

# The Compost

A Newsletter celebrating Charles County Master Gardener Projects

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## CCMGs Participate in Heirloom Tomato Trials by CCMG Meg MacDonald

The University of Maryland Extension's Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC) Grow It Eat It program has declared 2024 to be The Year of Heirloom Tomatoes. The HGIC and Master Gardeners across the state will be celebrating the incredible diversity of this popular crop, so easy to grow in Maryland, by learning about and trying new cultivars and techniques.

As part of this effort, Master Gardeners will be growing heirloom cultivars in demonstration gardens (including the MG Learning Garden at State Fair) and in their own gardens. Fourteen heirloom tomato cultivars have been identified and distributed to all local MG Grow It Eat It programs. Participating MGs will collect data on the various cultivars, including production (weight of fruit), any pests and disease problems, dates of planting, fruit set, etc., and they will take photos to share in an online photo album. All data collected on these cultivars will be shared with the public at the end of the year.

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

## CCMGs Participate in Heirloom Tomato Trials, cont.

by CCMG Meg MacDonald

In Charles County, ten CCMGs are participating in the Heirloom Tomato Trial: Beth Grem, Marguerita Harding, Brian Larson, Aileen Lennon, Meg MacDonald, Alex Mudry, Connie Nesbary, Bob Peregoy, Kay Redman, and Laura Walker. As the season progresses, photos and observations will be shared with CCMG members as well as other colleagues across the state. More information on the Year of Heirloom Tomatoes and the Heirloom Tomato Trials can be found here: [Year of the Heirloom Tomato | University of Maryland Extension](#)



## Southern Maryland Food Bank Garden

Article and photos by CCMG Brent Burdick

We had a very busy time in the garden this spring! We started planning this year's garden at the end of January. A special thanks to CCMGs Alex Mudry, Karen Westhead, Linda Ivko, Elveta Gibson, Elena Wilcox, Donna Ball, and Brent Burdick who participated in our planning session! We discussed what worked last year, what did not work, and what we needed to do this year to make the garden more of a success than it had been in the past.

### Relocation of Beds

The footprint of the garden had to be shifted because the back beds were being overtaken by shade. We removed most of the old pallet fencing last fall from around the garden but did not begin moving the raised beds until the first part of February. The process entailed emptying soil from one bed frame, moving it to its new position, then refilling it with soil from the next bed. Plants that had wintered-over in the to-be-relocated beds were transplanted to beds that were not being moved. By the first part of April, all the beds were relocated and filled. The area that had once been garden space was cleaned up (i.e., old garden cloth removed, mulch raked up, ground smoothed out, etc.) and grass seed planted. The moving of the beds was heavy-duty work – a special thanks go out to CCMGs Bob Peregoy, Bill Allen, Gail Black (and husband Bruce), Derex Thompson, Karen Trundle, Sally Matts, Linda Ivko, Karen Westhead, Elena Wilcox, Elveta Gibson, Brian Larson, Laura McManus, and Brent Burdick, and Interns Olivia Pettus and Jamila Barton for their strong backs and pure perseverance in getting the garden shifted to its new footprint area and the old space cleaned up! We also prepared most of the raised beds for spring planting by working compost into the soil. The remainder of the beds should be augmented with compost by the first part of May.



Garden footprint before relocation in January 2024.

# Southern Maryland Food Bank Garden, cont.

Article and photos by CCMG Brent Burdick

CCMGs Gail Black, Bill Allen, and Bob Peregoy emptied a bed before relocation (right). Then CCMGs Brent Burdick, Bill Allen, and Bob Peregoy relocated the bed frame (photo below by CCMG Sally Matts).



Next CCMGs Bob Peregoy and Gail Black and her spouse Bruce moved soil to the relocated beds (photo on right). CCMGs Brian Larsen, Olivia Pettus (Intern) and Elveta Gibson cleaned up the old landscape cloth and mulch from the former garden area (bottom left). CCMG Sally Matts transplanted kale and cabbage as CCMGs Bob Peregoy and Bill Allen emptied soil from another bed (bottom right).



# Southern Maryland Food Bank Garden, cont.

Article and photos by CCMG Brent Burdick

A new fence surrounding the garden was due to be installed before the end of April. We started putting down landscape cloth and mulch in aisles between the new bed locations, which should be finished by the first part of May. CCMGs Karen Hile, Elena Wilcox, and Brent Burdick were most helpful getting the first bit of mulch in place. Below left, Intern Olivia Pettus works compost into the relocated bed. CCMG Karen Hile helps install new landscape cloth and mulch in the photo on the right.



## Winter Sowing Workshops, Potato Baskets, and Sweet Potatoes

Valentine’s Day was our annual kickoff for starting our planting season. We again held our first Winter Sowing workshop to get seeds started for later transplanting into the garden. We held, then, Winter Sowing workshops on 2/14 (16 jugs), 3/11 (16 jugs), 3/16 (16 jugs), 3/23 (30 jugs), and 4/1 (14 jugs) for a total of 92 jugs. Seeds started included 17 varieties of tomatoes, and numerous other vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Photos show participants in the Winter Sowing Workshops with their jugs of vegetables, herbs and flowers.

