



Trumpet Vine

Knowledge for the Community from Loudoun County Master Gardeners

Summer 2016

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LOUDOUN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER LECTURE SERIES

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Barbara Lamborne,
Greenstone Fields, Wheatland,
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Purcellville, VA 20132

August 4, *A Year in the Life of
a Winemaker*- Karem Baki,
Hillsborough Vineyard, 36716
Charles Town Pike, Hillsboro.

Sept. 8, *The Chestnut Story*-
Catherine Mayes, President,
The American Chestnut
Foundation

Oct. 6, *A year on the Life of a
Beekeeper* by Amanda Rose
Newton BCE. Entomologist and
Extension Master Gardener

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Summer in all its Glory

A cool wet spring that has produced luxurious growth now yields to summer and the possibility of high temperatures and lack of rain. Each season is a new adventure for the gardener. Will we have drought? frequent rainstorms? destructive wind storms? a beautiful growing season ?

We can't control the weather but we can enjoy our gardens whatever the season may bring.

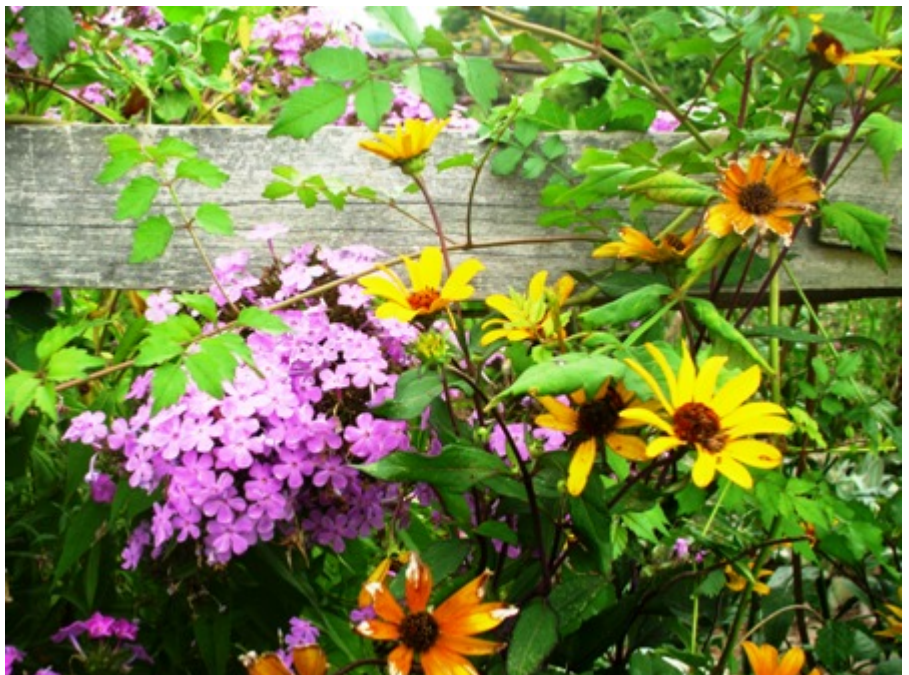


Photo by Normalee Martin

The Loudoun County Extension Master Gardeners are celebrating their 25th anniversary, proudly educating the community and fostering environmental stewardship since 1991.

It Starts With Your Backyard

One of the best posters I've ever seen showed a beautiful marble-like planet Earth from outer space, with a caption that said "There is No Planet B". We all want to "save the planet", but often don't know the best way to go about that. Habitat conservation, beginning with your backyard, is a good start.

It has taken billions of years to create our intricate ecosystem. It is important to recognize that this ecosystem is comprised of countless microecosystems, each sustaining its own share of life and contributing to the whole. However, habitats are very fragile and any damage to a small or seemingly insignificant microecosystem often has adverse effects on many others. With coordination, determination, and good stewardship at all levels we have a good chance to improve even our local habitats.

Realizing these challenges, the National Audubon Society — whose focus is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems — created a program called Audubon at Home where the focus is to build a healthy wildlife habitat or sanctuary. The program helps property owners become better stewards of nature and in essence, "let the animals decide" how healthy a yard is for them to reside. In a partnership with Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and many volunteer conservancy organizations including us, Loudoun Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, the program provides practical knowledge regarding conserving and restoring local natural habitat and biodiversity. Certified members are called Audubon at Home Ambassadors (AAHA), and are highly trained to perform site assessments and offer suggestions to conserve and expand healthy habitats needed to sustain native plants and animals in Northern Virginia. This collaboration works because together we provide sound environmental and ecological solutions to county residents -- two view points instead of one.

For many people, some suggestions from trained experts could be just what they need to convert a backyard that is possibly harmful to wildlife and humans, into a sustainable and biodiversified living space that bursts with life, while also lowering water contamination, improving soil quality, and is eye-pleasing. To achieve that goal, Ambassadors do a site analysis and offer specific tips on plant selection, soil conservation, storm water runoff mitigation, and also other pertinent information such as pruning techniques and biological or mechanical controls for horticulture problems.

I have been a gardener all my life, but never knew that I had the power to make such a difference to the environment. Two years ago, my Extension Master Gardener training led me to institute a series of changes in my own back yard. Suddenly, the number of bees and butterflies increased, but I realized that I still needed to do more. I requested a free consultation from the Audubon at Home program. A week after the Ambassadors' visit, I received an extremely detailed report listing and explaining possible improvements. I was very impressed, and I am still using it as the guide for my backyard landscaping. My yard is now even better, and increasingly wildlife friendly.

The Audubon at Home program significantly contributes to the goal of "making a difference" when it comes to a healthy wildlife habitat and I would encourage everyone to take advantage of this program. For more information on the Audubon at Home Wildlife Sanctuary program and how you can arrange an Ambassador visit, see <http://audubonva.org/audubon-at-home-1> and http://www.loudounwildlife.org/Audubon_at_Home.html. You too can take the Healthy Yard Pledge and make a difference in your backyard!

Ling Lay. Extension Master Gardener

A Survey of Summer Butterflies: A Showcase of Colorful Insects in the Garden



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*)
Taken in Louisville, KY. By Ltshears, 2007.

The return of Summer also signifies the return of the bugs. For us lucky enough to call the Mid-Atlantic home, in addition to the mosquitos, vegetable pests, and gnats we also feature a treasure trove of jewel-winged beauties. Butterfly season is just around the corner and if you, like many, have wondered “who is who” in your flower bed, this article covers some of our most common visitors.

Swallowtails

These are probably the butterflies you are most familiar with. Big and showy, these specimens certainly draw attention!

- **Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*)** The Eastern Tiger is not only beautiful; it is also our State Insect! The larva utilizes tulip poplar as their host plant and tend to favor flowers with large “landing platforms” to nectar feed from. They are around all summer for your viewing pleasure.
- **Spicebush Swallowtail (*Papilio troilus*)** If you plant fennel, spicebush, parsley, or dill it is very likely you have seen the big green caterpillars this butterfly derives from. I have had parsley planted thirteen stories up on a balcony and still had these guys show up, so if you plant it, they will come.
- **Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*)** Similar in appearance to the Spicebush, one can easily distinguish this butterfly by its double row of black spots on its underwing. It too favors commonly grown herbs and large-headed plants for nectar feeding.
- **Zebra Swallowtail (*Eurytides Marcellus*)** As its nickname, the “paw paw butterfly” suggests, it’s host plant is the Paw Paw Tree, which grows in our region. It features “kite tails” which sets it apart from the rest in this family.

