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“Message from Mariah”

Thanks everyone for a great fall season!

Thank you to county fair volunteers Lynn Duff, Olga Dewey, Louise Snell, Sara Everheart, Michelle Johnson, Sheila Milburn, Janet Marks, Gena Wade, Rebecca Ironmonger, Thao Le Nguyen, Charlotte Barnhardt, Lea Weaver, Ruth Yates, Tracey Pintell-Quade, Miriam-Ellen Bonk, Thomas Cervone-Richards, Debra Pence, Liz Walter, Donna Voithoffer, Mary Bauer, Michelle Johnson, Patrice Hopkins, Fran Beale, Carolyn Williamson, Macy Hovland, Mary Ann Friesen, Marlene Smith, and Bill Smith!

Thank you to Riverfest volunteers Thomas Cervone-Richards, Patrice Hopkins, Suzanne Troisclair, Charlotte Barnhardt, Elizabeth Clark, and Barbera Vogentanz. Also special thanks to St. Mary’s County Watershed Restoration Educator Caroline DiGiovanni who helped with the MG table set up!

Thanks to Marsha Adamo and Naomi Constantine who volunteered at the second annual native plant swap at the Leonardtown Library.

Thanks to Janet Marks and Tracey Pintell-Quade who have done an excellent job running the plant clinic at the Barns at New Market this year.

Thanks to Carla Wilson, Janet Marks, Liz Ward, and Christi Bishop for all their work on the Lexington Park Passive Park Community Garden.

Thanks to Marlene, Bill, and Misty Smith for all of their native plant presentations and videography.

Thanks to Gena Wade and Sandy Witham for running an educational program for children with Building Bridges.

Thank you to Penny Shissler for doing amazing tending to the garden at the Barns at New Market and some sign gardens.

Thank you to Deb Pence and Christine Kaila for maintaining the demonstration garden at the office.

Thanks to Ben Beale for helping to coordinate Farm to School and Farmers Feeding St. Mary’s this year, and all of the volunteers that helped him with those endeavors.



And thank you to anyone who did fall programming who I missed in this thank you note.

We have been very busy this fall, so not much time to write newsletter articles. Hopefully our next edition of The Vine will have some more material.

Please don't forget to send me pictures of your MG projects! You can email them to me or also add them in the St. Mary's or even Southern Maryland Master Gardener Facebook groups.

Below is a picture of me demonstrating how to do a soil sample at a winter gardening talk at the Lexington Park Passive Park Community Garden... proof that I do something besides send y'all seemingly endless emails about upcoming volunteer and continuing education opportunities! Keep checking your inboxes for more opportunities.

Hope everyone enjoys this fall season!



thank you

Curse of the Squash Bug ***By: Charlotte Barnhardt***

Last year I sent my burgeoning birdhouse gourds up into nearby maple trees for support, after all, I have spent years listening to permaculture podcasts which talk about the multiple layers of a food forest and the joy of each part of your system having multiple functions. Alas, though it was a joy to behold the silver maples doused in birdhouse gourd baubles, the tree was not very happy about it, and so this year I decided to build a structure for them to climb over.

Enter - the 'Magidome'. A deceptively easy structure to build with high visual impact. I built it in early spring, leaving me plenty of time to compost some strategically placed straw bales to grow in (my soil is very sad and rebuilding it is a work in progress). So excited was I by the supportive possibilities of my new structure I didn't just plant gourd seeds, oh no dear reader, those bales were filled with Tromboncino, Acorn Squash, mini gourds, regular gourds (with seeds saved from last year's best) and a whole host of wild and cut flower seeds!

Naturally, the vines waited until we left for vacation to really start stretching and upon our return I discovered every squash gardener's nightmare...squash bugs. Initially I recruited my children to collect the bugs in jars of soapy water and return them to me for the princely sum of 5c per bug/cluster of eggs. They amassed less than \$20 between them before they got bored/grossed out by the "stinky" bugs. Next it was my turn to wander around the garden with my marigold gloves on hunting the little beasts. As my initial trepidation and disgust turned into fury, I forewent the gloves and soapy water in favor of speedy collection and squashing (pun intended) of the bugs, at this point having added cucumber beetles (spotted and striped), leaf footed bugs and squash vine borer (SVB) to the growing list of pests I was trying to minimize. I was disheartening to watch my beautiful vines being felled by these ghastly creatures and I was kicking myself for not having anticipated that building what essentially amounted to a monoculture of squashy deliciousness might attract these guys.

