

The Compost

A Newsletter celebrating Charles County Master Gardener Projects

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State Seed Collection Workshop

Article and photos by CCMG Terry Thir

David Garner, Terry Thir and Rose Markham attended the State Master Gardener workshop presented by Jon Traunfeld on seed collection this fall in Timonium, MD.

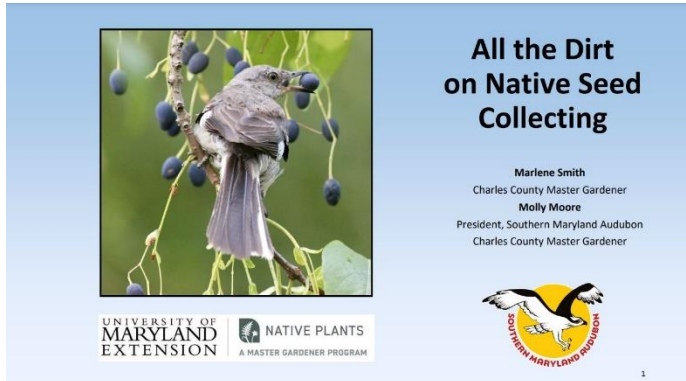


All the Dirt Series Expands

Article by CCMG Molly Moore and Marlene Smith

Photos by CCMG Molly Moore

CCMGs Molly Moore and Marlene Smith recorded a presentation of a new workshop held on Oct. 14, 2023, entitled "[All the Dirt on Native Seed Collecting](#)." They cover the ethics of native seed collection and types of native plant seed structures in 10 simple steps and share their personal experiences with native seeds.



What could be better than gardening in the dead of winter? Charles County Master gardeners and our Southern Maryland partners are expanding the popularity of winter sowing throughout our county and region. The goal: Getting hundreds, if not thousands, of new native plants in yards, gardens, patios, and containers this spring and summer.

Enthusiastic participants turned out for our Jan. 6 "[All the Dirt on Winter Sowing Native Plants](#)" workshop at Charles County Library Waldorf West and our workshop at St. Mary's County Library Lexington Park is full booked with a growing waiting list.

Right: Winter Sowers selecting seeds: Master Gardeners help workshop participants at Waldorf West Library select the correct native seeds to sow for their gardens.



Charles County Master Gardeners are co-hosting these workshops with Southern Maryland Audubon and Wild Ones Chesapeake Bay, allowing us to reach new audiences as well as building additional volunteer and expertise support in spreading the word on the importance of native plants.

All the Dirt Series Expands, cont.

Article by CCMG Molly Moore and Marlene Smith

Photos by CCMG Molly Moore

We are also working with the amazing students in the Natural Resources Management program at Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center in Leonardtown, teaching them how to harvest and store native seeds properly and winter sow them in recycled milk jugs. This year the students are growing seedlings for new gardens they will install on their campus this spring. We'll be on hand supporting class teacher Dorothy Birch and the students as they plant more jugs, monitor them through the winter and transplant the seedlings before the end of the school year.



Left: Students at Forrest Careers and Technology Center learned the techniques of winter sowing to grow seedlings for campus gardens.

The Winter Sowing team welcomes all Master Gardeners to join us. The workshops are not only teaching the public more about native plants and how to grow them but are great fun with always-enthusiastic and engaged participants. Right: Photo from Avellino Farms Facebook page.



Did you know that Snow delivers about two to twelve pounds of nitrogen per acre per year from the atmosphere to the soil.

Cobb Island Monarch Mania

Article and photos by CCMG Janet McGrane

The Cobb Island Citizens Association (CICA) sponsors Monarch Mania each October with the primary focus of tagging and releasing monarchs caught on the island. Master Gardeners have participated each year providing educational information and children's arts and crafts.



In 2023, the event was rescheduled to October 15 at the CICA building due to rain the previous day. The event is normally held in Old Fisherman Field on the island.

The children and all participants were enthralled with the tag and release of the monarchs. Mike Callahan did a fantastic presentation on the life cycle and migration of butterflies.



More detailed information on tagging monarchs and the collection of data is available at monarchwatch.org.