Photo on the right is from 3/11 with CCMGs Linda Ivko, Gail Black and Olivia Pettus (Intern).



Valentine’s Day on 2/14 participants: CCMGs Bob Peregoy, Linda Ivko, Karen Westhead, Elveta Gibson, Olivia Pettus (Intern), and Alex Mudry.



# Southern Maryland Food Bank Garden, cont.

Article and photos by CCMG Brent Burdick



Left: 3/16 crew with CCMGs Elveta Gibson, Elena Wilcox and Karen Hile.



Right: 3/23 had CCMGs Alex Mudry, Brian Larson and Sally Matts.



Left: CCMGs Jamila Barton (Intern), Laura McManus and Elveta Gibson on 4/1.



During our first session on 2/14, we also started 4 varieties of sweet potatoes (photo middle-right) to grow vines to later generate slips for planting (photo bottom-right from April).



During two sessions in mid-March, we started potato baskets for the garden. The workshop participants included CCMGs Bob Peregoy, Karen Westhead, Linda Ivko, Alex Mudry, Gail Black, Elveta Gibson, Karen Hile, Sally Matts, Brian Larson, Olivia Pettus (Intern), and Brent Burdick. Right: CCMGs Elveta Gibson, Elena Wilcox and Karen Hile with the second planting of potato baskets.



# Southern Maryland Food Bank Garden, cont.

Article and photos by CCMG Brent Burdick

## Transplanting Winter Sown Seedlings into Garden

On March 30, CCMGs Bob Peregoy, Elveta Gibson, Karen Trundle, and Brent Burdick started transplanting the first of our Winter sown jugs into the garden! They transplanted kale, spinach, broccoli, and Brussel Sprouts into the garden; direct-sewed carrots and dried onion sets; transplanted new strawberry slips into the strawberry bed. They also set up a 4'x4' bed to demonstrate Gardening-by-the-Square-Foot. Below left: CCMGs Elveta Gibson, Bob Peregoy and Karen Westhead layout and start planting demonstration garden-by-the-square-foot. Below right: CCMGs Elveta Gibson and Karen Trundle transplant broccoli, brussel sprouts and spinach from winter sown jugs into a relocated garden bed.



## Gardening Forward

Our most immediate plans for the garden include getting the rest of the mulch down in the aisles between the beds, installing the new fencing, transplanting our Winter Sown seedlings into the garden, and finalizing our garden layout with potted plants, trellises, and other infrastructure.

MG and UME-related program groups can schedule garden tours/activities by contacting the CCMG Project Coordinator, Brent Burdick. Other community members and groups can schedule garden tours and other gardening learning activities by calling Monica Bumbray, the Food Bank Community Outreach Program Manager, at (301) 274-0695.



## Bay-Wise Landscape Management

Article by CCMG Rose Markham

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### It's Time to Get Bay-Wise Certified

Let's talk Taxes and learn how we can save more of our money instead of handing it over to "Uncle Sam" aka our federal and state tax collectors. Wouldn't you like to have some extra cash to head out to a place like Chesapeake Natives or Atkins Arboretum to buy native flowers or shrubs and then drive over to a local farm to buy your favorite veggie plants for your garden? Keep reading to find out how our Bay-Wise program helps to put more money in your pocket.

Recently, I mailed out a letter to you and to homeowners in our County to let them know that if they wanted to save our Chesapeake Bay and get a tax break on their property taxes, they can simply fill out a Bay-Wise application, select one of the yardstick links and email it back to us. The process is easy and free, and certifications are on-going from April 1 until October 31. If you haven't had a chance to [read the letter, you can do so at this link](#). The goal of the Bay-wise Program is to certify all Charles County Master Gardeners and interns. Currently, less than 30 percent of our active MGs are certified. Let's set a great example and get that to 100%!

During our Back Yard Buffer Event on April 13th, a good number of the people who picked up their tree bundles stopped by our Bay-Wise display and signed up for a property site visit (photo on right with CCMGs Rose Markham and Karen Hile taken by Terry Thir). They asked us many questions on native plants and vegetable gardens. There was a lot of interest on storm water problems and how to build and maintain rain gardens. Most of them had read our letter and thanked us for all the information it provided. Several people signed up for our Master Gardener Training Program as well.



A special thank you goes to Kathy Davis for coming out early to help set up our display and to Karen Hile for volunteering to hand out material and give guidance to those homeowners who stopped by. Our volunteers were very helpful in passing on some great ideas and solutions to many of our customers who had some serious property issues. A special thanks to Karen for holding down our display as the heavy winds roared in from time to time and sent some of our material flying all about. We were all running around extension retrieving lots of paper! It was a terrific event and thank you to all who made it special.