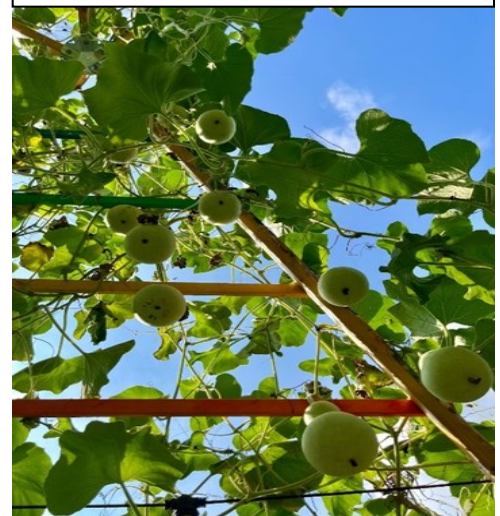
As I await the drying out of vines that signals harvest time of the gourds (one of the few squash that actually produced well) I am reflecting on how to better mitigate the effect of squash beetles next year. Happily, preparation can start this year, here are the tips I have learned in my research:



Happy gourds climbing up less happy trees



Can you spot the unwanted visitor next to the Tromboncino?



Adult squash bugs will overwinter in garden debris and mulch, so end of season cleanup is important. Remove all old squash vines, leaves, debris and anything that they could potentially hide under, as they likely won't survive the cold of winter if they are exposed. I have read to till the soil but I won't be doing this as I need to prioritize building healthy soil.

If you have the space to do so, rotating your plantings and delaying planting may slow down the population build up.

Interplanting Buckwheat, Calendula, Dill and Queen Anne's Lace can attract the tachinid fly parasitoid which will eventually kill the squash bugs and companion plants such as Catnip, Tansy, Radishes, Nasturtiums, Marigolds and Bee Balm may also help repel the squash bug and work as a trap plant for other garden pests.

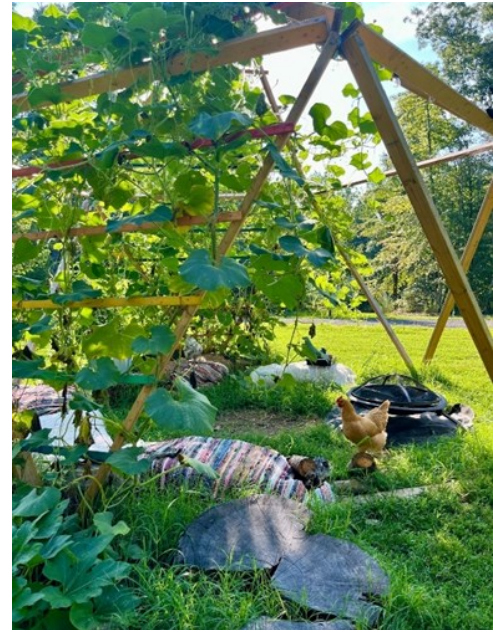
Row covers are effective for squash that don't climb, particularly if you put down a layer of newspaper around the vines to suppress and overwintering bugs and need only be removed once the plant starts to flower.

Female squash bugs usually appear in early June, inspect your plants for egg clusters, these are often found on the underside of leaves, between the veins but could also be found on other parts of the leaf and the stems. Crush the eggs and dispose of any live nymphs and adults in soapy water. I have found that, once you are sufficiently desensitized to handling them, putting the bug on the ground on their back keeps them still long enough to squash with your shoe.

Adult bugs like to hide underneath things so you can trap them by laying down newspaper or boards, collecting and destroying them in the morning.

Young plants are most vulnerable to these pests so stay vigilant early in the season to give you better long term success and remember that keeping your plants healthy, well watered and fed are the best ways to safeguard them against pests and diseases.

Good luck and happy gardening friends!



These fussy dino-descendants have no interest in eating the squash bugs (though they can do



Know thy enemy! Life stages of a squash bug. Photo credit: Cassie Johnston, growfully.com

New Master Gardener
By: Darcy White

Hello, my name is Darcy White. I am a new Master Gardener, and I wanted to share how grateful I am for this class and all the wonderful people I have met along the way. I enjoy all types of gardening but in the past year, I have begun to favorite natives. With the constant growth and building of our community, I have found it so important to coexist with the environment around us and bring back the natives to support our ecosystems. Everywhere I go I see non-native species overtaking areas as their fast growth and beautiful flowers attract many landscapers, I now enjoy finding peace in the gradual growth of natives. Now having a better understanding of how important they truly are, I have much more patience watching my plants grow. Knowing year after year they will only get better. Sleep, creep, leap!

The year started with Flowering Dogwood, Blanket Flower, Violets, Spiderwort and Prickly Pear flowers. Leading way to the summer stars, the Black Eyed Susan's, Joe Pye, Milkweed, Mexican Sunflowers and Ironweed. Now as the warmer seasons are coming to an end my garden had a few more tricks up its sleeve. The New England Aster and Golden Rod have become my favorites with White Wood Aster filling in the empty spots.