Master Gardeners provided information and answered many questions on native plants, pollinator gardens, the Bay-Wise program and winter seed sowing. The children especially liked creating butterflies, decorating caterpillars and wearing monarch masks that were given out at our crafts table.

Master Gardener participants were (front l-r) Rose Markham, Kathy Davis, Laura Walker, (back l-r) Jamila Barton, Janet McGrane, and Marguerita Harding.



Senior Education Programs (SEP)

Article by CCMG Michelle Chenault, photos from Meg McDonald, Terry Thir & Donna Ball

Hello Fellow Gardeners! It's 2024, a new year with new opportunities for growing and growth!! The current project team includes the following CCMGs and Interns (in addition to Donna Ball, as Project Co-lead): Tiffany Daniel, Kathy Davis, Lori Guido, Jeanine Harrington, Linda Ivko, Kathy Jenkins, Brian Larson, Aileen Lennon, Rose Markham, Janet McGrane, Meg MacDonald (representing Grow It Eat It- GIEI) Laura McManus, Kay Redman, Paris Reed, Jessica Richards, Stacey Sheffey, Terry Thir, Karen Trundle, Gail Walker, Karen Westhead, Teri White, Julie Nethon-Williams and Karina Willette. **Join us** by contacting Michelle Chenault at vmchenault@gmail.com or Donna Ball at dball15226@aol.com. Meetings are usually on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6pm via Zoom. The February meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 20th on zoom. In March we may meet at a restaurant – watch for an announcement.

The project team has exciting announcements to share. First, the SEP team has been asked to serve as horticulture consultants for the gardeners at the Indian Head Senior Center located at 100 Cornwallis Square in Indian Head. This senior center has an experienced group, the Green Thumb Club, of approximately 10-12 very active seniors. They have effectively used several raised garden beds for their vegetables and some pollinator flowers for over 10 years. The raised beds had deteriorated, so the Southern Maryland Sierra Club rebuilt the beds and prepared new spaces. SEP will provide the first of several educational presentations starting in March with pollinators as the topic by presenters Kathy Jenkins and Terry Thir. The seniors will use this information to select pollinator plants for their new raised garden beds. **Volunteers are needed to serve as consultants for this location.**

Next, discussions are underway to provide presentations and or workshops in 2024 for seniors at the Nanjemoy Senior and Community Center, 4375 Port Tobacco Rd in Nanjemoy and the Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center at 90 Post Office Rd. The educational instruction or services needed, provided, and requested are a bit different for each center and based upon the facility and the seniors that attend the programs. **Join us** to assist on any of these programs. Right: CCMGs Karen Westhead and Kathy Jenkins (lead) doing a workshop on herbs for seniors.



To prepare for winter at the Victoria Park (VP) Senior Apartments site, we dismantled, cleaned, and stored the rain barrels and manual pumps for the free-standing water delivery system in the raised bed garden area. We also assisted the gardeners by cleaning and applying mulch to the demonstration bed. This workday at the VP location in Waldorf was on Saturday October 28th. Thanks again to the great team of CCMGs that worked at the VP site. The CCMG volunteers were Donna Ball, Michelle Chenault, Abigail Clements, Kathy Davis, Linda Ivko, Laura McManus, Karen Trundle and Gail Walker.

Senior Education Programs (SEP)

Article by CCMG Michelle Chenault, photos from Meg McDonald, Terry Thir & Donna Ball

HURRAH!! The project team completed all 10 Senior Plus gardening classes scheduled in 2023 at the Richard S. Clark Senior Center in La Plata. The 2023 inaugural gardening participants, "Clark Gardeners" are 16 physically and or mentally challenged seniors enrolled in a special Senior Plus Program through the center. The Clark Gardeners Certificate Ceremony was held in November and all the participants received personalized certificates and special congratulations cards (see brown envelope in photo) prepared by the Junior Master Gardeners. Thank you, JMG Project!