# Bay-Wise Landscape Management

Article by CCMG Rose Markham



As busy as we were we had time to even Bay-Wise our Extension office demonstration garden in Bel Alton. The garden is thriving, and Terry Thir was giving public tours throughout our event. Here’s a picture of Terry accepting the garden’s certification (photo by Marguerita Harding). Until next time, happy gardening!

Below left: CCMGs Kathy Davis (Bay-Wise table), Janet McGrane, Marguerita Harding, Connie Nesbary. Right: CCMGs Karen Trundle, Marguerita Harding and Terry Thir. Photos taken by CCMG Rose Markham.



## Backyard Buffer Program

Article by CCMG Janet McGrane

The Backyard Buffer tree seedling giveaway was held on Saturday, April 13 at the extension office. We also had a Bay-Wise and Master Gardener information table and provided tours of the Demonstration Gardens. Photo above on left: CCMGs Kathy Davis (Bay-Wise table), Janet McGrane, Marguerita Harding, Connie Nesbary. Right: CCMGs Karen Trundle, Marguerita Harding and Terry Thir. Photos taken by CCMG Rose Markham.

Master Gardeners distributed 125 tree seedling bundles (2000 seedlings) to over 70 Charles County residents on Saturday. The Backyard Buffer program targets homeowners who have a waterway on or adjacent to their property. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Forest Service provide bundles of native tree seedlings and shrubs to be planted as a buffer near the waterway. This year the bundle consisted of 16 trees: 4 of each species of Sycamore, American Persimmon, Northern Red Oak, and Buttonbush. The Backyard Buffer program is targeted to small landowners who are not eligible for other programs. Many expressed their appreciation and thanks for the program and are repeat customers having received trees in the 2023 program.

The Demonstration Gardens with their springtime growth are beautiful and a wonderful showcase for our native plantings. Many of the participants took advantage of the opportunity to tour the gardens, asking questions and learning about the native plants.

Thank you to our CCMG volunteers, Kathy Davis, Connie Nesbary, Marguerita Harding, Karen Hile, Karen Trundle, Rose Markham and Janet McGrane. A special thanks to Connie Nesbary and Judy Crawford (UMD extension) for creating and providing support with online registration and assistance.



# Charles County Sheriff's Office Health & Wellness Fair

Article by Intern Elveta Gibson, Photos by Elveta Gibson and Laura Walker

Master Gardener Interns Elveta Gibson, Laura Walker and Aileen Lennon participated in the Second Annual Charles County Sheriff's Office Health and Wellness Fair held at the Charles County Fairgrounds in La Plata on Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup> from 11am - 3:00pm. This was a well-attended event and each participant who visited the Master Gardener table was able to choose from either viewing a demonstration on planting seeds and then taking this home, or they had the option of picking seeds to take home and plant at a later time.

The Master Gardener Interns discussed the various program options available to the public. Additionally, a few participants suggested potential future programs for Master Gardeners to be involved in. This was a very engaging Health and Wellness fair with a wide variety of booths offering relevant information on resources in the community.



Above left:  
Interns Laura Walker and Aileen Lennon. Right: Our display.

Right: Chase from Paw Patrol with Interns Aileen Lennon and Elveta Gibson.



# Melwood Horticultural Therapy Programs

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

As we enter the spring months, we turn to the beginning of a new life...cleaning up, planting, and caring for the overwintered plants and planting seeds.

Wye Oak acorns were given to CCMG Barbara Hill, and they overwintered well. We are seeing sprouts! We should be able to provide some nice historical presentations with these.



Since January is a quiet month for growth, the focus was more on Healthy Living, and we had activities with Seed to Table families learning about the benefits of houseplants in the home and their contributions to cleaning air and how to care for houseplants in different indoor environments. The hands-on activity was dividing and potting snake and spider plants, which the families really enjoyed. From Suse Greenstone: Thank you MGs Teri White and Tiffany Daniel for providing wonderful educational direction during this class. It was needed and you made it interesting and extra fun!

February and March were active with Seed to Table Events. Besides the gardening sessions at each event, families take part in a seasonal food lesson, have the opportunity to take part in a hands-on culinary activity, and taste what is made during the class for lunch. In February, kale and spinach from the Learning Garden were used to make a seasonal salads and kale chips.



# Melwood Horticultural Therapy Programs, cont.

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



Mini Charcuterie fresh vegetable and fruit boards with meats and cheeses were discussed as a healthy option for the upcoming Super Bowl Game to share with family and friends, with a hands-on opportunity to make some for all to try. Not shown here, but in March, corned beef and cabbage soup and a different kale salad recipe (with cabbage from the Learning Garden) were made and shared for lunch. Definitely a seasonal favorite!

