
7. [Ferry-Morse Seed Company](#) (Fulton, Ky.)
8. [Southern Exposure Seed Exchange](#) (Mineral, Va.)
9. [High Mowing Organic Seeds](#) (Wolcott, Vt.)
10. [Fedco Seeds](#) (Waterville, Maine)
11. [Nichols Garden Nursery](#) (Albany, Ore.)
12. [The Cook's Garden](#) (Warminster, Pa.)
13. [Botanical Interests](#) (Broomfield, Colo.)
14. [Renee's Garden Seeds](#) (Felton, Calif.)
15. [Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply](#) (Grass Valley, Calif.)



Since seeds are the topic this month I thought I would focus on fennel seeds for their delicious taste which makes a pleasant drink to help digest the fats in the foods we eat so often.

Fennel: *Foeniculum vulgare*: this tall graceful plant adds height to a cottage herb garden. It is a hardy perennial, an umbelliferous bulb with yellow flowers and feathery leaves. Easily propagated by seeds it can be sown in early spring. Fennel likes a sunny dry condition.

Where Found: considered indigenous to the Mediterranean and probably spread eastward to India. It has followed civilization.

Parts Used: seeds, leaves, roots

Uses: this plant is a popular food worldwide. Used by the ancients fennel has a long history of use as a carminative (digestive aid that relieves gas, bloatedness) and a strengthener for the eyes as well as a popular culinary seasoning. The seeds, leaves and roots can even be used to help with weight loss. However there is no magic formula for weight loss other than the tried and true: watch what you eat, pick high quality nutrient dense foods and exercise. Seeds and the oil from the seeds and fruits have been added to cordials, liquors, soups and to temper the fat in meats and fish. Did you know it takes 500lb of seed to yield 1 lb of oil? [Fennel seed tea](#) is safe for infants too to dispel gas and for colic. (Consult your doctor.)



Looking for a soothing after dinner tea? Fennel seed tea has a long history of helping digest rich foods. Chewing a few seeds or making a tea from them offers an aromatic tea that helps relieve bloating and/or gas after meals. Fennel seeds can often be found as an after dinner condiment in Indian restaurants.

Fennel Seed Tea Recipe: steep a teaspoon of fennel seeds in hot water for several minutes. It helps to crush them a bit too. Strain and enjoy a pleasant tasting, hint of anise or licorice like flavor tea. You can add other herbs like spearmint and natural sweeteners like honey or stevia according to your preference.



Here's a tasty recipe using fennel bulb: quick and easy, a side dish. Enjoy.

[Insalata siciliana: Sicilian orange and fennel salad](#)

Prep time: 15 mins | Total time: 15 mins | Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 3 oranges
- 1 large (or 2 small) fennel bulbs
- 15 black olives (kalamata or similar)

Directions:

- Peel the oranges, making sure that no pith (white part) is left. Cut into thin slices and place on a serving dish.
- With a [mandolin](#), slice the fennel bulb very finely on top of the orange slices.
- Decorate with the olives.
- Dress with salt and olive oil.

Notes: Best made just before serving.

Submitted by Judith Dreyer, MS, BSN, RN, Fauquier County Master Gardener

Notes from the Help Desk:

Q: A new US hardiness zone was published recently, does this impact our area?

A: "The 2012 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The map is based on the average annual minimum winter temperature, divided into 10-degree F zones" (from usda.gov). We had relatively no change in this area with the new 2012 hardiness zone map published. Find your hardiness zone based on your zip code here:

<http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/#> .

Some zones based on area zip codes:

20165, 20176, 20147 - **Zone 6b**, -5 to 0 degrees

20175, 20191, 22181, 20132 - **Zone 7a**, 0 to 5 degrees

Q: What is the last frost date and when can I plant?

A: The last killing frosts in our area are toward the end of April (4/20 - 4/30). However, we do not recommend planting tender annuals until after Mother's Day. This would include tomatoes! If you plant earlier, watch the weather carefully and be prepared to cover your plants with row cover, old sheets or newspaper if a frost is forecasted.

Q: I have a little weed invading my lawn and garden, it's even in my containers. It's actually rather pretty, it blooms in early March. What is it and what can I do about it?

A: It's most likely bittercress. This weed has a tremendous variety of common names, most relating to the way seeds propel from the seed pods. The most used common name is bittercress, others include:



pepperweed, shotweed, popping cress, flickweed and snapweed. It is a member of the mustard family and the leaves can make a tangy addition to a salad. Bittercress is native to Europe and Asia and present in North America as an invasive weed.

Bittercress is a winter annual, it is most prolific from late fall through early spring. This plant grows best in consistently damp, recently disturbed soil.

These are conditions that are prevalent in nursery-grown plants, and hairy bittercress may "hitch a ride" in the containers.

