



the Trumpet Vine

Knowledge for the Community from the Loudoun County Master Gardeners

Fall 2007

Volume II, Issue 4

www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org

LOUDOUN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MONTHLY MEETINGS

FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Meetings are held at the Virginia Tech
Extension Office, 30B Catoclin Circle
SE, Leesburg at 7pm

OCTOBER 6

*"Audubon At Home – Bringing
Nature Into Your Yard" – Kevin
Monroe*

With so much construction in the past in Loudoun County, it's time to provide back to nature. Kevin Monroe is an educator and a naturalist. Currently, Kevin is the Park Manager of Huntley Meadow Park. Previous to this he worked as the Program Coordinator and Staff Naturalist for the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia and is still actively involved in the Audubon Society.

NOVEMBER 6

"History of Loudoun's Agriculture and Master Gardener Program" – Bill Harrison

A nice tie-in to the Fall Farm Color Tour, long time Loudoun resident and founder of the Loudoun County extension office will be on hand to discuss the history of Loudoun County's farms and the Master Gardener program in particular.

IN THIS ISSUE

Feature Story	1
Gardening Events	2
Fall Flowers	3
Fall Lawn Care	4
Fall Trees & Shrubs	5
Vegetable Gardening	8
Pest Management	10
Fall Gardening Tips	11

2007 Farm Color Tour

Fall is the perfect time of the year to explore our wonderful county of Loudoun. One of the best ways to explore the agricultural history of our county and see the diverse terrain in which we live is via the Farm Color Tour. 25 farms, vineyards, orchards and demonstration gardens open their doors to the public. You can enjoy alpacas, late season apples, and a taste of wine at many of the venues. There are hay rides, scarecrow makings, and horses.

The Loudoun County Master Gardeners have a special spot on the Farm Color Tour. Come visit the Ida Lee Demonstration Garden to see the Demonstration Garden and gardener-made scarecrows. Kids can make their own scarecrows! There will be tot clothing and straw for stuffing! Enjoy fall in the garden and find out what plants best survived our drought.



Facts: Loudoun Farm Color Tour, October 20 - 21, from 10am until 4pm. Visit

<http://www.loudounfarms.org/default.asp?contentID=51> for an interactive map of the farm, and to download a color brochure.

Did you know that Loudoun County was listed as a Drought Disaster Area? Farmers in our county were horribly affected by this summer's drought. Corn especially failed in significant amounts. Now is the time to visit the areas of your county where agriculture is the mainstay of life.

To unsubscribe from this publication, call or e-mail the Help Desk (info below) with your name and address.

Fall Gardening Events

- Oct 13-14 Blandy Experimental Farm ArborFest
- Oct 20-21 Farm Color Tour
- Nov 4 Association meeting, Extension Office, 7pm, “History of Loudoun’s Agriculture and Master Gardener Program”
- Nov 19-23 Master Gardener Help Desk closed for Thanksgiving
- Nov 26 Open House for those interested in becoming a Master Gardener, Extension Office, 7pm
- Dec 17-31 Master Gardener Help Desk closed for holiday
- Check our website – www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org – for additional details and the latest information

Gardening... Hawaiian Style

They say life is slower in Hawaii so relax, sit back and just enjoy. And so we did! My family was fortunate to enjoy a wonderful trip to Maui in July and take in all the flora and fauna that inhabit it (yes, we took over 500 pictures). There was lush beauty with the green grass, palm trees and masses of flowers and a striking contrast to that with the 1790 volcanic remains (right) where there were still no signs of life. One side of the island is like a rain forest while other parts are as dry as Loudoun County! One of my favorite plants was near the top of the 10,000-foot volcano, Haleakala. It is called Haleakala



Silversword *Argyroxiphium sandwicense* ssp. *macrocephalum* or ‘Ahinanhina in Hawaiian. This subspecies only grows on the slopes of this volcano at an elevation of 6,900 to 9,800 feet. It looks like a strange Christmas tree out in the middle of nowhere and is truly spectacular! The plant can live to be 50 years old and only flowers once right before it dies. It sends up a shoot that can be over 6 feet tall out of the rosette leaf structure to flower, set seed and then it dies. It takes a very long time for it to mature from seed.