Finally, it's time to start planting seeds for the new year! The March Seed to Table family event was a very active and fun event. Families learned about seed propagation, scheduling the start of seeds for proper planting time in gardens throughout the season, and using grow lights for starting seeds at home. From Suse Greenstone: Thank you MGs Tiffany Daniel and Linda Bronsdon for your amazing leadership during this high energy and detail-oriented Seed-to-Table hands-on activity! It definitely took team strategy to lead this very large group. During this session, families started romaine lettuce, spinach, Pak Choi, Tendergreen Mustard, kale, chard, and beets.



Winter months in the Horticultural Therapy Programs with Adult Day Program participants focused a lot on houseplants and seasonal nature crafts. Different methods of propagation took place during the weekday classes. Succulents are a favorite of many, and participants enjoyed learning about succulents and their care. Left: CCMG Linda Bronsdon is demonstrating proper potting techniques for good succulent health.

## Melwood Horticultural Therapy Programs, cont.

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

In April, Adult Program participants were very busy assisting with the starting of vegetable, flowers and herb seeds and transplanting seedlings into bigger pots. Seed to Table events will focus on more transplanting and preparing the Gardens outdoors at the Recreation Center and in their home gardens as well.

There is always work to do in the gardens and greenhouse at the Melwood Recreation Center -- as we get ready for all the growth this spring and summer. If you want to volunteer at Melwood in Nanjemoy, contact Suse Greenstone to discuss beginning the vetting process. Sgreenstone@ melwood.org or by phone or by text at 240-882-5280. If interested in a group of MGs coming out for a morning or afternoon service event, a group can come out to help without going through the vetting process for that stand alone project event. If interested, also contact Suse for details.

Our question of the day... Do you recognize this spider that may be seen in the garden?



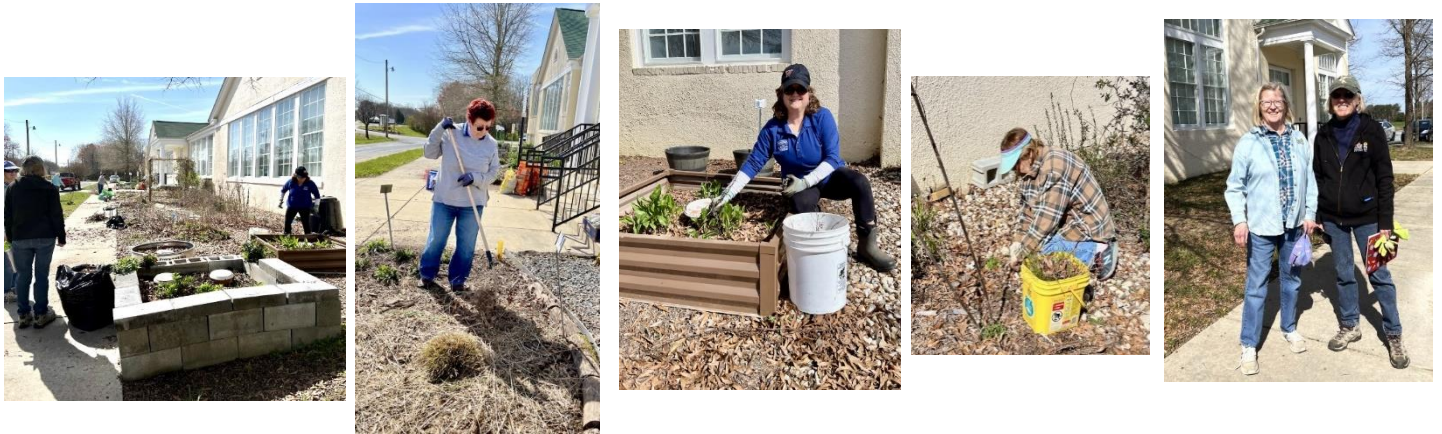
Yes, it's a Marbled Orb-Weaver Spider. She is nonvenomous and slow to bite but will bite if overhandled.



Suse Greenstone, HTR  
Manager Horticultural Therapy Programs  
5606 Dower House Road  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
[Sgreenstone@melwood.org](mailto:Sgreenstone@melwood.org) O: 301-599-2716 | C: 240-882-5280  
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## Extension Demonstration Garden Workday

Article by CCMG Terry Thir. Photos by CCMG Connie Nesbary.



L-R: CCMGs begin cleaning the Demonstration Garden, Kathy Davis rakes, Kay Redman clears a raised bed, June Leyland pulls weeds, Co-Leaders Janet McGrane and Kathy Jenkins approve the work.

Hard working CCMG volunteers Kathy Davis, Kathy Jenkins, Janet McGrane, June Leyland, Connie Nesbary, Kay Redman and Emeritus Jan Lakey-Waters spent most of the day on March 26th cleaning and pruning plants in our demonstration gardens. By design, we allowed the stalks of plants to overwinter to provide food and shelter for pollinators. More work is needed to dig-up and relocate plants. Soon the gardens will be bursting in color, interest, and pollinators.