Even some wild volunteers that can be seen to some as weeds, I see as nature asking for space. These include Fleabane, Yarrow, Primrose and Late Boneset. With fall being one of the best times to plant; less bugs, weed, heat, as well as giving the plants more time to focus on their roots for better start next spring. So I got busy planting and added 99 native plants to our garden. This weekend we will be adding our 100th, a large Serviceberry tree!

A huge thank you to Butterfly Alley and Ecoplantia for their large varieties of native species! With the new natives in our yard, I have also noticed so many visitors. Daily we have 10-30 different bird species with the record being 38 at a time! They love feasting on many of the caterpillars and many other bugs we have attracted. We even had our first American Bumblebee and Monarch chrysalis. I did lose a one of the largest watermelons I have ever grown to the deer, two honeydews to box turtles, and corn to the squirrels. Maybe a little upset at first but I am glad they were able to enjoy it as they need to eat too. I am honored they chose my garden to rest in and to be honest it was very entertaining watching the melons roll away after every little turtle chomp. I will have to allow space for more to share next year!

Thank you MG's for a year of learning! I am so excited to continue to grow and meet you all. I am especially excited to volunteer at more plant clinics, it has been so much fun talking to the community and hearing about others journeys in their gardens.

Happy Fall to you all, to help get into the cozy season, here is my favorite pumpkin pancake recipe!



Darcy's favorite pumpkin pancakes
By: Darcy White

Thank you MG's for a year of learning! I am so excited to continue to grow and meet you all. I am especially excited to volunteer at more plant clinics, it has been so much fun talking to the community and hearing about others journeys in their gardens. Happy Fall to you all, to help get into the cozy season, here is my favorite pumpkin pancake recipe!

PUMPKIN PANCAKES

- ◇ 4 large eggs, separated
- ◇ 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon (195 g whole milk ricotta cheese
- ◇ $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (183 g) canned pumpkin purée (not pie filling)
- ◇ $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice or ground cinnamon
- ◇ $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon sea salt
- ◇ 1 cup (104 g) almond flour
- ◇ 1 heaping teaspoon baking powder
- ◇ 2 tablespoons sugar
- ◇ Butter, ghee, or avocado oil, for greasing the pan

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS

Plain Greek yogurt

Chopped walnuts or pecans

Julienned apples



1. Add the egg yolks to a large mixing bowl, followed by the ricotta, pumpkin purée, pumpkin pie spice, and salt. Mix until smooth. In a separate bowl, whisk the almond flour, baking powder. Gently fold it into the wet ingredients.
2. Add the egg whites to a third bowl. Whisk vigorously by hand, or use an electric mixer, until foamy. Add half of the sugar and whisk until absorbed. Add the remaining sugar and continue whisking for 2 to 3 minutes, until stiff peaks have formed. Gently fold into the batter using a spatula in two batches.
3. Heat a large, nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Grease with butter and, when hot, add a few spoonfuls of the batter to the pan to make one pancake. Smooth with your spatula and allow to cook until golden underneath, flip, and continue cooking until the opposite is golden.
4. Repeat until you have used all of the batter.

Serve the pancakes with the toppings of your choice.

Kale Chips

By: Mariah Dean

Here is a recipe for kale chips. Figured some folks might still have some kale growing in their gardens and this is a tasty snack. Source:

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/176957/baked-kale-chips/>

Ingredients

- 1 bunch kale
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon flaked sea salt



Directions

- ◆ Gather all ingredients.
- ◆ Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F (150 degrees C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- ◆ With a knife or kitchen shears carefully remove kale leaves from the thick stems; tear into bite-sized pieces.
- ◆ Wash and thoroughly dry kale with a salad spinner.
- ◆ Drizzle kale leaves with olive oil and toss to combine. Spread out in an even layer on the baking sheet without overlapping and sprinkle with salt.
- ◆ Bake until the edges start to brown but are not burnt, 20 to 30 minutes.





Enjoy!

UME-St. Mary's
26737 Radio Station Way, Suite E-2
Leonardtown, MD 20650
TEL 301-475-4120
FAX 301-475-4483

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Check out MG Web site and the Facebook,

<https://extension.umd.edu/st-marys-county/home-gardening/master-gardener-program>



<https://www.facebook.com/St-Marys-County-Master-Gardeners-University-of-Maryland-Extension-111823550482511>

The University recently asked faculty to share this updated notice in their next newsletter. It is the same as the old notice except this one includes people who are not currently practicing a religion.



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