According to the signage, the Silversword most likely came from a California tarweed that arrived in Maui millions of years ago from a bird. It survives the windy, desert-like conditions near the top of the volcano with extinction threats from the Argentine ant and yellow jacket wasp to the delicate roots being trampled by visitors (2 and 4 legged). Because of its “extremely limited range and precarious life cycle”, it has been put on the threatened list and is protected as such. There is only one type of bee that cross-pollinates the ‘ahinanhina plant. It is the native yellow-faced bee and no swatting allowed!



So, aloha, and remember to slow down and enjoy all that is around you!

Barb Bailey, LC Master Gardener

Fall Flowers

You Don't have to Wait until Spring for Color!

When fall arrives, we love to look at the trees changing colors. It's also very easy for homeowners to have color in their fall landscape. Now that the summer heat has ended, the time is right to plant fall-bloomers.



Asters are compact plants that provide continual blooming in the fall. Their colors range from purple and blue to pink and white. They are perfect as the background for other colors. Asters have excellent drought tolerance and grow in clay soils. They should be planted in full-sun.

Chrysanthemums are the true sign that fall is coming. These compact plants provide a very colorful display ranging from burgundy, red, orange, pink, lavender, bronze, yellow and white. Select hardy mums that bloom year-after-year. They need full-sun and good drainage.



When we think of Dusty Miller, we think of its attractive silver-gray foliage that provides a striking contrast to your color in containers or beds. Best of all, they're deer resistant! And Dusty Miller can be

used in cut flowers.

Flowering Cabbage and Ornamental Kale are wonderful complements to mums. As the nighttime temperatures drop, the color of these plants develops. They are long-lasting and provide color until . . . we get snow.



Marigolds, although an annual, provide the classic fall colors: orange, yellow, gold, red. If you planned ahead and planted seeds, your marigolds are blooming now. If not, check nurseries that have their annuals on sale to get a good deal. They are easy to grow, bloom reliably, and have few insect or disease problems. Marigolds like full-sun and good drainage.

Pansies are very cold-tolerant plants, handling temperatures down to the mid 20's. If temperatures drop lower, the existing flower buds may be damaged, but the plants continue to live. They are perfect for containers – either by themselves or combine with other bloomers.



Janette Sawyer, LC Master Gardener

Congratulations to the Ida Lee Demonstration Garden Team

The Loudoun County Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden at Ida Lee Park was awarded the John W. Tolbert Award for work benefiting the town of Leesburg's environment.

Mayor Kristin Umstattd and the town council members presented the award to the Master Gardener team who lead the efforts in the garden: Barb Bailey, Sharon Harris, Dave Hellums, and Denise Palmer.

The garden shows residents of Leesburg and Loudoun County how to grow organically. The produce that is harvested is donated to Interfaith Relief.

Stop by the garden and see the terrific things growing and techniques we are trying.

Fall Lawn Care

Rethinking Your Lawn

Fall is the time for planting, reseeding and reassessing. It's a good time to step back and take a long hard look at your lawn. How did this summer's drought affect your lawn? Are you a slave to your lawn? What does your lawn cost you in time, resources, and money? What would you gain by reducing the size of your lawn? What would the environment gain from less turf?



The modern suburban lawn – an extension of the living room carpet – is a relatively new phenomenon. As recently as the administration of Woodrow Wilson, sheep grazed on the White House lawn. It wasn't until after World War II that the chemically dependent, non-native grass lawn became the standard of the American suburb.