Brushfoot Butterflies

This is a fairly extensive family featuring a wide range of butterflies. I have chosen to concentrate on 5 of the most common to our area.

- **Great Spangled Fritillary (*Speyeria Cybele*)** Due to its large size and bright orange coloration, the Great Fritillary is hard to miss in your garden. It is **probably** the most commonly seen butterfly from this group and it is not picky when it comes to nectar sources. Plant plenty of violets to ensure a larval food source.
- **Red Spotted Purple (*Limenatus arthemis*)** This interesting butterfly mimics, the poisonous Pipevine Swallowtail. Unlike the Pipevine, it favors several host plants including black cherry, service berry, willow, and birches.
- **Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*)** Probably the most commonly used classroom butterfly, the Painted Lady is common throughout the Eastern United States. It enjoys most nectar producing plants and uses thistles as its larval host plant.



Red Spotted Purple (*Limenatus arthemis*)
Saxophute at English Wikipedia, 2010

- **Common Buckeye** (*Junonia coenia*) The Buckeye gets its name from its unique set of eyespots on its forewings. Foxglove, Plantain, and toadflax all serve as valuable host plants for attracting these to your garden.
- **Red Admiral** (*Vanessa atlanata*) These bright orange butterflies tend to venture out into the garden early and stay late. The juvenile form favor plants in the nettle family and will nectar feed on a variety of sources.

Hairstreaks

Unique and often times overlooked, these small dusty-colored butterflies are worth paying attention to. Here are a few that you are likely to run into this summer.

- **Banded Hairstreak** (*Satyrium calanus*)
These tiny butterflies are often seen feeding on common milkweed, dogbane, and dogwood in the early summer. If you live in a heavily forested yard, you are likely to be a site for larva as their host plants are trees in the Oak, Walnut, and Hickory families.
- **Eastern Tailed-Blue** (*Cupido comyntas*)
Unlike the Banded, these hairstreaks prefer to be out and about in sunny environments. You are likely to find them on sweet clover, asters, and strawberries. The host plants include many plants in the pea family.

Sulfurs/Whites

This group is probably the most prolific in our area and are often the first to show up and the last to leave in the fall. It features many that you are sure to be familiar with and maybe a few you see only as a rare treat.

- **Cabbage White** (*Pieris rapae*) This beautiful butterfly starts off as the dreaded cabbage looper that feasts on our freshly sprouted greens year after year. Needless to say, it is rampant around our area! Males are identified by its single black spot, whereas females are easily identified by its two spots. The adult's nectar on just about anything and, not surprisingly, the host plant for the caterpillars is members of the brassicas family.
- **Clouded Sulfur** (*Colias philodice*) There is speculation that this "butter-colored" insect is what gave butterflies their name. These can be seen all summer long feeding on clover and many species of legumes.

Skippers



Peck's Skipper (*Polites peckius*) **Gatineau Park, Quebec, Canada, 2011.** By D. Gordon Robertson

These unique butterflies are named for their quick, darting behavior and often exhibit erratic flight patterns. Small in size but fun to watch, they bring a lot of visual interest with them wherever they go.

- **Peck's Skipper** (*Polites peckius*) Fuzzy and tawny brown in color, this butterfly is one of the last to leave our area once the weather turns cooler. In this area, they tend to favor bluegrass as a host plant and will nectar feed on whatever is available.
- **Lesser Skipper** (*Ancyloxya numitor*) Those of you fortunate enough to have pond features in your yard, have probably been visited by this butterfly. A marsh dweller, these butterflies also feed on grasses such as marsh millet and rice cutgrass.

- **Sleepy Duskywing** (*Erynnis brizo*) Preferring open or hilly habitats, this soot-colored butterfly prefers scrub oak to grasses and will nectar feed on wild azalea and blueberry.

Milkweed Butterflies

It wouldn't be a Master Gardener Butterfly List without mention of our favorite milkweed feeders!

- **Monarch Butterfly** (*Danaus plexippus*)



Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) Brooklyn Botanical Garden, 2007. By Richiebits, Wikicommons

Recent research shows that planting milkweed has helped in bringing back the numbers of these threatened creatures. So, plant that milkweed! Plenty of other forms of wildlife utilize it to make it well worth your while. Not to mention this is perhaps one of the most attractive and extraordinary insects we still have much to learn about.

Resources:

Identification

www.naba.org- North American Butterfly Association

www.gardenswithwings.com - Can search by wing type

Plant Resources

http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/MidAtlanticPlantList_web.pdf

Great Resource for Pollinator Plants for the Mid-Atlantic Region

Amanda Rose Newton, BCE. Entomologist and Extension Master Gardener

The Endlessly Fascinating World of Gardening and Responsible Landscape Management

Unnatural perfection or indiscriminate spraying with chemicals to ensure that perfection is not what brings enduring fascination and pleasure to the home gardener. A perfectly manicured landscape, for example, satisfies, until it becomes a source of stress or limits our enjoyment of outdoor living because of the many care precautions. What brings continued fascination and pleasure in gardening is when we welcome a balanced give-and-take between gardener and nature. The learning and surprises can be precious. Here are a few examples:



(Photo by B. Collins)

← A friend sent me this photo asking, "This is hanging off of my Eastern Cedars. There are several of them. They are kind of jelly like. Is it a fungus? Should I cut them all out?"

They thought it looked like it came from outer space. Worrisome, but fascinating and amusing. Stumped and mesmerized myself, I did not just say I did not know. I needed to know too, so I did research!



<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/info/plant-diseases/cedar-apple-rust>

I wrote my online search this way: "Jelly-like orange fungus on eastern cedar." It turned out to be **Cedar-Apple Fungus** (*Gymnosporangium juniperi-virginianae*). In the first year of infection around summer, barely noticeable hard brown galls not quite an inch form in the eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) to overwinter there. They will continue growing, and then come rainy spring, seemingly suddenly, huge orange globs hang from the tree.

This fungus has a two-host lifecycle. It needs both eastern red cedar and apple/crabapple trees (*Malus* sp.) to complete it. A fungus while living in the eastern red cedar, its spores are carried by wind to the apple trees and infect them as Cedar-Apple Rust. The fungus does not cause much damage to the red cedar; in fact no spraying is needed. But the rust damages the apple tree and its fruits. It may be disfiguring, but at least it does not kill the trees.

This pathogen fungus has close relatives with similar complex two-host lifecycles causing rust to some in the Rosaceae family. For example, cedar-hawthorn rust (*G. globosum*) and cedar-quince rust (*G. clavipes*). There is an Integrated Pest Management (IPM)-recommended spray, but there are non-chemical controls as well.



<https://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/FSA-7538.pdf>

And as the jarred gardener with the eastern red cedar is able to let out a reluctant sigh of relief, how about the neighbor with the treasured apple trees? It is a fascinating, challenging situation for responsible gardeners.

Pennyroyal. A garden center customer wants to buy a good amount of the uncommon herb Pennyroyal. Armed with an herbal book, he knows the botanical name, *Mentha pulegium*. He is then quickly told it is a weed that people buy herbicides for to eradicate and therefore not among the culinary herbs for sale. He insists it is a very popular herb in French cooking and is beautiful in flower. His resolve to find it is obvious, and an avid gardener witnessing such enthusiasm cannot help but be moved to research it. What is so special about this plant?