If anyone has tools (shovel, rake, trowels, etc.) that they'd like to donate, please let me know. A future clean-up date will be scheduled. Our gardens were Bay-Wise certified during the Backyard Buffer event on Sat., April 13<sup>th</sup> at the Extension Office. CCMGs were available the same day to give onsite tours of the gardens.

We are grateful for the volunteers. If you are not part of the demonstration team but would like to join, please contact Terry Thir at [thirccmg@aol.com](mailto:thirccmg@aol.com) or 240-441-4902, or Kathy Jenkins at [KGJenkins@comcast.net](mailto:KGJenkins@comcast.net).



# GIEI Education Project is Busy in 2024

Article by CCMG Meg MacDonald. Photos by CCMG Terry Thir.

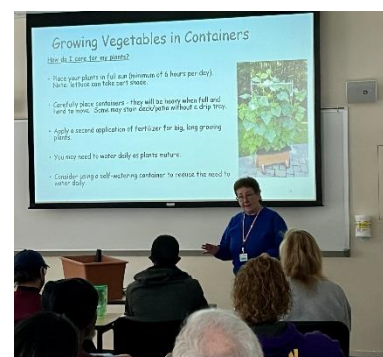
The CCMG GIEI Edu project team -- Tina Bailem, Michelle Chenault, Beth Grem (Co-Chair), Lori Guido, Kathy Jenkins, Meg MacDonald (Co-Chair), and Terry Thir – is moving forward on a busy year of educational workshops and public outreach efforts.

## GIEI Education Project Workshops

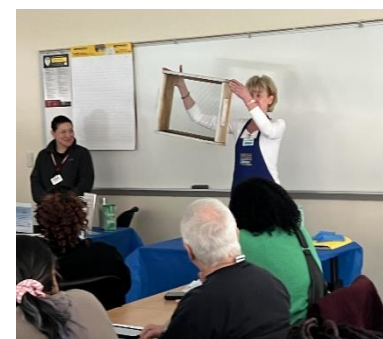
On Feb 3, 2024, the team presented a workshop **STARTING VEGETABLE SEEDS, INDOORS AND OUT** at the Waldorf West Public Library, and it was a big success. There were 27 attendees (despite limiting the participants to 25 and maintaining a waiting list) and ten CCMG volunteers. Participants were given information on starting seeds under grow lights indoors and on winter sowing in jugs outside. Everyone particularly enjoyed CCMG Beth Grem’s hands-on demonstration of building a simple, inexpensive PVC grow lamp stand (photo top right) and CCMG Terry Thir’s demonstration of winter sowing kale seeds. Multiple exhibits were available for the audience to peruse (photo right: MGs Alex Mudra, Erika Smith, Laura Walker, Jennifer Godlewski, Elveta Gibson). [View the presentation at this link.](#)



On April 6, 2024, the GIEI team presented another public workshop, **VEGETABLE GARDEN PLANNING**, at the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) in La Plata; Five CCMG volunteers assisted the team in presenting to an audience of 27 residents. Again, we had a waiting list for admission, so the GIEI team is looking into getting bigger spaces for upcoming workshops. Right: Beth Grem speaking on container gardening.



In addition to providing details on planning the site, prepping the soil, planting the crops, and producing and maintaining a vegetable garden, GIEI Team presenters promoted the UME HGIC “Year of the Heirloom Tomatoes” (see Tomato Trials section below). Audience members asked many questions and shared experiences. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone especially enjoyed CCMG Tina Bailem’s demonstration of planting a lettuce box with CCMG Jennifer Godlewski (photo right). [Click here to view this presentation.](#)



## **GIEI Education Project is Busy in 2024, cont.**

**Article by CCMG Meg MacDonald. Photos by CCMG Terry Thir.**

### **UME HGIC Tomato Trials**

The UME Home and Garden Information Center (HGIC) has declared 2024 to be the **YEAR OF THE HEIRLOOM TOMATOES**. See article **CCMGs Participate in Heirloom Tomato Trials** on page 1. All the seeds from HGIC are distributed, but we will have some spare seedlings come May (hopefully!). CCMGs who are interested in growing some of these heirloom tomatoes in their gardens and are willing to collect and share data and photos with other MGs around the state, please contact Beth Grem or Meg MacDonald.

### **Community Garden Task Force**

The GIEI project's Community Garden task force is currently gathering information so we can provide feedback to county staff and other groups to help make a community garden in Charles County a reality. Currently there are no public community gardens here. We are grateful to our MG colleagues in Prince George's County (particularly Esther Mitchell and Dave Kneipp) who have been so helpful to date. At the Statewide Grow It Eat It Conference March 31st, several of our MG colleagues across the state shared their experiences with (and pictures of) Community Gardens in their counties. The GIEI Project leads are looking for a Master Gardener or Intern to take the lead on the CG Task Force. If interested, contact CCMG GIEI EDU project co-chairs Beth Grem or Meg MacDonald.