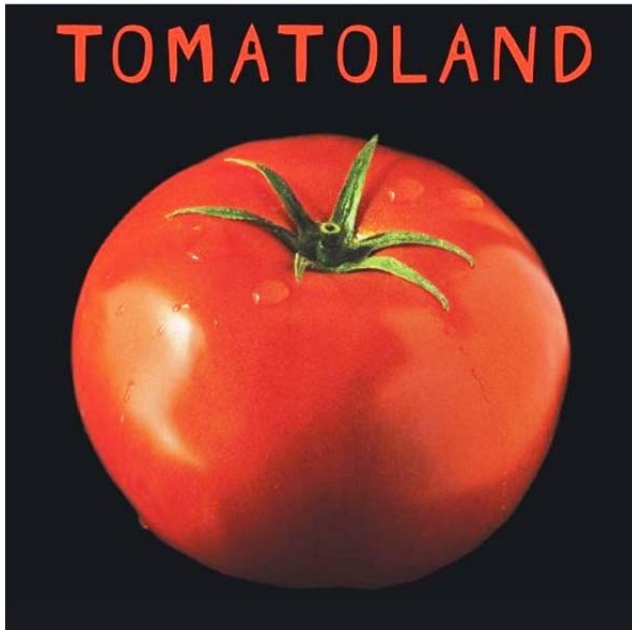
This weed is most problematic in propagation and overwintering. Plants form a small mounded clump generally 4 to 8 inches tall and wide. If bittercress weren't bad enough by itself, it also is a refuge for aphids.

The best practice is to remove the plants by hand, preferably before they bloom and follow-up by a thorough raking. These plants come up very easily. If flowers are present when the plants are pulled, be careful to bag them. Unfortunately, some pieces of the plants may remain in the ground and will continue to develop. Persistence is key. It may take a long time to completely eradicate this invader because of its explosive seed production. Some seeds can lay dormant for years. Have patience!

Barb Bailey, Master Gardener

TOMATOLAND - A BOOK REVIEW

Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit, Barry Estabrook, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 220 pages.



Love the taste of a freshly grown tomato from your home garden? We sure do at our house. So you are going to want to read *TOMATOLAND* written by Barry Estabrook who used to write for *Gourmet Magazine* and has written for the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

To sum the book up, it is "Fabulous, fabulous, and, yes, fabulous."

If you care about the taste of your tomato, Barry Estabrook will tell you how modern industrial agricultural practices have compromised what we love about this "most alluring fruit."

It's an easy read and interesting - probably especially to us home grown tomato obsessives.

Perhaps you know that there are 17 varieties of wild tomato and that most of these wild tomatoes in plant and fruit form do not look anything like the tomatoes

we produce today. Next time you go to Macchu Picchu, you might want to look around for some of these wild tomato plants because that's where our tomato plant comes from — from Peru.

There is also the truly geeky information we love to know, which is that it is important to secure the varieties of wild tomatoes so that we can always have different tomato genes available to breed out disease in the plants we produce.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg (and I don't mean the lettuce you eat). There's a lot to learn from this little book (with the beautiful perfect glossy big red tomato on the cover).

You will also learn about the farming conditions of these tomatoes, the people that do the farming, the health hazards they encounter when farming, that Florida is the state that produces most of the fresh tomatoes that are offered in our super markets, what a tomato round is, that taste is not a factor by which tomatoes make it to the market (surprise, surprise). You'll be glad to hear about the struggles to change things.

After reading this book, you will never look at a grocery store tomato the same way or the industrial commercial farms that grow them.

This is a great book, as you can tell from this review, I think you will get so much out of it, and I give it "five forks" - my highest recommendation.

Holly Smith Flannery, Mater Gardener



2012 Spring Plant Sale

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Pick up your plants at the Extension Office on Saturday, April 14 from 9-1.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received
Check/Cash

Name _____
Email _____
Phone _____
(please print)

Would you like to receive our
free online publication,
"The Trumpet Vine"?
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TOMATOES

Quantity	
	Ultimate Opener
	Glacier
	Big Beef
	Red Brandywine
	Mortgage Lifter
	Cherokee Purple
	Mr. Stripey
	Sungold
	Supersweet 100
	Black Cherry
	San Marzano
	Juliet
	Total Tomatoes

VEGGIES

Quantity	
	Tavor Artichoke
	Broccoli Packman
	Total Veggies

HEBBS

Quantity	
	Basil African Blue
	Basil Genovese
	Greek Columnar Basil
	Cilantro Calypso
	Parsley, Italian Flat
	Rosemary ARP
	Thyme, Golden Variegated
	Fernleaf Dill
	Total Herbs

PEPPERS

Quantity	
	Ace
	Red Knight
	Marconi
	Early Sunsation
	Sweet Banana
	Carmen
	Lipstick
	Pizza Pepper
	Cayenne Large Red
	Mucho Nacho
	Total Peppers

TOTALS

Quantity	
	Total Tomatoes
	Total Peppers
	Total Veggies
	Total Herbs
	Total Plants
	X \$3.25
	Total Due

Send order & payment to:

Loudoun County Master Gardeners, 30 Catoctin Circle SE, Suite B, Leesburg VA 20175

Orders are filled on a first come, first served basis.

LCMGA assumes no responsibility or liability for planting of any plant and makes no warranties, expressed or implied, regarding the survival of any plant.

Thank you for supporting the Loudoun County Master Gardeners!

Questions? 703-771-5150 or email us: loudounmg@vt.edu