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



<http://www.pennyroyalteat.net/Pennyroyal-Tea-Benefits/>



<http://www.rareseeds.com/pennyroyal/>



http://www.plant-world-seeds.com/store/view_seed_item/4708

The conflicting information about its toxicity to humans turns unsettling. A local herb farm sells it but cautions that it is not recommended for human consumption. That is repeated in other reputable sources: Taking it internally is very risky, or it is no longer considered safe for culinary use since recent studies indicate it may have toxic effects. The National Institutes of Health goes farther: "When taken by mouth, pennyroyal oil is highly toxic and has been linked to several instances of toxic liver injury and death." Yet another state's master gardeners' article claims it to be for culinary use. Another .edu source last modified in December 1997 states that it is generally recognized as safe for human consumption. Another source claims it is used as a relaxing tea.

As with many herbs, there are other known uses for pennyroyal. It repels fleas, supposedly cures respiratory and intestinal problems, is used for fragrance, and serves as an abortifacient (causes abortion), among others. So how does a concerned gardener exposed to the topic by chance synthesize those varying claims, especially when what is involved is a mistaken, outdated notion about its safe culinary use? Interestingly, pennyroyal is in the mint family, can be grown as a fast spreading groundcover in home gardens, smells good, yet can dangerously tempt misuse. Fascinating properties for a mint family member, and curious.

The Tomato Hornworm (*Manduca quinquemaculata*) has such presence for a hated garden undesirable. It is large and plump, and being a pest to our cherished home-grown tomatoes and peppers, we are focused on getting rid of every one we see. But do you know it is the tomato hornworm that turns into the magnificent Sphinx Moth that pollinates night-blooming flowers? Other names for the hornworm at its adult stage are Hawk Moth and Hummingbird Moth. By association, those identities no longer sound undesirable in the garden! How can a conscientious gardener not allow the tomato hornworm turn into that desirable evening pollinator?



<http://goodlifegarden.ucdavis.edu/blog/category/gardening-tips/pests-gardening-tips/>



(Photo by Betsy Betros, BugGuide.net)



(Photo credit: Colorado State University Extension Office)

Just as questions that come through the Master Gardeners' Help Desk and Garden Clinics can be opportunities for continuing learning for both sides, responsibly tending our own gardens can fascinate and continually educate as well. Spray and be done with it? What an easy way out. Why not start with trying to learn nature's "idiosyncracies" as we encounter them and be fascinated with how the natural world works. Even pests and undesirables in the garden fascinate. You know what they say about weeds ...

Maria Daniels, Extension Master Gardener

How Defoliation Affects Trees

Last year's cool wet spring caused an outbreak of anthracnose in area dogwood trees. Many lost almost all their leaves in the late spring. Last summer a swarm of Japanese beetles defoliated the apple tree in the Demonstration Garden. This spring a late hard freeze killed the leaves on some trees and shrubs. Disease, insects and environmental factors can all cause a tree or shrub to lose its leaves. The primary function of leaves is the manufacture of sugars and carbohydrates that provide energy for all the tree's processes. Food reserves are stored in roots and twigs. Defoliation eliminates a tree's food production capability. The effect of defoliation can range from a slight loss of vigor to death. The effect depends on the severity, timing and frequency of defoliation, the health of the tree, and the presence of other insects and diseases.

Considerable energy is spent on normal spring budbreak and leaf growth, but trees rebuild their reserves over the summer.



Effects of anthracnose on dogwood

Photo: [University of Georgia](#)

Refoliation usually occurs immediately following defoliation, therefore an early spring defoliation is especially hard on trees. The inability to manufacture food combined with additional depletion of stored food weakens the tree and results in reduced growth, stunted, pale-green new leaves and possibly twig and branch dieback. Small feeder roots may also die.

A late season defoliation is seldom harmful. Leaves have already manufactured and stored most of the needed carbohydrates. Defoliation that occurs as the tree is entering dormancy does the least harm. However, if the plant refoiliates in the late

season the new growth may not be able to harden off in time for the fall freeze and the tree could be damaged again.

Most healthy trees can tolerate a single heavy defoliation with only some loss of vigor. Evergreens are an exception; evergreens are usually killed by one complete defoliation. Two or three consecutive years of early season defoliation can kill even the healthiest deciduous trees. Trees already weakened by drought, disease or soil compaction are less able to withstand defoliation. Older trees are more sensitive than younger trees.

Defoliation weakens and stresses trees, making them more susceptible to insect borers, bark beetles, root decay, and canker fungi. These diseases are usually responsible for the ultimate death of the tree.

To help a tree withstand defoliation make sure the root zone is mulched with no more than 3 inches of mulch or wood chips and watered regularly. If the defoliation occurs before July 15, fertilization with a quick release high nitrogen organic fertilizer will help replenish needed nutrients. Trees are very resilient when they are healthy.



Ginkgo leaves killed by spring freeze

Photo: [Iowa State Extension](#)



Apple Tree defoliated by Japanese beetles Photo by Normalee Martin

Carol Ivory, Extension Master Gardener, Tree Steward

Tomato Grafting Update

The last Trumpet Vine reported about tomato grafting, which is the practice of grafting an heirloom tomato (usually) onto a hardier root stock tomato, such as Maxifort. The purpose is to improve the disease resistance and productivity of the heirloom (scion) while retaining its distinctive characteristics, especially superior taste.

The grafting team of the Extension Loudoun County Master Gardeners Association (ELCMGA) has been experimenting with grafting for several years. Our results this year were disappointing, achieving only about a 20% success rate, lower than in previous seasons.

What did we learn this season?

1. **Size of seedlings:** We used different methods for growing our seedlings this year, including larger plug trays and a starter soil which included a fungicide. Our seedlings took longer to germinate and were smaller than optimal when we grafted them, using the silicon clip grafting technique. Although we allowed 6 weeks of growth before grafting, the plants were very small. As a result, they were hard to handle and it was difficult to match the diameter of scion and rootstock. In the future, we will wait to graft until our plants are more substantial. We will source larger clips, possibly alligator clips.
2. **Size of healing chamber:** Our research told us that it is optimal fill the healing chamber with plants in order to maintain humidity. Our healing chamber is just too big for the number of plants we graft. (In our grafting workshop, we used two plastic cups for the chamber and a damp peat pot for moisture and many participants reported success.) Next year, we will experiment with a smaller chamber, perhaps just a plastic container, and will find a way to pump cool, moist air into the chamber. We will also look for a meter to monitor temperature and humidity. We have been using bottom heat to control temperature and that may be placing undue stress on the graft by forcing liquid up the stem.
3. **Attention lapse in removing from chamber:** One of our team members (me) went out of town just as the healing chamber was opened. Many wilted beyond saving and should have been returned to the chamber for a short time. We are considering docking the salary of that volunteer!
4. **Other considerations:** We will try transplanting the seedlings into slightly larger containers a few weeks before grafting, allowing sufficient time for the seedlings to recover. This will hopefully give us improved vigor.



Photo by Barbara Arnold

Our attempts to use super glue to graft were not successful. Again, the size of the seedlings made it difficult to hold the two sections together while applying the glue. We will continue to experiment with this methodology.

We will continue to reduce the stress on the graft by not watering before grafting and by cutting off many of the scion leaves.

The grafted plants were maintained in total darkness for the first four days and then gradually introduced to more light over the next three days. We will continue this practice.

We will carefully manage the accommodation of the plants from the chamber environment to normal conditions and be prepared to return them to high humidity if necessary (Ahem!).