The seniors were excited to see the appearance of the first bulbs from the spring planting during their October 2023 class. The Bulbs class used the "Lasagna" or layering technique and was led by CCMG Terry Thir. The seniors will make their own herb-infused olive oil in January using herbs grown in the garden and using the drying techniques learned in the November 2023 Herb workshop led by CCMG Kathy Jenkins. Below: Fall certificate presentation, CCMG Kathy Jenkins demonstrating how to make pesto, and CCMGs working with SEP seniors at the Herb workshop.



The patio garden at the Clark Senior Center is a beautiful and peaceful place often frequented by all the seniors and staff at the center to chat and relax. We have started planning at Clark for the 2024 gardening season. **Volunteers are welcome.** Contact us for your orientation. Please join us for the fun!



Southern Maryland Food Bank Garden

Article and photos by CCMG Brent Burdick

The Southern Maryland Food Bank "Seeds of Hope" Community Learning Garden Project is starting another year. Master Gardeners first started providing assistance to the Food Bank with its garden in 2019. We helped the Food Bank demonstrate home gardening techniques by providing advice and helping to maintain the garden. We increased their production of produce for use in their Food Truck operation and to provide fresh food supplements to their pantry bags. Before COVID, we also planned and conducted educational sessions in gardening with youth and other community groups, to include home schoolers. The garden area and beds are relatively small. The garden is located behind the Food Bank's leased warehouse and office space at 22 Irongate Drive in Waldorf.

We were quite successful last year – we harvested 573 lbs. of produce for the Food Bank! This compared with 530 lbs. harvested during 2022. When we closed out the garden at the end of last year, we started to prepare for a new garden layout. The back part of the garden was in shade and the old pallet fencing was rotting away. We started taking down the old pallet fencing in preparation for a new fence the Food Bank is going to put up this year. The new garden footprint will have the garden fencing moved forward closer to the parking area and extended out to the right to make up for the loss of the back shaded area. Several back beds will have to be relocated so that they will be inside the revised footprint of the garden. Below photo: In progress, garden footprint to be moved (photo taken January 2024).



The project team is anxious to get started with this year's garden. We normally start on Valentine's Day with Winter Sowing of some spring crops and plant a few potato baskets. We will also have to start moving some of the back raised beds before the new fence is installed.

So, Master Gardeners and Interns, wanna get **YOUR** hands dirty? Wanna help with a demonstration garden? Wanna promote community food production? Wanna help train the next generation in backyard gardening? If so, come on out and join the project! Contact CCMG Brent Curdick at b361220601@comcast.net to volunteer. Let's Grow It Eat It!!!!

Bay-Wise Landscape Management

Article by CCMG Rose Markham



Bay-Wise Certifications

The Bay-Wise Certificate program is administered by the University of Maryland Extension and the Master Gardeners. The program promotes environmentally sound landscape practices to protect our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. We provide an easy-to-use yardstick as a tool to do a self-assessment of your property prior to you scheduling an onsite certification. Once certified you receive a Bay-Wise sign, a certificate and are eligible for a 50% (Charles County) annual tax credit on Storm Water Remediation Fees. Our goal is to certify all our master gardeners so they can go out into the community and certify other resident properties. [All information can be found at this link.](#) Contact Bay-Wise Chair Rose Markham for more information at rosemarkham38@gmail.com or to **volunteer as a certifier!**

Backyard Buffers

The Backyard Buffer program is ready to launch for 2024. This program provides free trees to homeowners who register to help stabilize streambanks and reduce sediment runoff. The goal is to enhance water quality. [And it's working! Click here for good news from the DNR!](#)

Seedlings are approximately 1-2 feet in height. This year the bundles of 16 trees include a mix of [Buttonbush: *Cephalanthus occidentalis*](#), [American Persimmon: *Diospyros virginiana*](#), [Northern Red Oak: *Quercus rubra*](#), and [Sycamore: *Platanus occidentalis*](#) and will be distributed on April 13th. For more information, contact Janet McGrane, Project lead at backyardbufferccmg@gmail.com.



L-R: Buttonbush, bark of Persimmon, leaf of Northern Red Oak, and a young Sycamore tree. Photos from Wikipedia.



Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Project

Article by CCMGs Terry Thir and Kathy Jenkins

The Junior Master Gardeners program is modeled after the Master Gardener program for adults but offered to students from elementary school to adolescent ages. Our JMG class is working with students in grades 3-5. JMG leaders offer horticultural and environmental education while teaching leadership and life skills interactive fun activities. JMG leaders are committed to guiding young people to be both good gardeners and good citizens as they complete and graduate from the JMG program.

JMG classes are then offered to groups of interested young gardeners. Topics include plant growth and development, soil and water, insects and plant diseases, ecology and environmental horticulture, fruit and nuts, vegetables and herbs, life skills, career exploration, and growing a vegetable garden.

We need more trainers – Join Us! Instructors for the program are required to attend an on-line via Zoom training session Feb. 20 and 21, 2024 and follow the activities provided in the Teacher Leadership Guidebooks. [Click here to register by February 12th!](#) There is a \$65 fee. Let us know when you sign up – Rose Markham, Project Lead at rosemarkham38@gmail.com or Terry Thir, Co-Lead at thirccmg@aol.com.



CCMG JMG Trainers (l-r): Rose Markham (Lead), Kathy Davis, Terry Thir (co-lead), Kathy Jenkins, and Lori Guido. Not present: Gail Walker.



One of our Junior Master Gardener classes. Join the fun!

Pre-Conference Virtual Orientation: Feb 15, 2024, 5pm EST

Interactive Zoom Training: Feb. 20, 1 to 6pm EST and Feb 21, 9:30am to 6pm EST

Registration Closes: February 12, 2024

Meet A Charles County Master Gardener Intern from CCMG Intern Laura McManus



I became a master gardener because of my love of herbs and flowers. I wanted to help save the pollinators. I also did it for my mental health. I have a wonderful new network of friends!

-- Laura McManus with Bella

If you have a landscape, insect, or plant disease question, please use the [Ask Extension webpage](#) to submit photos and other details.

For 2023, Charles County Master Gardeners volunteered a total of 5723 hours. There were 68 active Master Gardeners in Charles County, and 854 continuing education hours were logged. From the 2023 Class of Interns, four have completed their 40 volunteer hours: Tiffany Daniel, Antoine "Tony" Johnson, Connie Nesbary and Karen Trundle. Congrats! Thanks to Pauline Spurlock for compiling these figures.

"Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the year; for gardening begins in January with the dream." -- Josephine Nuese

Garden Dictionary
Bipinnate - Compound leaf structures with a feather-like formation of leaflets arranged in pairs, with each leaflet also pinnately divided into pairs.
Pinnate - A compound leaf structure with a feather-like formation of leaflets arranged in pairs or alternating along the main stem.

Eggplants

Credits: left [The Garden Helper](#) and right from [The Happy Gardener](#).



Melwood Horticultural Therapy Programs

Article by CCMG Barbara Hill. Photos by CCMG Barbara Hill and Suse Greenstone



As we enter the winter months, we turn to clean up, planting and caring for winter hardy plants, providing cover from extreme winds and cold, and to do work in the greenhouse. Winter is a period of quiet change although it might not always be visible. There is lots of growing and a chance to participate in a lot of activities. Melwood always has a lot of opportunities for Master Gardeners to volunteer. Photo left: MG Linda Bronsdon & MG Barbara Hill.



Above: CCMG Linda Bronsdon showing off the sweet potato harvest in October.



We want to recognize CCMG LaVerne Madison who took pride in the planting of the carrots, and they grew well. LaVerne has had some health issues and hasn't been out in a while and we miss you a lot! Suse Greenstone had picked these for LaVerne around Thanksgiving. Feel better soon, LaVerne!



Melwood Horticultural Therapy Programs

Article by CCMG Barbara Hill. Photos by CCMG Barbara Hill and Suse Greenstone

Planting Pok Choi was a Seed to Table Project at Melwood. They started with seeds, transplanted up twice and then they were ready to harvest!



Below: The Seed to Table Project of Pok Choi is ready and being harvested.



Here is a new one, Wye Oak acorns were given to CCMG Barbara Hill, and we are going to see if we can get them to grow. We should be able to provide some nice historical presentations as the progress. I'm trying to show that they already have some root growth.



We come from a tree that was a seedling of the Wye Oak!