In addition to the time and energy you spend on your lawn, consider these facts. \$8.5 billion is spent annually on retail sales of residential lawn care products and equipment. Lawns require 3-4 times more water than trees and shrubs. A lawn has less than 10% of the water absorption capacity than a naturalized area. A 3.5 hp lawnmower pollutes as much in one hour as an automobile driving 350 miles. 580 million gallons of gas are used annually for power mowers. Most lawns are over fertilized with the excess running off into lakes and streams. Herbicides and pesticides combine with the grass monoculture to create a sterile and hostile environment.

Converting your lawn to a mixed landscape can save water and energy while reducing yard waste and the need for fertilizers and herbicides. However, rather than undertaking a total yard makeover, create a plan and proceed in small steps. Changes can be made over several seasons.

- Identify the less functional lawn areas to replace. Look for areas that are least used or hard to mow such as corners or under low tree branches. Plant groundcover under mature trees. Cut corners and create curved lines.
- Work with nature. Don't try to grow grass where it doesn't want to grow.
- Expand the width of your foundation plantings.
- Plant trees and shrubs along property lines.
- Create an island of trees, shrubs and native perennials.
- Create a rain garden to absorb water runoff.
- Create a butterfly garden.

Carol Ivory, LC Master Gardener

If you're thinking of becoming a Master Gardener . . .

There is an Open House for those interested in the MG program on Monday, Nov. 26th at 7pm at the Extension Office on Catocin Circle in Leesburg. This is a great opportunity to meet Master Gardeners and ask questions.

The Master Gardener Program is a nationwide, state-sponsored volunteer organization. Our goals are to enhance the knowledge of county residents in horticulture-related matters through education and dissemination of information. We also enhance and supplement the work of the Loudoun County Extension office.

Fall Trees & Shrubs

Selecting Trees

Fall is the best time to plant trees as they have several months to get established before the harsh winter weather arrives. As your tree can live for 25 to 100+ years, give some planning and thought before making the purchase. First, why do you want to plant a tree:

Landscape design	Winter wind-break	Spring bloom/fall color
Sight or sound barrier	Summer cooling	Wildlife habitat
Privacy	Reducing air pollution	Fruit and nuts

Next, consider the site where you want to plant the tree. Pay special attention to:

- Underground utilities – Call MISS UTILITY to find out where you can and cannot dig.
- Areas of heavy traffic – Some trees are very sensitive to car exhaust. Foot traffic compacts the soil, damages roots, and can lead to tree death.
- Overhead utility wires – Plan for the mature height of the tree.
- Distance from salted roads and walkways – Some trees are more sensitive than others.
- Distance from foundation, sidewalk, and driveway – Depending on the size and type of tree, roots can cause future damage.

Now you're ready to select your tree. Proper selection can provide you with years of enjoyment as well as significantly increasing the

value of your property. Do some research before you go to the garden center.

- If you live in a housing development, identify the trees that are already planted in your neighborhood and choose something different. When the same type of tree is planted in every yard, a disease can spread down the street like a cold goes through your office.
- Consider the mature height, projected longevity, rate of growth, mature shape, appearance of the bark and leaves, flowers and berries if any, light and soil requirements.
- Is the tree evergreen or deciduous? Evergreens provide cover and shade year round and may be more effective as a wind and noise barrier. Deciduous trees give you summer shade and winter sun.
- Consider planting native plants and trees. Native plants grow best and require less watering and fertilizer. They are not invasive and naturally provide food and habitat for our local native wildlife.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation produces a good list of native plants: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/natvtree.pdf

Dirr's Manual of Woody Landscape Plants is a good book to research the possibilities – or search the internet.

Nature by Design and Hyla Brook Farm are Virginia native plant nurseries with excellent plant lists on their websites. Here are just a few native plants you can plant.