Barbara Arnold, Extension Master Gardener

Raised Bed Garden

Growing the Summer Crop and Getting Ready for Fall

As promised in the last issue of the Trumpet Vine, this final installment of the four part series on raised bed garden concerns growing the big summer crop, and then preparing the beds for the next cool season crop toward the middle of August. In the last article I erroneously forecast a short cool season in Spring; we nearly had a frost a week after Mother's Day. As a result, a lot of my cool season spring plantings are still going strong like purple kohlrabi, beets, baby broccoli, Tuscan kale and varieties of lettuce. Most lettuces are not tolerant of the heat, and tend to go to seed (and become bitter) with a prolonged heat spell.



Raised Bed with Kohlrabi and Wild Arugula

Photo By: Eileen Swicker

Gardening with several large containers offers the opportunity to try different types of mulch to suppress weeds and to retain moisture in the soil. This year, I've tried red plastic mulch for the tomatoes, and leaf mulch for other crops that don't crowd out the weeds.



Red Plastic Mulch on the Tomato Beds

All photos by Eileen Swicker

Because the weather was so cool and wet in spring, I was late getting the cucumbers seeds planted this year. But soon they will be producing like they did last year!



Cucumber seedlings in June 2016 and overgrown plants in July 2015, the result of planting more seeds than needed!

Maintaining a large container garden involves the same chores as a regular garden — weeding, pruning, checking for bugs and signs of disease, fertilizing, watering, etc. It is easier on the back to tie up tomato plants that are at shoulder height on a hot summer day.



Soon enough, the best tomato, bean and cucumber harvests will be coming to an end, and it will be time to think again about the cool weather crops. In this area, mid-August is a good time to plant seeds that will germinate in the warm soil, but grow to maturity in the coolness of fall. It also a time to try a cover crop like buckwheat which will be killed by the frost before it has a chance to set seed.

I hope you have enjoyed this year long exploration of gardening with big containers and deciding whether they have a place in your garden.

Eileen Swicker, Extension Master Gardener

Planning for Abundance

The benefits of preserving your own (usually organic) vegetables to sustain you and your family during the long winter months are many. I never tire of making a wonderful winter “fresh” tomato soup to accolades, or opening a jar of perfectly spiced pasta sauce. Of course, sometimes we are surprised with the abundant harvest and must consider alternatives to wasting good food, or taking responsibility for giving it away. Currently, my peas are outdoing themselves and I need a solution ASAP!

During the long winter months, I peruse the many wonderful seed catalogs looking for the best varieties for cucumbers, tomatoes, beans, and squash, as they are our mainstay. I grow at least three varieties of cucumbers and stagger the planting two to three weeks. Cucumbers should be properly sized and firm for the best fresh eating and pickling. My personal favorite is *Suyo Long*, an Asian variety that has smaller seeds and can be eight to 20 inches long. They are firm and meaty with an excellent taste. They make wonderful slices for my special secret recipe “sunshine” pickles. Other varieties are selected for dill pickles using my own dill. If they grow too large, you may end up with too many seeds, which are not wasted but enjoyed by the chickens as a delightful treat. I also grow *Marketmore*, and rotate through the pickling cucumber of the year, *Arkansas Little Leaf* this year. Primarily relying on Southern Exposure Seed Exchange to guide my choices has not disappointed yet.

Other vegetables also make wonderful pickles. Squash, melon, and carrots are a few good choices. A simple vinegar base will preserve those wonderful peppers that become prolific. Hailing originally from Tennessee, I have to make chow-chow every year too. Slathered on pinto beans on a cold winter day, you appreciate all the work that went into chopping those veggies. Now that you know the vagaries of our diets, you can see why preserving our own fresh vegetables is so important.



Juliet tomatoes ready to sauce.

Photo by Deborah Wilson

Although there are people who do not eat fresh tomatoes--“saints preserve us”--they usually will eat pasta sauces. It is difficult to imagine a vegetable flavor more rewarding to preserve. Growing tomatoes is the most popular choice for many a gardener, and the many varieties of tomatoes are such fun. Every year I try to grow a new variety just to discover what new nuance of taste will come my way. Meaty Italian tomatoes (think *Uncle Joe's*) are the very best for all the sauces, plain and enhanced that we devour in the long winter months. My *Juliet* crop is also so large that they provide many delicious meals. For the taste, growing heirloom varieties particularly the different *Brandywines* is rewarding. You may have experienced the sudden abundance of tomatoes at your home too. When pushed for time, freezing tomatoes whole is a great alternative. Like me you may have discovered that commercial facilities have the advantage of flash freezing and vacuum sealing, but that doesn't negate the fresh taste to be gained with home freezing, particularly with a vacuum sealer on hand. The best preserving is canning tomato sauce, pasta sauce and soup bases. Although there is a time commitment ease of storage is a great benefit.

Beyond tomatoes, green beans also come in many “packages” and are lovely to grow in Virginia. A long row of bush beans will bring you delicious plenty. Last year, I remember tasty long beans at a friend's house. We ALWAYS grew Kentucky Wonder beans in Tennessee, but I find our season too short here to have the abundance necessary. Perhaps our cooler location in Hamilton is the problem. Although we have scorching

days too, sometimes we have a later start for the garden. Bush beans provide abundance for canning or freezing. A favorite here is dilly beans made with our own peppers and dill.



Colorful veggies ready to consume.

Photo by Deborah Wilson



Early summer garden at the Wilson's. Cucumbers with radish borders, first and second plantings. Tomatoes in the background.

Photo by Deborah Wilson

If your mouth isn't watering, it must not be mealtime. As you can see, planning for abundance has benefits throughout the year even on a small scale. You need not grow all that you preserve either. Farmer's Markets and even grocery stores that carry local produce may be a great source of ultra fresh produce that you want to savour even out of season. Watch for my next article covering how to get started with canning and preserving as that wonderful produce rolls in.

Deborah Wilson, Extension Master Gardener



Photo by Normalee Martin

The Herb Reference: English Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

The pleasing aroma of lavender wafting through the air is a familiar fragrance to most gardeners. Its scent is relaxing and peaceful, often found as an ingredient in soaps, shampoos, and potpourri. The sweet, floral fragrance of lavender is associated with relaxation, calming, and also cuisine.

History of Lavender

Lavender is a flowering plant of the mint family with a history that has been traced back to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Despite its common name, the aromatic herb is a native to the Mediterranean region, and was valued for medicinal and culinary purposes. Believed to have antiseptic properties as well as a reputation for calming anxiety and tension, lavender was in high demand in many regions. The ancient Romans used lavender flowers to scent their bathwater, which reflects its Latin name "lavare", meaning to wash. The ancient Egyptians prized the herb to make fragrant perfumes. In Medieval Europe, lavender was grown extensively in monastery gardens where it was readily available for culinary and medicinal preparations.

Modern herbal remedies value lavender for its calming properties for upsets that range from emotional to digestive, and is still valued as a mild antiseptic for skin ailments. After the discovery of medicinally beneficial compounds in lavender, research studies now support many of the ancient beliefs in the healing properties of lavender. Chefs treasure its floral sweetness as a seasoning.

Growing and Harvesting Lavender



Photo by Liz Greene

English lavender is a perennial shrub, with many varieties ranging in size from 1 to 3 feet in height, and a spread of 2 to 4 feet. This sun loving herb forms grey-green mounds of foliage, with blue-purple flower spikes, when in bloom. For growing success, lavender requires full sun, well-drained soil, and good air circulation, especially with the high humidity in our region. Lavender will not thrive in a damp or shady location.

Be patient with your lavender, it will take about three years to reach full size. Proper pruning annually (not to be confused with harvesting) is necessary to extend the life of the plant.