Melwood Horticultural Therapy Programs

Article by CCMG Barbara Hill. Photos by CCMG Barbara Hill and Suse Greenstone

CCMG Linda Brondson led the Connectors Group at Melwood in trying to heal the Aloe plants that had black spot. They cut off the stems infected with spot and then repotted them.



Very exciting NEWS!!!! Melwood and Children's National Hospital Announce Partnership of Specialized Summer Camp for Children with Disabilities or Chronic Medical Conditions!

*For the first time, the two organizations are coming together to offer a shared summer camp program for kids and teens with disabilities or chronic medical conditions across the mid-Atlantic region. Every one of the camp's distinct experiences throughout the summer is tailor-made to serve campers and welcome them as they grow through multidimensional programming. The activities for campers include swimming, equestrian activities, creative and performing arts, sports, climbing walls, adventure activities, **nature, horticulture, STEM, culinary** and much more.*

There are classes going on all year round and there is always work to do in the greenhouse to get ready for the spring: things like washing pots and trays and such so. If you want to volunteer in these cold winter months at Melwood in Nanjemoy, contact Suse Greenstone to be vetted at Sgreenstone@melwood.org or by phone or by text at 240-882-5280.



Suse Greenstone, HTR

Manager Horticultural Therapy Programs

5606 Dower House Road

Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Sgreenstone@melwood.org O: 301-599-2716 | C: 240-882-5280

Support Us: [Donate Now](#) | [CFC# 21166](#)

Holiday Greens Celebration

Article and photos by CCMG Carol Teets

The Charles County Master Gardener’s celebrated another successful year! A greens gathering, wreath making workshop, and potluck luncheon were led by project leader Carol Teets. We are reminded that the “greens” are the gift of the season.

Best wishes for the New Year were shared by all.



Above, Project Leader Carol Teets

CCMGs display their wreaths made during the workshop.



Holiday Potluck – Back to front: Pat Bile, Connie Nesbary, Janet McGrane, Linda Ivko, and Gail Walker.

Posies for the Vets

Article and photos by CCMG Kathy Davis

I lost my husband three years ago who was a Veteran. My family and I have always participated in the annual "[Wreaths Across America Campaign](#)" at Christmas. I received a thank you letter for my donation to purchase 6 wreaths. However, the organization indicated that they still had not met their goal to purchase enough wreaths for every Veterans gravesite. They indicated they would only have enough wreaths for every third gravesite.

It saddened me, but I came up with a solution. I decided to make as many posies as I could before going to Cheltham Veterans Cemetery wreath laying activity in December. I was able to make 110 posies with greenery left over from the MG Greens workshop. My daughter joined me on December 16th to visit my husband's gravesite. We then laid posies on gravesites that didn't have a wreath.

I'd like to suggest that next year at our greens workshop those CCMGs consider also making posies to supplement the "Wreaths Across America" campaign. I'd be happy to lead the effort.



GIEI Education Project Ends First Year of Events

Article and photos by CCMG Meg McDonald

The University of MD Extension's Grow It Eat It (GIEI) mission is teaching Marylanders and others how to grow their own affordable and healthy food using sustainable gardening practices. The CCMG GIEI Education project began work in December of 2022 planning and executing workshops for 2023 to address this goal.

The first workshop, **Vegetable Garden Planning**, was held at the Waldorf West public library on April 1, 2023. [See the Powerpoint presentation at this link.](#)



The second workshop in the series, **Vegetable Garden Problems**, was presented at the Waldorf West library on July 22, 2023, a time when many vegetable gardeners in the region start to see pests and diseases affecting their vegetable and herb plants. [The presentation can be viewed at this link.](#)

On September 22nd, the CCMG GIEI EDU project was invited to participate in a **Health and Wellness Expo** offered by Chutes, Inc., a private company in Waldorf. CCMGs and Interns provided information and answered questions on Food Gardening to many of the 100+ employees of the company who stopped by our tables (see photo above with CCMGs Tina Bailem, Abigail Clements, and Tiffany Daniel).

In addition to the published resources and website links the CCMG GIEI shared, some live demonstration items were on display, including potted herbs, herb drying equipment, food safety information, and a lettuce box full of healthy seedlings, grown by CCMG Tina Bailem.