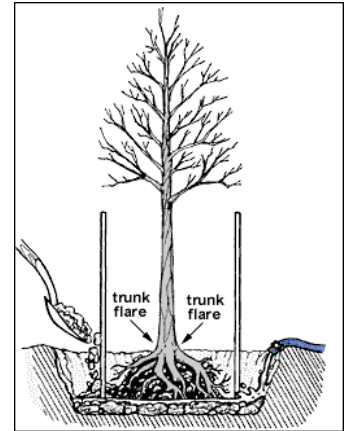
Native Shrubs	Trees 20 Ft and Under	Perennials
Red Chokeberry	Serviceberry	Joe Pye Weed
American Beautyberry	American Hornbeam	Rudbeckia
Virginia Sweetspire	Sourwood	Echinacea
Sweet pepperbush	Fringe Tree	Lobelia
Arrowwood Viburnum	Redbud	Agastache
Ilex verticillata	Witch Hazel	Columbine

Carol Ivory, LC Master Gardener

Planting Trees

Once you've selecting the right tree for your landscape, proper planting ensures the tree thrives:

- Keep the root ball well watered and keep the tree in a shaded place until you are ready to plant.
- Expose the trunk flare on your tree before digging the planting site so you can properly measure the depth of the hole. The trunk flare is the point where roots begin to branch from the trunk. (The top of the root ball is not always the trunk flare.) Pull back excess soil around trunk of tree to locate trunk flare. Measure the height from the base of the trunk flare to the bottom of the root ball. Dig to the depth of the trunk flare.
- The diameter of the hole should be 3 times the diameter of the root ball.
- The trunk flare and root ball top should be level with the ground surface.
- Breakup compacted soil. Sides of the hole should not be packed.
- Place tree into hole by holding onto the root ball, not the trunk.
- Balance the tree upright in center of hole.
- Prune dead or crushed roots and straighten or cut circling (girdling) roots. Make clean cuts. Trees can slowly weaken and die over a period of years or decades because of root girdling. Roots begin to grow around the main stem /trunk and restrict the movement of water and nutrients. Trees that have been container grown for several years are likely to have girdling roots.
- Begin refilling with soil, watering as you fill to firmly set the tree. Gently tamp.
- Never plant too deep. Trunk flare and top of root ball should be at grade. Fill soil up to the tree base just to where roots begin to branch from trunk
- Prune only dead or injured branches. Do not paint wounds.
- Mulch lightly and evenly with 2" of composted material at least to the diameter of the crown of the tree. Mulch keeps the topsoil temperate for root growth, reduces surface evaporation of water, provides nutrients, and slows weed and grass growth around the tree's base. It also prevents a hard crust from forming on top of the soil, which slows water penetration. Leave 3" circle of bare soil around the trunk. Deep layers of mulch can be harmful. *This is important:* the mulch should resemble a donut around the base of the tree not a volcano encasing the tree trunk.
- Do not plant flowers under trees.
- Do not fertilize at planting time. Fertilizer is not tree food. A stressed tree should never be fertilized. Fertilizer should be applied (if absolutely necessary) only after the first year. When used, fertilizer should be applied at the perimeter edge of the planting site.
- Water is the critical factor for tree survival after planting. Deep water regularly throughout the first growing season. Allow water to run slowly, soaking the soil, once or twice a week. Do not over water. Water at the perimeter or edge of planting site. Continue deep watering for five years.
- If you are having a landscaper install your tree, do not assume that they will do it correctly.
- If you have questions, consult a certified arborist or a tree care professional for assistance.



Girdling roots

Carol Ivory, LC Master Gardener

A Fall Buffet for the Birds

There are many plants that provide beauty, color, and interest in your fall garden. Some offer food and shelter for wildlife during the season when it may be scarce.



American Beautyberry, *Callicarpa Americana* has amazing clusters of magenta berries. The branches provide a resting spot with a banquet waiting for cardinals, mockingbirds, thrushes, woodpeckers, and bluebirds. Don't expect to enjoy the berries



for long – they can be devoured in a day! A new cultivar is out with berries the color of peaches! Give these beauties full-sun or light-shade with well-drained soil.