Harvesting lavender is a treat for your senses. It is harvested during the summer when a few of the petals have just begun to open, and you glimpse that beautiful blue-purple color. The stems are cut about one-third the way down, but don't take all of them. Typically, it is dried quickly after harvest - first tied into small (1-inch) bundles and

hung upside down in a dark, well-ventilated area of low humidity.

Lavender is a versatile herb that is easy to grow in your garden or in pretty containers. With proper care, it will enhance your garden for the next 15 years. It is a favorite of bees and butterflies, and disliked by deer and ants. With its wide variety of uses from culinary to medicinal, it is definitely worth consideration for your summer garden. I cannot imagine summer without homemade lavender ice cream.

Karen Olgren, Extension Master Gardener

The Virtues of Comfrey

Comfrey is a very versatile plant. It draws minerals out of the soil into the roots and leaves making it a fertilizer and compost accelerator. It is the perfect ingredient for liquid 'manure' (compost tea), a beneficial insect attractor, weed suppressant, livestock forage and wound healer. It has been traditionally known by herbalists as 'knit bone' as it helps heal fractures. It is also an ideal permaculture plant.



Comfrey

Photo by Normalee Martin

Throughout history comfrey has been known as a great healer. Fairly recently though, scientific studies have indicated that comfrey *might* be carcinogenic when taken internally.

I have had a fascination with herbs since the early 1970's, particularly historically medicinal herbs. Driving the back roads of Loudoun County in the early 1980's, I came across a woman who sold herbs from her back porch. Imagine my delight to find some not so commonly sold comfrey plants. I bought one, and hastily put it in the ground in my back yard.

Comfrey is a hardy, upright, leafy perennial that dies down in the winter and comes back strong in the spring. It grows from rhizomes that contain a fleshy,

juicy mucous like substance that gives it one of its nicknames — slippery root.

Comfrey flowers from May to frost. It is native to Europe and Asia and is naturalized on every other continent. I have read that it likes rich soil and moist meadows, although that first plant I put in the ground was moved in my yard, which was lightly amended Virginia clay, 3 times, and dug up and moved with me when I moved into a townhouse in town with untouched soil. It thrived everywhere. Now I have 1 plant (it spreads) in an amended, rich bed, and 1 small division I just stuck in the soil at the corner of my porch. I also planted a division in our Demonstration Garden at Ida Lee and then transplanted a division of that one to another location in the garden. All of it thrives.

Comfrey's reputation as a healing herb has been around since 400 B.C. The Greeks used it for bronchial problems and to stop heavy bleeding. The word comfrey comes from the Latin *conferta*, meaning 'grow together.' People were convinced that comfrey could close wounds and knit broken bones. They made poultices for external wounds and drank tea for internal ailments. Leaves were cooked in soups and stews, or tossed into salads. Farmers cultivated comfrey as fodder for livestock.

In the 1840's, Henry Doubleday, an Englishman, established a charitable association to research the cultivation and use of comfrey. The association is still in existence today and publishes pamphlets on comfrey's history and use.

Freshly cut comfrey leaves make a good mulch as they are high in nitrogen so they don't pull nitrogen from the soil while decomposing as high carbon mulches like straw and leaves do. They are especially good mulches for tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers, but are not good for root crops like carrots, or leafy greens as they may encourage them to go to seed prematurely. Use freshly cut leaves in planting holes, but not flowering stems as they may take root.

To make comfrey tea (compost tea), use a bucket, trash can or a container of the size you prefer and fill half way with comfrey leaves and stems. Fill with water and cover for several weeks. Beware that it smells foul, so keep it away from sensitive noses. Use as a soil drench or strain it through a paper coffee filter to use in a sprayer for foliar feeding.

In 1978 a study found that rats fed a diet containing dry comfrey leaves and roots developed liver tumors after six months. There was a caution against all but the external use of comfrey. I never used comfrey internally, but had great luck with its use externally. I worked with heavy machinery for many years and would cut my hands, fingers and sometimes there would be light infection. I would take several leaves, mash with a pestle to get the juices flowing, soak in a little hot water and wrap the leaves around the wound, sometimes wrapping a bandage around the leaves and keeping it on overnight. Healing has always been rapid. The healing compound in comfrey is allantoin, which can be found in ointments and creams to treat various skin problems. In addition to its regenerative abilities, it is effective in destroying harmful bacteria. It is even used on farm animals.

Cosmetically, the mucilage in comfrey soothes and softens skin while the allantoin promotes the growth of new cells.

Comfrey is easy to grow by dividing roots. It is hard to get rid of once it is established. I have never wanted to get rid of it! It requires little maintenance.

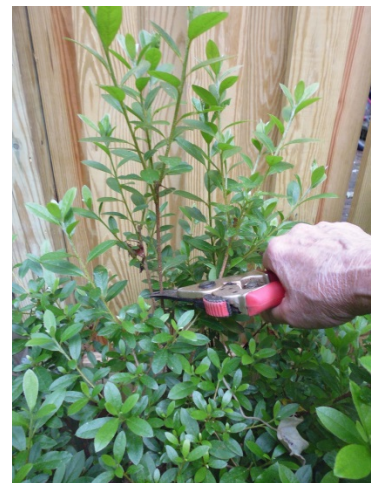
If you come to the Extension Master Gardener's Demonstration Garden at Ida Lee Park in Leesburg, in the fall, I would be glad to give you a small root division from our several plantings. That's all you need to start growing this most wondrous and beneficial plant.

Normalee Martin, Extension Master Gardener

It's Time to Prune!

Azaleas, Rhododendron, and other spring blooming shrubs should be pruned now, before mid-July. Cutting them back in late summer, fall, winter or early spring will remove flower buds and significantly reduce the number of spring blossoms.

Remember that azaleas should not be pruned into geometric shapes! Don't use hedge shears. Azaleas have beautiful, natural, cascading layers that should be maintained by pruning with hand pruners, snipping one branch at a time.



Azalea pruning Photo by Carol Ivory

Mugo Pines

When you think of pines, you think of the majestic White Pine, Scotch Pine, and Longleaf Pine. But there is one pine that grows as a shrub. The Mugo Pine is also called Swiss Mountain Pine. It is native to mountainous regions of Europe such as the Alps, Pyrennees and Carpathians. In its native form it can grow up to 75 feet tall, but the varieties sold in the U.S. are grown as shrubs.



Photo by Betty Hedges

I have found Mugo Pine to be carefree and slow-growing. I planted one 16 years ago. It is now 4 feet tall by 6 feet wide, without any pruning, and has not had any insect or disease infestations.

Its needles are grouped in pairs and grow about 2 inches long. You can use it

as a foundation plant, in rock gardens and in the back of perennial borders. It is also used as a bonsai plant. To keep its size in check, you can prune new shoots when they are half their mature length.

It is very adaptable to many types of soil, pH and climate. Mine grows in clay soil left by the builder, with morning sun and afternoon shade.

The new buds can be steeped in sugar water to produce a flavorful syrup to add to tea, sauces, desserts or to soothe a sore throat.



Photo by Betty Hedges

Betty Hedges, Extension Master Gardener, Tree Steward

Native Bees

Bees pollinate one third of our food supply. Historically, we have relied primarily on the troubled honey bee for this job. As science works to help the honey bee, we can increase the population of gentle-natured solitary bees like mason and leafcutter bees. These amazing pollinators are a great supplement to the honey bee, and have proven to increase various crop yields.

Protecting our food supply with more diverse bee pollinators is an easy project we can all participate in. In particular, we can focus on increasing the mason bee population for spring fruit, nuts and plant pollination. That's one part of the solution to our food pollination challenges.