Many of the Chutes employees shared their own gardening experiences and were glad to learn of the resources provided by Master Gardeners and UME. Several completed a CCMG survey, identifying their areas of interest: the top priority was Food Gardening, followed by Preserving the Harvest, Gardening for Kids, Native Plants, Composting, and Other – "Medicinal Purposes." It was a great chance for CCMG to reach members of the public, and we are grateful to Chutes Inc. for providing that opportunity.

2024 is the Year of Heirloom Tomatoes

GIEI Education Project Ends First Year of Events

Article and photos by CCMG Meg McDonald



CCMGs Terry Thir and Tina Bailem provide information to participants at the Ask a Master Gardener GIEI workshop Nov. 4th.

The final CCMG GIEI workshop for 2023, **Ask A Master Gardener - Fall Edition**, was offered November 4, 2023, at the La Plata Public Library. The CCMG GIEI team set up multiple demonstrations and displays and answered questions from participants about extending the season, drying and preserving herbs, prepping soil for the spring, and planning for winter sowing later in the year. Participants asked questions about problems they'd experienced in their summer gardens and were given information on how to prevent these. Information on the MG program and how to join was also provided to interested attendees.

Photo below: CCMGs set up demonstrations and information for participants at the GIEI Ask a Master Gardener Workshop on Nov 4, 2023, at the La Plata library. Right to left Kathy Davis, Tina Bailem, Kathy Jenkins, Beth Grem, Michelle Chenault, and Terry Thir.



Going forward into 2024, the CCMG GIEI Education Project will host regular, seasonal workshops at various branches throughout the county. **The next workshop is planned for February 3, 2024, at the Waldorf West Library. The topic is "Starting Vegetable Seeds - Indoors and Out."** Information on that February 3rd workshop is on the CCMG website under Outreach Events. The year ahead will include library workshops in the Spring, Summer, Fall of 2024 and Winter of 2025.

The CCMG project team members are Beth Grem and Meg MacDonald, co-chairs, Tina Bailem, Michelle Chenault, Lori Guido, Kathy Jenkins, and Terry Thir. Many other CCMGs and Interns volunteered their time and support at events and in the planning of presentations; they have helped to make the CCMG GIEI EDU project's first year a busy and successful one. We are looking forward to an equally rewarding 2024.

UNIVERSITY OF
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GROW IT · EAT IT
A MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

**Charles County Master Gardeners
Grow It Eat It Project presents:
Starting Vegetable Seeds, Indoors and Out**

Feb 3, 2024, 10 a.m. –12 pm
Waldorf West Library
To register, email
ccmggiei@gmail.com



This **FREE** presentation will teach you about starting your own vegetable seeds, either indoors under lights or outside via winter sowing. No special equipment needed. Hands-on demonstrations, using everyday low- or no-cost materials. **Please register to help us plan.**

Charles County Public Library events are accessible for all.

If you have an accessibility request, please contact programs@ccplonline.org three business days prior to the event.



CCMG website

University of MD programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.

Visit to Local Gardens

Article by CCMG Marian Bruemmer

This area has several beautiful gardens that are fun to visit at any season. I recently visited the [U.S. National Arboretum](#) and [River Farm](#) (photos from respective websites).

The National Arboretum is located at 3501 New York Avenue NE and is open every day except Christmas Day. The grounds are open from 8am to 5pm and the Bonsai Museum is open 10am to 4pm except for federal holidays. There is no admission fee. For those of you who are tech savvy, they have a USNA app with information for special tours and to locate and identify many of the plants. I like to just roam around since there is always something interesting to see. It is a garden, so wear your walking shoes!

MAP OF ARBORETUM GROUNDS



Another favorite is much smaller, but equally fun. River Farm is a historic 25-acre site that was once part of George Washington's original farms and has been the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society (AHS) since 1973. Normally, the hours are Monday through Friday from 10am to 4pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm, but winter hours can vary.