Elderberry, *Sambucus spp.* has multi-colored berries of red, blue and black that attract bluebirds, grosbeaks, vireos and tanagers. It requires full-sun, is drought-tolerant, and can handle moderately moist soils. The berries also make wine, cordial, juice, pies, and jellies/jams. A new variety, Black Beauty, is deer tolerant. Elderberry can be grown as a small shrub or cut back every year and grown as a large perennial.



Spicebush, *Lindera benzoin* has nutritious berries to help migrating birds on their way south. The berries are a favorite of Wood Thrushes, robins, Northern Bobwhite, Gray Catbirds, Eastern Kingbirds, and flycatchers – as well as your ordinary birds! Plant in full-sun to part-shade. Spicebush is a native plant with multiple stems growing to about 5 feet.



Viburnums offers a lot to both the gardener and the birds. There is a viburnum for just about everyone. They come with different shape leaves, different colored berries, and all sizes and shapes from small shrubs

to large shrubs. Most viburnums require sun to partial-shade but there are several that can handle shade. Flowering times vary from spring to late fall. The one pictured is called *Blue Muffin*, it is a relatively new variety. Just check out those berries! Please note that the berries are NOT edible for humans!

Grape Holly, *Mahonia spp.* has blue-black berries that attract a variety of birds: waxwings, finches, robins, thrushes and towhees are just some of the birds that may come to visit this shrub.



The most common variety in our area is Leatherleaf Mahonia. Mahonia is a very striking plant that requires partial-shade and moist, acidic soil. It grows in an upright loosely branching effect reaching as high as 10'.

Winterberry - *Ilex verticillata* has berries that mature in early fall. This is a great plant to catch the attention of early migrating birds. The berries persist thru winter and, as this



particular holly is not evergreen, provide a much needed burst of color to the gardener. Winterberry takes full-sun to partial-shade (more sun equals more berries) and moist, acidic, highly organic soil. If you have our typical VA clay, use lots of compost. Winterberry attracts robins, bluebirds and waxwings. The picture shows 'Sparkleberry,' a prolific producer. This is a female and you need another male variety to see these results.

Becky Phillips, LC Master Gardener

Vegetable Gardening

Heirloom Vegetables in The Demo Garden



Fall is in the air and the summer heirloom vegetables in the Ida Lee Demo Garden are sensing the diminishing sunlight and have slowly made their way toward retirement for this season. If you have been a regular reader, you already know the vegetables planted in the main vegetable beds were heirloom selections from the years 1591 - 1886. Read on to find out which ones earned the right to be called back to duty for next year whether in your garden or ours.

Two varieties of squash, “Golden Crookneck” and “Early White Bush Scallop” stood out for their monstrous plants and enormous yellow blossoms. When our summer heirloom gardening talk was held in July, we taste-tested the fresh vegetables and the “Early White Bush Scallop” squash was declared the best tasting of all the vegetables. Although this squash is not so pretty, when picked at primetime, and then lightly steamed, broiled or grilled, it melts in your mouth much like a sugar wafer.

Some like them sweet and some like them hot, so let’s talk peppers. The best overall pepper was a sweet variety named “Jimmy Nardello’s.” It is very good fresh, roasted or fried. The unusual sweet pepper “Golden Summit” had a surprise in store for us with bell-shaped peppers that grew upside down. The hot peppers “Fish” and “Long Cayenne” were good producers with a decent bite to them and may be used fresh or dried and stored. Be warned, however, that these hot pepper plants are extremely brittle and unusual care must be taken when harvesting.

Green beans are another of summer’s great treats. Three kinds of heirloom pole beans were grown; the old standard “Kentucky Wonder,” another green bean with a purple-ish overlay called “Cherokee Trail of Tears,” and the most colorful bean of the bunch “Blue Coco.” All were wonderful producers and disease resistant. “Blue Coco,” besides being a fabulous color addition to your bean teepee with its deep purple pods, also won the award for best taste as it has a very pronounced “green bean” flavor.