Spring has passed, so I'm concentrating on summer native bees, the leafcutter bee.

I had thought about mason bees for several years. Then, at our LCMGA annual Symposium, I met one of our speakers, Tim McCoy, an entomologist at Virginia Tech. He enthusiastically showed me different type houses, how to make them, and where to buy supplies. His enthusiasm was contagious and I was determined to make a 'bee hotel'.

Bees by Season

Spring pollinators are *Blue Orchard Mason Bees*. Females live about 6 weeks, (males live 2 weeks) and are one of the first bees that fly in spring. They only need temperatures in the mid 50's to emerge and begin nesting. One spring mason bee pollinates 12 lbs. of cherries. It would take 60 honey bees to do that. You might



Honey Bee

Mason Bee

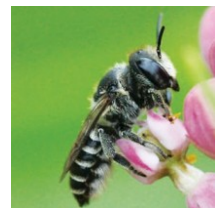
Photos from Crown Bees - Native Bee Guide

mistake the blue orchard bee for a fly due to its size, coloring and furry body.

The female will nest in existing holes, occupying up to four nesting tubes and laying up to 24 eggs. She gathers a pea sized mound of pollen, lays an egg on it and creates a chamber within the tube, then seals the tube with mud. There can be up to 8 egg chambers. By the end of the summer, the new eggs feed off the pollen that they were laid on. The larvae spin cocoons in which they hibernate during the winter months as pupae.

Summer Alfalfa Leafcutter Bee is the perfect pollinator for summer vegetables or any other flowering plant. It flies best when temperatures are 70° and higher. About 2/3 the size of a honey bee, it is black with yellow stripes on its abdomen.

The leafcutter bee gets its name from the way it collects nesting material. She will cut a semicircle from a plant leaf (non-fibrous), about ¾ inches in diameter. At the nest the cuttings are cemented together with leaf liquid and bee saliva to form cocoons for the eggs. The cocoons develop into bees the next summer.



Leafcutter Bee

Crown Bees - Native
Bee Guide

Nesting Hole Options

- Easy tear cardboard tubes or natural lake bed reeds. Both are easy to open for harvesting your bees and can be purchased from a supplier or garden center.
- Guard tubes with easy tear inserts.
- Reusable wooden trays. They are easy to harvest from and to clean. It will retain its bee-scent which is a bee attractant.

Avoid these materials

- Bamboo nesting tubes as they are difficult to open. The bees may suffer from pest build up.
- Drilled blocks of wood cannot be harvested or cleaned. Mites and pests can move in making the bees vulnerable.

Key Information

- The house or hotel should be placed accessible to warm sunny mornings. Make sure there is an overhang over the houses to help protect from rain.
- Place close to eye level so you can watch the bees' activity, as they don't mind being observed.
- Mason bees seal their egg chambers with mud. They prefer a clay type with a moderate moisture content. You can make your own clay mud, or it is available at garden centers.
- Leafcutter bees differ in that they use plant material rather than mud for cocoons.

Harvesting and Storing your Cocoons

- Bee production for the next season can be increased by collecting cocoons from the nesting holes. In the fall, harvesting the spring and summer cocoons reduces pests from invading the nests while insuring greater survival through winter hibernation.
- Store the cocoons in the refrigerator in a humidifier or 'Humidibee' so they don't dry out. The Mason bees can be released when pollen is available in the spring. Summer leafcutter bees can be released in May to begin developing into adult bees.

Protecting Your Bees

- Avoid using harmful pesticides or chemicals.
- Provide clean nesting holes each year to prevent mites from invading.
- Mason bees are tasty treats for birds and squirrels. Place a piece of hardware cloth ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch) over the front of the bee house, leaving a 3 inch space between the nesting holes and the cloth.
- Earwigs love pollen. Roll up a wet newspaper and place it under or on the bee house. Earwigs love wet and damp and will crawl into the rolled newspaper. Discard the paper after several days.
- While vegetable gardeners welcome parasitic wasps during tomato growing time, wasps can also infest all bees through multiple lifecycles. Remove mason nesting holes in early June to prevent intrusion. Place them in a fine mesh bag for storage in a shed or garage. For summer leafcutters, place cocoons in a mesh bag a month before you want them to fly. Once the first bees emerge, it is safe to put all cocoons on top of or behind the nesting holes.

One other common pest you'll see with leafcutter bees is 'pteromalus' (teromalus). This pest waits for the nesting female to finish laying its egg, gets in the hole and lays its eggs in the newly laid leafcutter egg. Pteromalus will overwinter with leafcutters and emerge before the leafcutter bees, which is the dangerous part. The pteromalus will deposit eggs while the leafcutter is in mid development and produce another batch of pteromalus. If you see them flying around the nesting bees, spray a fine mist of water to knock them out of the air and then dispose of them.



Photo by Normalee Martin

This is a picture of my Bee Hotel. I used three mason jars that I put nest tubes in, plus one set of wooden trays and one house shaped like a tube that has nesting tubes in it.

I gathered tree branches and pieces of bark to give them other areas to go. It is June 4th and my leafcutter bees are to be shipped from Washington state on the 6th. I imagine that in a little over a weeks time the first of my bees will be in their new home.

Native bees are vital pollinators for our fruits and vegetables. Commercial growers have relied primarily on the honey bee. The overlooked solitary native bee is an excellent supplement and is easy to raise in your back yard. It doesn't have to be a 'bee hotel', but a single Mason bee house is a help to our environment.

Normalee Martin, Extension Master Gardener

Pest Spotlight BONUS Feature

Buzz Off: Make Your Own Plant Derived Insect Repellent

Metro D.C. in the summertime means outdoor festivals, picnics, barbeques, and gardening! Unfortunately, it also has become synonymous with mosquitos, particularly those of the Asian Tiger variety shown on the left.



Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*)
James Gathany, CDC. 2000.

The easiest way to avoid bites is to cover up, but let's be honest, once August is here, the heat and humidity result in the opposite happening.

If you have been feeling conflicted using repellents featuring DEET and other chemicals, utilizing essential oils derived from plants might be for you. The plants discussed below are known to produce scents not favored by mosquitos, gnats, and a few other arthropods. Additionally, most are very easy to find in essential oil form at Natural Food stores, Garden

Supply Stores, and even www.amazon.com! Follow the recipe and try a few combinations to find your own unique Buzz off! Blend for Summer 2016!

Making Sense of Scents

- **Witch Hazel:** Derived from bark of *Hamamelis virginiana*, this shrub has great attributes as an anticoagulant and can be thought of as "pre-bite" care.
- **Neem:** From the Indian tree, *Azadirachta indica*, the oil has long been used as a natural pesticide in the garden. It makes natural sense to include in your blend.
- **Rosemary:** As a general rule of thumb, tastes and smells we like, but flies generally do not. They favor rotting meat and garbage to our fine rosemary and basil! Either of those herbs in just the cutting form are enough to deter a few!
- **Lemongrass:** Those citronella candles you more than likely have used in the past is actually from a type of lemongrass. It can be grown as an annual here and luckily, the oil is available year round.
- **Lemon Eucalyptus:** This is a hardy plant that can do well even in our clay environment and the crushed leaves rubbed on skin can often help with deterring mosquitos.
- **Lavender:** *Lavandula angustifolia* adds to the sentiment that if it smells sweet, flies probably won't be into it. In addition, it also naturally calms and relieves. Win-win! **L. angustifolia* has reported insecticidal attributes- see resources below
- **Cedar:** Extracted from cedar oil, this has been used to control fleas on pets for decades. It is also effective against other arthropods such as ticks, biting gnats, and mosquitos. The fact that it's safe for pet use is a serious plus. The price is worth it as a small amount goes a long way.