Visit River Farm

Spring and fall are my favorite times to visit. There are lovely perennial borders that bloom throughout the year and are resistant to diseases and pests. At the Manor the plantings are predominantly native shrubs and trees with under plantings of perennials and some annuals. Interior gardens include a children's garden and a calming garden.

The AHS has a spring plant sale and sometimes offers classes. Watch the Facebook page for [River Farm](#) for seed swap days, too. I've been to a couple of classes over the years, and they were excellent.

If you haven't visited these two gardens, I hope you will be able to this year.

If you would like to assist in getting a community garden started in Charles County, contact Meg McDonald at <mailto:maggiemac420@hotmail.com>.

Harvest Results – Year 1

Article and photos by CCMG Connie Nesbary

These are probably very basic for most Master Gardeners but being able to have a “real” garden for the first time in over a decade has given me lots of opportunities to experiment.

First, I learned how to harvest and dry the basil from doing the Fact Sheets for the Senior Education Program. I LOVED the smell of the basil as it was drying in the oven. I had washed it and let it dry on a paper towel for a day, then baked it on a parchment paper on a baking sheet at 170 degrees for about an hour... until it would turn to powder between my hands.

Then I did the same with carrot greens and parsley... love the parsley smell, too. And, I was harvesting parsley well into December! You can see we’ve been using the herbs in our cooking.



Photos above left-right: Herbs, Swedish Pickled Cucumbers in jar, Lemon cucumbers, and Japanese Climbing cucumbers. Below: All things zucchini.

Next, I had fun making [Swedish Pickled Cucumbers](#). We had 2 Japanese Climbing cucumber plants and 2 Lemon cucumber plants and they gave us plenty of cucumbers. I used both to make Swedish Pickled Cucumbers which were great for a snack or to eat for breakfast.

From only 4 zucchini plants, we were inundated with zucchinis. Good thing we all love Zucchini Lasagna and Zucchini casseroles. How many ways can you cook zucchini?!

I can't wait until the next harvesting season!



Greenbrier vs Me

Article by CCMG Linda Bronsdon

Long ago, a friend desperately asked us to take over their time share at a resort called "Greenbrier." Sadly, I noted she could transfer her interest to us for free, but I still wouldn't accept. That's how much I despise greenbrier (the plant's Latin name is *Smilax rotundia*). Whoever named this luxury resort never walked through a patch of this annoyingly thorny, cantankerous plant.

During these long winter months, when the ground is not frozen, eradicating greenbrier is slightly more feasible than when the briars are hiding amongst tall, lush vegetation. No herbicide has been effective in my efforts. I find the only answer is to get deep below the surface and pull out the long, meandering white roots. Occasionally, if the plant is young enough, the roots are relatively compact and gnarly, but if the area has lots of greenbrier stems, then there is a parent root connecting them together.

Pictured below is one of my favorite tools called a [Pullerbear](#) (click here for video). Designed to remove woody, unwanted volunteers, its mouth clamps around the base and then the long handle is used like a wedge to pop out the plant, roots and all. It's a bit hard to grasp a greenbrier root, but I can wind the clamp around an embedded root and pull out a segment at a time. Then I move the tool a bit further to grasp the next segment, trying hard to keep the root from breaking.

A friend once noted that if one took the time to remove all the thorns, the stems are excellent for basketweaving. And in deep woodland settings, the thorny environment can protect small animals from larger predators. But it's not a plant I find valuable. I keep a sturdy box to wind the stems and roots inside for transporting to the County's yard debris center. In the beginning, I was just cutting stems to free wanted vegetation. Super thick gloves, often doubled, are a necessity.

When I see large areas of land cleared of trees for a new subdivision, the only happy thought is that these new homeowners are spared the agony of removing greenbrier.



CCMG Plant Sale – May 18, 2024

Article by CCMG Terry Thir, Project Leader

We are having our plant sale!!

Save the date: **Saturday, May 18, 2024, 8-2**, at the LaPlata Farmers Market. We held our first plant sale planning meeting on January 9. Minutes and other information will be shared with general membership. A schedule will be provided later along with online sign-up volunteer opportunities. Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to participate in future planning meetings.