Hardy plants were the name of the game for our heirloom cucumbers “White Wonder” and Early Russian.” The vines would not stop producing especially considering they were not hybrids designed to resist all that is bad. “Early Russian” was the better tasting of the two and is recommended for anyone who wants cucumbers in bunches although “White Wonder” was not far behind and produced massive white fruits in just a couple of days.

Some words about the summer heirloom vegetables that did not impress us perhaps because of the weather or the myriad of other things that play havoc with growing plants. Three varieties of tomatoes were grown and produced fruits but developed plant diseases early thereby reducing plant yield and fruit size. Three varieties of carrots were also grown and while there were good yields from the plantings, none of the selections can be recommended for eating fresh. Maybe that is why carrots were considered animal fodder during Colonial times.

When next spring’s seed ordering time comes around, consider using some of our successes in the Demo garden. Not only are you getting a great tasting vegetable, but you are helping preserve the heritage of our early settlers and the vegetables they had on their tables.



Denise Palmer, LC Master Gardener

Protect Your Soil with a Cover Crop

The cold winter winds not only make you go “Brrrr” but they also carry off our precious garden soil. If you want to keep what you have, now is the time to consider planting a cover crop or “green manure” as it is sometimes called.

The benefits of cover crops include keeping your soil in your garden by providing a sort of anchor for your soil, enriching your soil with nutrients and organic matter, and suppressing weeds throughout the fall and winter into next spring. Growing a cover crop is easy and requires little maintenance for much of its useful life. Simply clear your garden space of garden debris, scatter cover crop seed as indicated on package directions, rake gently into the top layer of soil, and water lightly for germination.

There are many types available and your specific needs will determine which is best for you. Remember that whether or not a cover crop is winter killed, it still retains most of the benefits listed above as long as it has time to establish some growth. Here are some of the most popular for home gardens:



Buckwheat (left) – springs up very fast and is ready to be cut down within 6 weeks. It is best for suppressing weeds, providing potassium and

calcium to your soil, and attracting beneficial insects to your garden with its flowers. Do not cut it down before it flowers if you do not want it to reseed. Buckwheat is also grown from spring through late summer to attract beneficial insects and is amazing at suppressing weeds as it blankets every available space with its broad leaves.



Winter/Cereal Rye – is a very hardy cover crop that can be planted until the first killing frost. It greatly improves soil structure by sending out long runners. Usually winter rye is combined with hairy vetch.

The rye is dense and suppresses weeds and keeps the soil in your garden while the hairy vetch, which is a legume, provides your soil with a high nitrogen diet. Winter rye grows through the winter. In the spring, cut down top growth, allow it to dry out for a couple of days then turn under with a tiller or digging fork. If allowed to grow too long, the runners of winter rye get very tough. If grown in combination with hairy vetch, cut down before the vetch flowers as it can also be a troublesome weed. You should wait three weeks after turning before planting vegetables.

Crimson Clover – is a shade-tolerant leguminous cover crop that is winter killed in colder areas. It can be planted through late summer. It can also be under-planted among your vegetables (living mulch) during the late spring and summer to attract beneficial insects.



Red Clover – again this is a legume but is not quite as tender as Crimson clover. It is an excellent smothering cover crop for weeds and can be planted into early October. It overwinters in the garden to begin growing again next spring.



All leguminous cover crops should be cut down before bloom.

You can find cover crop seed in farm supply stores, garden magazines, or over the Internet. Time is running out – winter is around the corner – protect and enrich your soil with a cover crop today.

Denise Palmer, LC Master Gardener

Pest Management

Lady Bug, Lady Bug, Fly Away From My Home!