The Recipe:

Armed with your knowledge of repelling scents, you can now put together a simple spray able solution to chemical based deterrents.

- Materials

I find a 4 oz. plastic bottle (easily found in bulk or in travel size section of stores) is convenient to carry and still allows enough room to shake up contents

- Base Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons of Witch Hazel (can also use Vodka in a pinch)
- 2 tablespoons of Neem Oil
- ½ teaspoon of Vodka (it makes a great preservative)
- 100-120 drops of Essential Oil Blend

- Essential Oil Repellent Blend

As you have already read, different arthropods are repelled by different scents so it is in your best interest to combine several. Here are a few suggestions that have worked well for me to get you going:

- 55 drops of Lemon Eucalyptus
- 15 drops of Cedarwood Oil
- 15 drops of Lavender Oil
- 15 drops of Rosemary Oil

- Blend!

Add the base recipe to the spray bottle

Mix in the essential oil blend

- Tips

- Be sure to give the bottle a good shake before each use, as the oils will be oils and separate from the mixture.
- Reapply every few hours (think sunscreen) to ensure its effective
- We are all individual snowflakes- if you don't like the scent, play around with it! You will find a blend that makes both your nose and your skin happy this summer.



Resources:

<https://www.mountainroseherbs.com/catalog/aromatherapy/essential-oils>

Where to buy and information about herbs

References:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26350499> Lavender As Insecticide

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14713564> Effects of DEET

Amanda Rose Newton, BCE, Entomologist and Extension Master Gardener

Termites and Carpenter Ants – How to Tell the Difference

Ants - they're everywhere, especially this time of year. It's always annoying to see them crawling across the kitchen counter, but what if they aren't plain old ants, but carpenter ants, or something worse, like termites? Could they be doing real damage to our homes?

Now don't panic. Termites and ants look quite different, and carpenter ants can be readily distinguished from other types of ants; you just need to know their unique characteristics to be able to identify them.

In this article, we'll look at termites, how they differ from carpenter ants and the clues that both leave behind.

Termites



Termite mud tubes

Photo: [Connecticut Termites](#)

There are five different types of termites found in Virginia. The most common one is the Eastern Subterranean Termite, *Reticulitermes flavipes*. All are subterranean; they live in the ground up to twenty feet below the soil surface to protect the nest from extreme weather conditions. Unless they are swarming, termites are always hidden from our view either beneath the surface of the soil, inside wood, or in earthen (mud) tubes they construct.

On the left is a picture of a mud tube. Notice that it is about the diameter of a pencil.

As for the insects themselves, there are four castes of termites: Worker, Soldier, Male, and Queen. Each caste looks different from the others. If you uncover hidden termites, they will most likely be Workers and Soldiers which are both milky white and soft-bodied,

wingless and sightless, up to ¼ inch long. Only the Males and Queens have eyes and dark bodies. All castes have straight beadlike antenna, and are broad waisted. Furthermore, termite Queens "stretch" every time they molt, adding another set of ovaries; therefore, Queens can be up to ¾ inch long.



Termite Worker

Photo: [VT Pubs.edu](#)



Termite Soldier

Photo: [termites gonewild](#)



Termite male swarmers

Photo: [Terminix](#)



Termite Queen

Photo: [TermiteNewYorkCity](#)

You are most likely to see termites when the winged swarming males and Queens emerge from their colony. When they are done swarming, they lose their wings. Often people mistake swarmers for flying ants, so next let's look at carpenter ant swarmers so we can identify their differences.

Carpenter Ants



Photo: [Dmitry Mozzherin](#)

Eastern Carpenter Ants (*Camponotus pennsylvanicus*) are found in Virginia. Each colony has one queen. Mature colonies contain 2000+ ants and can have multiple "satellite" colonies of 500+ ants each. Carpenter ants nest in moist wood including rotting trees, tree roots, tree stumps, and logs or boards lying on or buried in the ground. They can also nest in moist or decayed wood inside buildings. A "satellite"

colony does not require moisture because the workers do not tend eggs. (The eggs would dry out without sufficient humidity.) For this reason, satellite nests can be found in relatively dry locations, such as insulation, hollow doors, and sound wood. The workers of satellite colonies move readily between their nest and the parent colony.



Winged Carpenter ant

Photo: [Discover Life](#)

Carpenter ants are the largest black ants most people in North America ever see. The Workers and male Drones are ½ inch long, and the Queen is 1 inch long. Drones die quickly after mating with one or more Queens, and the Queens lose their wings.

Termites vs. Carpenter Ants

Flying ants and swarming termites are quite different, but you may need a magnifying glass to get a clear look at them. Don't be afraid to catch some and put them into a sealed plastic bag or container. When you

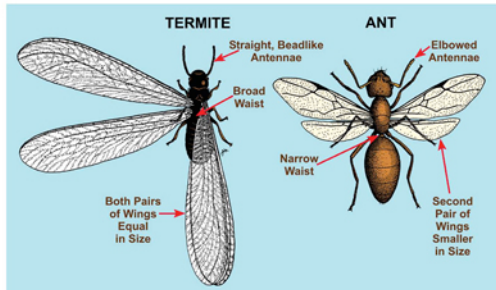
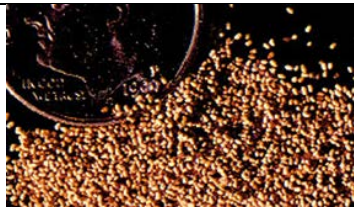


Photo: [Kentucky.edu](#)

look closely, you will see that termites have relatively straight, beadlike antennae, while ants have elbowed antennae. (See the Side by Side Comparison to the left.) The termite has two pairs of wings (front and back) that are almost equal length and size. The ant also has two pairs of wings but of unequal size; the front wings are much larger than the hind wings. The abdomen of the termite is broadly joined to the thorax (chest), while the abdomen and thorax of the ant are joined by a narrow waist called a petiole.

In addition to their physical differences, termites and carpenter ants cause different types of damage to homes. Termites actually eat wood, specifically the wood cellulose; so they can eat parts of your house. What they leave behind is their excrement or frass. It consists of very fine granules that look somewhat like sawdust. In contrast, Carpenter Ants eat protein and sugar; our homes are in their way, so they tunnel through them to get to their food. Carpenter Ants do not eat our homes, but they cause damage and leave sawdust in their wake.



Termite Frass

Photo: [Auburn extension](#)



Termite Damage

Photo: [Proactive Pest](#)



Carpenter Ant Sawdust

Photo: [Happy Homeowners](#)



Carpenter Ant Damage

Photo: [Roberts Pest Control](#)

Conclusion

Now you know that termites and carpenter ants look very different, but you'll need a magnifying glass to see the distinguishing details. Both termites and carpenter ants can cause severe structural damage to buildings. So if you see an insect that you think may be either a termite or carpenter ant, your home may be at risk.

Wendy Hiller, Extension Master Gardener

Round Hill Elementary School Green Team Wins Award with a Little Help from the Master Gardeners

Round Hill Elementary has been named one of five winners in the 2016 Carton to Garden Contest sponsored by Evergreen Packaging and KidsGardening.org. The Carton to Garden Contest emphasizes environmental efforts on two fronts. First, it encourages the recycling of materials such as milk cartons to begin the gardening process. Secondly, it supports students' care for the earth by creating a garden for their school community to enjoy.