Our goal is to purchase native plugs, winter sow, and dig up popular plants from our yards. A list of desirable plants and a list of invasive plants we will not accept will be provided. We are exploring native nurseries and looking for a greenhouse to grow up the plugs. If you know of a greenhouse source, please let me know. We will also be growing vegetables and herbs. [Beth Grem](#) will serve as our contact and will share information in the future.

We will also **need volunteers** to help with all logistics -- sell plants, demonstrate lettuce box, potato baskets, and staff our plant clinic. More details to follow.

You can reach Project Leader [Terry Thir here](#). New Co-Leaders are Abigail Clemente and Jonathan Gazarek.



Save the Dates and Volunteer!

February 3 – Starting Vegetable Seeds – Indoors and Out

Come join the Grow It Eat It Project for a **free** workshop **from 10am to 12pm** on starting your own vegetable seeds – either indoors with lights or outside via winter sowing. No special equipment needed. The workshop features hands-on demonstrations, using everyday low- or no-cost materials. Starting your own vegetable seeds saves money and allows for greater selection in what you grow. Master Gardeners will answer your questions. **MG volunteers needed** to help set up/take down and work the registration desk. Email Meg (maggiemac420@hotmail.com) or Beth (ndbg1@verizon.net) to volunteer.

Deadline February 12 – Apply to be an instructor for the Junior Master Garden program (see page 9 for more info). Attend an on-line via Zoom training session Feb. 20 and 21, 2024 and follow the activities provided in the Teacher Leadership Guidebooks. [Click here to register by February 12th!](#) There is a \$65 fee. Let us know when you sign up – Rose Markham, Project Lead at rose.markham38@gmail.com or Terry Thir, Co-Lead at thirccmg@aol.com.

March 13 – Winter GIEI Meeting

Virtual or in-person from 10am to 12pm. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

April 6 – GIEI Education Project

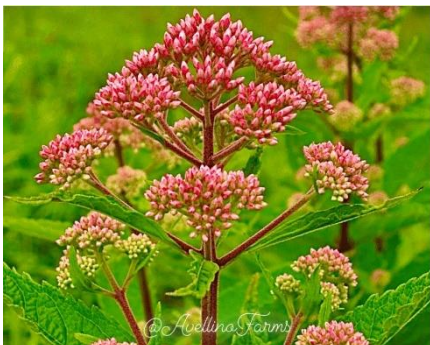
The CCMG Grow It Eat It Edu Project is having a workshop April 6th, from 10am-12pm at the CSM La Plata campus (Room TBD). The topic is "Garden Planning".

April 13 – Backyard Buffer Tree Distribution

Tree seedling distribution from 9am to 12pm. Contact Janet McGrane for more information. [Registration required at this link.](#)

May 18 – CCMG Plant Sale

Contact Terry Thir to volunteer. Let Meg McDonald know if you will be growing plants for the sale at maggiemac420@hotmail.com. Watch for more announcements.



Did you know....One in four people (25 percent) specifically buy **native plants**. An increase from 17 percent in 2022. The number of people planning to transform a portion of their **lawn** to **wildflower** native landscape has increased from 9 percent in 2021 to 22 percent in 2023!!!

The mission of the Charles County Master Gardeners is to support the University of Maryland Extension service by educating residents about safe, effective, and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.



Need a CCMG Shirt?

Members are asked to wear a Charles County Master Gardeners shirt at community events. Purchase a royal blue color polo or t-shirt and have it embroidered with our official logo at:



The Embroidery Factory
12150 Acton Lane, Unit A
Waldorf, MD 20601
301-885-0000
embfactorymd@gmail.com
<https://www.theembroideryfactorymd.com>
Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

The Embroidery Factory also has shirts available for purchase. Printing takes approximately 1-2 weeks. Once printed, there are no refunds.

Questions? Contact Terry Thir at thirccmg@aol.com.

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Connie Nesbary, Editor of *The Compost*
Click on photo above to visit our website.



Submissions to The Compost - Submit articles, photos, reports, events, and other items for publication to the editor at thecompostofccmg@gmail.com by April 15, 2024, for the Spring 2024 newsletter. Please include a brief description of the activity, names of persons in photos and the photographer's name. Please include scientific names of plants.

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