About this time every year, we receive calls from people whose homes are being invaded by lady beetles. This is usually the Multicolored Asian Lady beetle (*Harmonia axyridis*). Though considered a beneficial insect because they feed on aphids and scales, they are also considered by many to be a nuisance species due to the fact that they get into houses in most of the United States. They do not carry disease, but may bite or pinch in rare cases (they have chewing mouthparts). They emit a foul odor and leave a stain when crushed. In large numbers they may aggravate symptoms of allergies or asthma.

Natural over-wintering sites are fencerows, hollow trees, rock piles, and cliff faces. In fall, lady beetles congregate on the warm, sunny sides of buildings and in many cases find their way into homes where they may over-winter in the attic or a wall void. They enter the house through small openings around windows, doors, and utility access points. In addition, they can enter the house by cracks in



the siding and trim and through attic vents.

Getting inside the house is a fatal mistake because the low humidity causes the insects to dry out and die. It may take several weeks, so they can create a nuisance as they fly about and collect on the ceiling and at windows. If they accumulate at a window, simply open the window and let them leave. You can also sweep or vacuum the beetles up and empty them outside or dispose of the vacuum bag. Only in extreme infestations is an aerosol insecticide labeled for household insects recommended – be sure to clean up the dead beetles.

The best control is to keep the beetles out in the first place. By sealing entry sites you can prevent them from becoming indoor pests. In late spring or summer, con-

duct a thorough energy audit of your home and seal all openings where cold air can enter as these are the places where the lady beetle can gain access. Early to mid-October is peak time for these beetles in Virginia, so it is not too late to take action this year if you have had problems in the past. Fill all cracks and leaks with a fine quality silicone or silicone-latex caulk. This should eliminate the nuisance of the beetles in your home in the fall, as well as in the spring, and keep these beneficial insects outside where they belong.

For more information on life cycle, history, and a control check list for the Multicolored Asian Lady beetle go to: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/entomology/444-275/444-275.html>. The University of Kentucky has a fact sheet with color photos showing the variability of the beetles: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef416.asp>.

*Debbie D. Dillion
Urban Horticulturist
Loudoun Cooperative Ext.*



Bulbs! Bulbs! Bulbs!

One of the most exciting fall activities is planting bulbs. They are easy to grow, provide almost year-round color, and bring unique form, color, and fragrance to the garden. The appearance of bulbs forcing their noses out of the ground is one of the first signs that spring is arriving. Now is the time to plant your bulbs.

Fall Gardening Tips

Thoughts of Fall Turn to ... Apples!



Did you know that Virginia is one of the top apple producing states in the U.S.?

Six states, including Virginia produced 83% of the nation's 2001-crop apple supply. This states' growers produce about 5-6 million bushels of apples annually; the fruit is grown in over 100 commercial orchards. Virginia apples go to markets in 15 states and more than 20 countries. The five most popular apples in the United States are all grown in Virginia: Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Gala, Fuji and Granny Smith.

The saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," is proving itself true. Some of the benefits of antioxidant phytonutrients contained in apples include helping reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, slowing the growth of some kinds of cancers, and strengthening bones and improving lung function.

Besides being crunchy and sweet, apples are high in fiber and contain no fat, cholesterol, or sodium. Apples can be stored for months and retain much of their nutritive value. Vitamins A, B1, B2, C, and Niacin, plus nutrients Phosphorous, Magnesium, Iron and Potassium are found in an apple.

Applesauce can be used as a fat free substitute when cooking and adds moisture to baked goods. Instead of picking up junk food when hungry for a snack, try an apple because it suppresses hunger longer.

Many communities in Virginia host festivals to celebrate this venerable fruit. These events are great opportunities to sample homemade apple butter, cider, pie and other foods made with apples. For a list of festivals and pick-your-own farms and orchards, go to <http://www.virginiaapples.org>.