On March 11th, two Extension Master Gardeners met with the parent liaison, Kimberly Shierts and Principal Andrew Davis to help them with the Green Team objectives and goals for this year. The team goals they developed were:

- Develop a butterfly garden
- Create a vegetable garden using raised beds
- Create waste free days/recycle/compost
- Publicize awareness

Master Gardeners met with the children on April 4th to help them plant their garden; on May 2nd to demonstrate how to weed and maintain the garden, and on June 4th to help harvest their vegetables, and replant the beds.

Along with their gardens, the children have they designed and built a compost recycler that allows them to have one day a month that is a waste free.

The children have adopted beds and along with parents' help, they will work throughout the summer and keep the garden going all season long. The produce goes to Loudoun Interfaith. On June 4th, they provided about 20 lbs. of produce.

As a winner in this contest, Round Hill will receive a prize package worth more than \$1,000. It includes \$900 in cash to be used for the purchase of soil, plants and other gardening needs; a \$100 gift certificate from the Gardener's Supply Company; and a garden essentials educational package.



Master Gardener mentors

Photo by Diane Hayes



Green Team members with Principal Davis

Photo by Diane Hayes

Story provided by the Extension Master Gardeners Children's Education Team

The Gardener

She dug the plot on Monday,
The soil was rich and fine;
She forgot to thaw out dinner
So we went out to dine.

She planted hosta Tuesday;
She says they are a must
They really were quite lovely,
But she forgot to dust.

On Wednesday it was daylilies;
They opened with the sun
All whites and pinks and yellows,
But the laundry wasn't done.

She planted pansies Thursday
A bright and cheery red;
I guess she really was engrossed
She never made the bed.

It was iris time on Friday
In colors she adores.
It never bothered her at all
All the crumbs upon the floors.

I hired a maid on Saturday;
My week is now complete.
My wife can garden all she wants;
The house will still be neat.

It's nearly lunchtime Sunday
And I can't find the maid.
Oh No! I don't believe it!
She's out there with a spade!!!!!!

By Terri Money, Alabama

Winner of the newsletter award in 2003 category for humor, published in Spring 2003, Region 14 *The Dixie Daylily*. Republished in *The Daylily Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3, Fall 2003. Ms. Terri (Tee) Money is a member of the American Hemerocallis Society, Region 14 (Alabama). Reprinted here with permission of Ms. Money.

This poem about the priorities of those of us who garden never fails to give me a chuckle and it's oh so true! Certainly, during gardening season, a lot is left undone in this household, and I suspect that's the case in the homes of most of us who garden.

Lina Burton, Extension Master Gardener

Notes from the Help Desk

It's peak gardening season, and the Help Desk has been fielding questions on everything from lawn care to ornamentals to veggie beds. Here's a small sample of what we've been hearing that may help answer some of your questions, too.

My roses were so beautiful last year, but now they're getting these thick canes that are shooting up above the rest of the plant, with red bristly leaves on the ends and flower buds that don't open. What's going on?

It sounds like your roses may be suffering from Rose Rosette disease (RRD). It's a virus spread by tiny wind-borne mites that's systemic, meaning the virus attacks the entire plant, and unfortunately there is no cure. Your best bet is to bring a sample or send a photo to the Help Desk to confirm the diagnosis. Once RRD is confirmed, promptly remove the diseased roses from your garden, taking care to remove all leaves, branches, twigs, even roots. These should be discarded in the regular trash or burned (if allowed in your area). Do not recycle or compost them because the virus will survive and may end up in someone else's garden. Then disinfect your gardening tools with bleach or rubbing alcohol to prevent the virus from infecting any remaining healthy roses. Another preventive measure is to treat nearby healthy plants with horticultural oil or insecticidal soap weekly until mid July when mites become less active. Fortunately RRD only affects roses and does not pose a threat to other plants in your garden.



<http://hyg.ipm.illinois.edu/article.php?id=313>

My tomatoes were growing beautifully, but just as the fruit was beginning to ripen the blossom ends turned dark blackish brown and leathery.

Your tomatoes have Blossom End Rot, or BER. The most frequent cause of BER is uneven moisture although other causes are possible. (Think hot and dry and then thunderstorms which come and deliver a large amount of moisture at once.) Mulch around the base of the plants to conserve moisture during hot spells; and water regularly, especially on very hot, dry days. Another possible cause is excess soluble salt in the soil. Test your soil to make sure the pH is adequate for tomatoes (6.2 to 6.8) and add lime to raise pH if necessary. If you act now, future tomatoes further along in the season should be fine. For more information see the Virginia Tech publication on selected vegetable diseases https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/426/426-363/426-363_pdf.pdf



Joey Williamson, ©2009 HGIC, Clemson Extension
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/hot_topics/2009/08blossom_end_rot.html

Japanese beetles are eating everything in sight. What can I do to get rid of them?

While not for the squeamish, Japanese beetles can be picked off of plants in the morning when they're less active, and drowned in soapy water. Tomato hornworms, squash bugs, Colorado potato beetles and cabbage worms can be managed the same way: handpick early each morning, and destroy. If you've got a fullblown Japanese beetle infestation, it may be time to think about prevention. Nematodes can be applied to turf in mid August to control newly hatched Japanese beetle larvae (white grubs) before they can do any damage. There are also a number of approved pesticides that can be applied in late July or early August. For recommendations on an approved pesticide and its use, contact the Help Desk or go online to pubs.ext.vt.edu/index.html and use the Search tool.

Nancy Caldwell, Extension Master Gardener

Two Handy Books for Gardeners

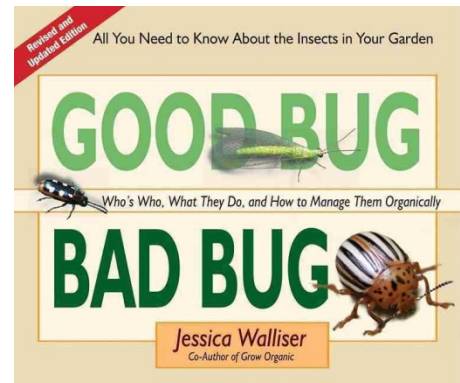
These two sturdy, spiral bound books could easily be carried in your gardening tote to quickly ID and classify weeds and bugs when you encounter them.



Nancy Gift is the Chair of the Sustainability & Environmental Studies Program, Berea College, Berea, KY., and she has a Ph.D in Crop and Soil Science from Cornell University. Despite these weighty credentials, Nancy has written an informative and easy to use book that even includes recipes such as Strawberry Japanese Knotweed Pie. The book is divided into Bad, Not so Bad, and Good Weed sections, further divided by season. Each weed section includes two or three photos key to ID.

You may disagree with her categorizations — ground ivy is a good weed? — but each weed description includes description and life cycle, benefits, and control. Unfortunately the book does not include environmental benefits such as which are butterfly hosts or provide essential food for other animals.

Jessica Walliser serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the American Horticultural Society. Her degree is in ornamental horticulture from Penn State University. Good Bug Bad Bug is intended to reduce your need to research pest problems and their safest most effective solution. The book is divided into Pest and Beneficial sections and includes a glossary and an appendix of organic product information. No recipes! Bug entries in the Pest section include description, spot the damage, plants they attack, live biological controls, preventive actions and organic product controls. Entries in the Beneficial section include description, life cycle, pests they control and how to attract and keep them. Jessica chooses the most interesting and helpful information to make this book a fun and enjoyable read even when you aren't out trying to ID a bug.



Carol Ivory, Extension Master Gardener



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