### **Other Community Outreach**

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, GIEI team members worked with a **Girl Scout troop** (eleven children in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade) talking to them about growing food and helping them start some seeds.

GIEI Co-chairs visited **New Hope Church's Food Garden** from a request for MGs to help improve their food garden. We provided tips on-site and directed them to resources at UME. Follow-up correspondence invited continued collaboration and assistance.

CCMG GIEI Edu project team members will be participating in **Celebrate La Plata Day** on April 27, 2024. We plan to have Year of the Heirloom Tomato promo material on hand – maybe some seedlings to give away as prizes! – as well as other GIEI information. For more information contact Terry Thir.

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## Senior Education Programs (SEP)

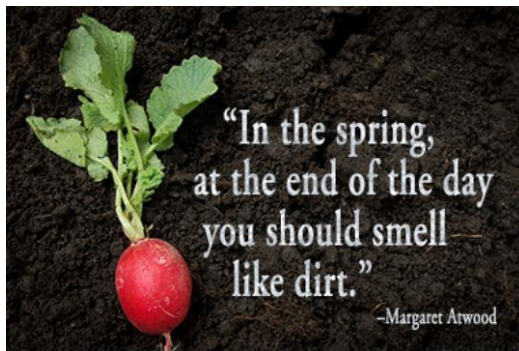
Article by CCMG Michelle Chenault. Photos by CCMG Meg MacDonald.

HURRAH - IT'S SPRING!! Hello Fellow Gardeners! The SEP project team has more exciting announcements to share:

**Indian Head Senior Center** - The Southern Maryland Sierra Club has rebuilt the deteriorated beds and prepared new spaces. The SEP team has been asked to serve as horticulture consultants for the Green Thumb Gardeners.

**Nanjemoy Senior and Community Center** – The Charles County Recreation, Parks and Tourism Department is working on establishing a garden area on site. The SEP team has been asked to serve as horticulture consultants. Thanks to Melwood CCMGs Linda Bronsdon and Suse Greenstone, SEP will set up an indoor plant educational information table and give away spider plants and others to good homes.

**Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center** - SEP CCMGs will provide a lettuce clinic to commemorate Earth Day on Monday April 22, 2024. The workshop entitled "Lettuce Celebrate" will be led by Donna Ball and Linda Ivko. Other volunteers will include Kathy Davis, Laura Walker, Karen Westhead, and Janet McGrane. Fact sheets on lettuce and instructions for building a lettuce box will be provided. Linda Ivko assisted by Karen Westhead will build a lettuce box on site. Brian Larson provided materials and built 1 box as the model.



The SEP project team includes the following CCMGs and Interns (in addition to Donna Ball, as Project Co-lead): Tiffany Daniel, Kathy Davis, Elveta Gibson, 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, Laura Walker, Karen Westhead, Teri White, Julie Nethon-Williams and Karina Willette.



# Senior Education Programs (SEP)

Article by CCMG Michelle Chenault. Photos by CCMG Meg MacDonald.



At the **Richard S. Clark Senior Center** in La Plata, the Senior Plus gardening program has started. The 'Clark Gardeners' have completed 3 classes so far. Seeds are started through direct and winter sowing. We are working with the seniors to beautify the patio area for spring using transplants and plantlets. Photo on the right shows Linda Ivko planting in the raised bed. Below left is Laura Walker planting and (right) Donna Ball and Linda Ivko organizing materials.

There is an orientation process to work with the special seniors. Contact Michelle Chenault ([vmchenault@gmail.com](mailto:vmchenault@gmail.com)) or Donna Ball ([dball15226@aol.com](mailto:dball15226@aol.com)) for more information.

A workshop entitled: "Simply Succulents" will be held on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> for all seniors. CCMG Carol Teets is the speaker. Volunteers are needed to support and help participants with the hands-on activity. Contact Carol Teets ([carolnwbrg@aol.com](mailto:carolnwbrg@aol.com)) or Michelle or Donna.



We are planning a workday at the **Victoria Park (VP) Senior Apartments** site (rear of the complex, between 11080 and 11060 Weymouth Ct in Waldorf) soon. Thanks to the great team of CCMGs that work at the VP site.

The Senior Education Programs (SEP) Project meeting is usually held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6pm via ZOOM. Contact Michelle Chenault ([vmchenault@gmail.com](mailto:vmchenault@gmail.com)) or Donna Ball ([dball15226@aol.com](mailto:dball15226@aol.com)) for more information and to receive email invitations to the meetings. Please join us for the fun! We welcome your ideas!! Again, sincere thanks to all for your efforts, hard work, and input.

## Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Project

Article and Photos by CCMG Rose Markham

We had our last class today and Kathy Jenkins and I found ourselves reminiscing about our first-year experience with this wonderful group of youngsters we had the privilege of teaching this year. To give you all a bit of background, we never expected to create this program when we signed up to take the Junior Master Program offered by the Texas A&M Agri-Life Program last year. An idea in August transformed into a meeting and before we knew it, we had an invitation by the Neighborhood Creative Arts Center to offer our program to its EFH Homeschoolers. We had a few bumps in the road during our first term which began in September 2023, but we were becoming more comfortable after our Christmas Break and come January we began our second term with a more relaxed platform.

Much to our surprise we found ourselves with a classroom full of enthusiastic students who absorbed our program and really took a hands-on interest in our gardening program. We made it fun, and the students made it a simple joy for us to teach the different concepts and activities our program lays out. The truth is that the Junior Master Gardener Program is set up in such a way that the lesson plans prepared by the University provides many concepts and ideas to bounce around and offers the students the option to choose many activities and leadership activities to guide them thru the program toward earning the title of Junior Master Gardeners.



To give you some idea, in September we decided to spend our first 10 weeks teaching the importance and uses of plants. We went from the basics of plant classification, learning all the plant parts, to how we can make new plants from older ones thru propagation. In our second term, we concentrated on the importance of soil and water and the significant role they play in our lives. We relied on most of the hands-on activities the leader guidebooks offered us to teach the different parts of soil and how to recognize what combination of its part produce healthy plants. Our students learned how to read a soil test, how to build compost bins and how to vermi-compost. We even let them touch those red wigglers and explained how they play such a vital role in our food production. We spent the last part of our sessions teaching the class the importance of water and how it can move through soil and is held in all its spaces. Photos above show Kathy Jenkins instructing the Eco-System Juniors.

## Junior Master Gardener (JMG) Project

Article and Photos by CCMG Rose Markham

The students named their group the Eco-System Juniors and some of the youngsters are talking about what they hope to learn next year. Our homeschoolers are planning an outing at Gilbert Run Park to celebrate our end of year. To share their gardening experience with their peers, they have elected to present a skit on pollution. The skit is entitled, "Who Polluted the Potomac," a master gardener activity we have used in some of our earlier presentations. The skit is one of their leadership role activities that leads to becoming a Junior Master Gardener.



Right: More photos from our last session where we talked about soil erosion and where water goes.

We hope you will think about taking this yearly JMG workshop offered by Texas A&M and join us next year to teach these wonderful gardening concepts to our future master gardener community. Catch up with you soon. The JMG Team: Rose Markham, Terry Thir, Kathy Jenkins, Lori Guido, and Gail Walker

## Horizontal Vermiculture

Article and photo by CCMG Linda Bronsdon

I've been using this bin system for two years now, where one half receives new compost as the other half are the worm castings rich in humic and folic acid. A little bit goes a long way as plant fertilizer. Contact me for more information.



## New Vegetable Garden & Master Gardener Project

Article by CCMG Karen Hile.

The “**Earth Day – Birth a Garden**” event was a tremendous success! Held on Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, the event was a celebration for the whole community, with garden creation, family fun and games, and refreshments.

Many of you are familiar with the Christ Church Meditation Native Garden, a Master Gardener project. The garden provides a serene gathering spot for individuals or groups among plants native to Southern Maryland. The garden was designed to provide effective use of rainwater. We are now expanding that project to include a brand-new vegetable garden. The produce will be put into the Community Refrigerator at Christ Church, the only such community refrigerator in Southern Maryland. The church already operates a large food pantry for non-perishable goods, but last May opened the community refrigerator so that people with food scarcity could have 24/7 access to fresh food. It's been hard to keep it stocked, however, so we thought, why not grow our own food to contribute? Thus, the on-site Plentiful Garden was born.

In preparation, church “Plentiful Garden” team members winter-sowed 36 milk jugs of vegetable, herb, and flower seeds, and created 16 potato baskets with Master Gardener guidance. The beautifully constructed garden beds were created and delivered to the site by a Christ Church member. I feel lucky to be able to merge two of my greatest interests – life at Christ Church in La Plata and the Charles County Master Gardeners – in this new gardening project. Photos below left: Winter sowing with church members Kristen Albrittain, Keirra Meekins, Rev. Kate Heichler, Heidi Yauch, Tim Yauch. Below right: CCMG Karen Hile demonstrating winter sowing and potato basket making with Joanie Daniels, Tim Yauch and Heidi Yauch.



## New Vegetable Garden and Master Gardener Project, cont.

Article by CCMG Karen Hile

Volunteers for the **Birth a Garden** event on April 21st included University of Maryland Extension Charles County Master Gardeners, church members, community representatives, and middle and high schoolers, who filled two raised 4x8 beds with soil, transplanted milk jug seedlings into the beds, and set out potato baskets. Even the Mayor of the Town of La Plata, Jeannine James, came out to help plant some lettuce seedlings! Photo right: Volunteers help fill the new beds with lettuce, pea and dill seedlings at the **Birth a Garden** event. Photo by Jessica Roberts.