If you're feeling the urge to try something yummy with apples, here are a couple of simple recipes:

Applesauce

6 cooking apples
2/3 c. sugar
1 c. water
8 whole cloves

Wash, peel, core and slice apples. Combine fruit with remaining ingredients. Cook until apples are soft. Mash with potato masher or press through colander or strainer. Enjoy hot or cold. May make in large batches. Freezes well.

Apple Crisp

8 cooking apples
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. nutmeg
½ c. sugar
½ c. water

Topping

1 c. flour
½ c. brown sugar
½ c. butter
½ c. chopped pecans

Wash, peel, core and thinly slice apples. Place in lightly buttered baking dish. Sprinkle apples with cinnamon, nutmeg and sugar. Add water.

For topping: Combine flour, brown sugar, and butter. Mix well using a pastry cutter. Add chopped pecans. Spread mixture over apples. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes; turn heat down to 350° for 25 minutes. Serve with ice cream or whipped cream.

Lee Ann Howdershell, LC Master Gardener

Time to Renew and Refresh

It's time to switch gears and begin preparing for winter!

The average date of the first fall frost in Loudoun County is October 15.

Flowers	Garden	Lawn	Trees / Shrubs
<p>Plant spring-blooming bulbs</p> <p>Plant fall flowers (colchicum and crocus bulbs, asters, chrysanthemums, biennial seeds, fall / winter pansies, ornamental cabbage and kale)</p> <p>Plant ornamental grasses</p> <p>Divide overcrowded perennials</p> <p>Fertilize roses for the last time to allow them to harden off before winter; continue deadheading</p> <p>Start edging and mulching beds; be sure they are weed free; clean out faded flowers and vegetables</p> <p>Bring any tender flowers inside (geraniums) to overwinter</p> <p>Dig up tender bulbs after foliage yellows and before frost; allow to air dry and store in a cool dry spot inside the house</p> <p>Pot spring bulbs for forcing like daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips and put in cold frame, garage, or refrigerator (@ 40°) to bring inside in January / February; keep moist</p>	<p>Plant (or transplant) cool crops (arugula, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce)</p> <p>Plant cool season salad greens in a cold frame or protected site; cover if necessary from early frost</p> <p>Pot herbs to take inside for winter use (chives, oregano, rosemary and sweet marjoram); sow parsley in a pot</p> <p>Harvest any warm season crops before frost; extend your season by covering during early frosts; enclose tomato cages to encourage ripening</p> <p>Turn soil and prepare beds for next year; plant cover crops if desired</p>	<p>Install new lawns and keep them moist</p> <p>De-thatch and / or aerate mature lawns if needed</p> <p>Have your soil tested to determine the pH (6.2-6.5 is desirable) - now is the time to apply lime if your pH is too low</p> <p>Leave seed heads and grasses for birds to eat and hide</p> <p>Now is a good time to start a compost pile with the abundance of leaves, and grass clippings</p> <p>Edge, mulch, and weed</p> <p>Clean and sharpen tools and equipment for next year</p> <p>Turn off outside water</p> <p>Empty gas and / or oil from yard equipment</p> <p>Store excess chemicals where they are safe and won't freeze; ALWAYS leave them in their original containers to identify and keep safety warnings visible</p>	<p>Plant roses, shrubs, and trees</p> <p>Plant and / or transplant broadleaf evergreens (holies, rhododendrons)</p> <p>Prune hedges if overgrown, but only minimally, so not to overdo before winter</p> <p>Do <u>not</u> fertilize shrubs or trees so they can go dormant and not put out new growth that cannot harden off before winter</p> <p>Watch for bagworms, fall webworms and tent caterpillars - and destroy</p> <p>Water broad-leaved evergreens, dogwoods and new plants thoroughly before ground freezes</p> <p>Wrap evergreen plants for protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netting for deer • Burlap for wind • Wire (2-3" from trunk) for rodents <p>Mound soil and or leaves around roses above graft to protect; not needed for shrub roses</p>

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