Background left to right: Christ Church Garden Committee volunteers Kristen Albrittain, Tim Yauch, and Keirra Harvey. Foreground left to right: Christ Church's Pastor Kate Heichler, Town of La Plata Mayor Jeannine James, and Christ Church Plentiful Garden Team Chair/CCMG Karen Hile.

Many thanks to CCMG Brent Burdick who has been our supremely helpful guest speaker, mentor, host, and participant, and to CCMGs Carol Teets, Terry Thir and the whole CCMG Steering Committee for making this project an "MG thing." Thank you also to CCMGs Kay Redman, Sandee Heredia, Rose Markham, Carol Teets, and Brent Burdick for joining us at the event. Your help was indispensable!

## New Vegetable Garden and Master Gardener Project, cont.

Article by CCMG Karen Hile

There are many opportunities to get involved with this garden. We'll need volunteers to help plant or transplant our summer veggies, tentatively planned for Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. We'll also need people to help rig trellis systems, tend the plants from now to harvest, and much more. For future volunteer experiences at the new Christ Church/Master Gardener vegetable garden or for more information, contact CCMG Karen Hile at [karenlynnehile@gmail.com](mailto:karenlynnehile@gmail.com).

Clock those volunteer hours at the new garden!



"Birth a Garden" volunteers, left to right: Keirra Harvey, the Albrittain family (Nathan, Michael, and Kristen), CCMG Rose Markham, Cameron Mastin, Christ Church Pastor Kate Heichler, LPHS volunteer Xzavier, CCMG Karen Hile, CCMG Sandee Heredia, Joanie Daniels, Bonnie Rafer, CCMG Carol Teets, CCMG Kay Redman, CCMG Brent Burdick, and Tim Yauch. Photo by Jessica Roberts, Vestry member of Christ Church.



<https://www.buzzsprout.com/687509>

# The Garden Thyme Podcast

Garden Thyme Podcast

A monthly podcast where we help you get down and dirty in your garden, with timely gardening tips, information about native plants, and more! The Garden Thyme Podcast is brought to you by the University of Maryland Extension.

<https://extension.umd.edu/>. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## CCMG Michelle Chenault's Favorite Gardening Books for 2024

*The Complete Language of Flowers* by S. Theresa Dietz, *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden* by Camille Dungy, *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, *The Joy of Gardening* by Ellen Mary, and *The Comfort of Crows* by Margaret Renkl.

Be safe on the roads today.!!  
My car just slid into the garden center's parking lot again.



The next time someone tells you planting native wildflower seed is useless, show them this picture

## Save the Dates and Volunteer!

### May 4 – Port Tobacco Market Day

Rain date is May 18th. Location: Historic Port Tobacco Courthouse, 8430 Commerce St in Port Tobacco. Bay-Wise MGs will have an information booth to promote Bay-Wise principles and encourage property certifications. Email Rose Markham to volunteer at [rosemarkham38@gmail.com](mailto:rosemarkham38@gmail.com).

### May 9 – CCMG Awards Ceremony/Intern Graduation/Potluck Social

Location: Charles Soil Conservation District Offices, 4100 Gardiner Rd in Waldorf 5:00 to 7:30 pm. Contact Pauline Spurlock for more information at [spurlockp@gmail.com](mailto:spurlockp@gmail.com). [RSVP here](#).

### May 26 – NatureFest

Hours TBD. Tilghman Lake Park in La Plata. CCMGs will have hands-on activities for children. Contact Derex Thompson to volunteer at [derex.thompson@usaa.com](mailto:derex.thompson@usaa.com).

### Plant Clinic Project @ La Plata Farmer's Market - Saturdays

This outreach program links the community to gardening resources of the University of Maryland Extension. MGs answer questions from area residents on plant-related topics. For more information, contact Linda Ivko at [ljivko@gmail.com](mailto:ljivko@gmail.com).

### Plant Swap?

Last year we held a plant swap in June at Tilghman Lake. *Is anyone interested in doing this again?* If so, send an email to Terry Thir at [thirccmg@aol.com](mailto:thirccmg@aol.com) with a list of plants you'll have available to share. Spring is a great time to dig-up and separate plants in your yard. Those who winter-sowed or raised plants by seed may find you have far more plants than expected. Suggest a date (May/June). If anyone would like to lead this event, let me know.



### Garden Dictionary

**Complete Fertilizer** – A plant food which contains all three of the primary elements... nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

From [The Garden Helper Dictionary](#)



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](mailto: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](mailto:thirccmg@aol.com).

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**Submissions to The Compost** - Submit articles, photos, reports, events, and other items for publication to the editor at [thecompostofccmg@gmail.com](mailto:thecompostofccmg@gmail.com) by July 15, 2024, for the Summer 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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