



Brunswick County Master Gardener
Volunteer Association

NEWSLETTER

December 2006

[Ozzie Coor](#)... was a very entertaining speaker at the November General Meeting – we learned a lot about plants native to our area – his presentation and the photos were excellent – who knew there were so many varieties of hibiscus or that NC has the second largest number of native orchids (only Hawaii has more)?

We have a great line-up of [Speakers for 2007](#). Once again, David Barkley and Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman have worked hard to develop a great group of speakers and topics.

On [January 25](#), [Bill Cline](#) will talk to us about grapes and blueberries. Bill works at the North Carolina Horticultural Crops Research Station in Castle Hayne as the Small Fruits Plant Pathologist for the University. He works mainly with blueberry, grape and strawberry crop diseases.

Some of our other speakers for next year include [Dan Keir \(in February\)](#), the owner and operator of Japanese Maples of Wilmington; many of you have purchased Japanese Maples from him by way of the MG plant sales. He will talk to us about grafting; this will be a hands-on demonstration. In [March](#) we will hear from [Gloria Kidd](#) on Butterfly Gardening; [April](#) will bring us [Debbie Roos](#) to talk about Organic Gardening. Other speakers will be announced in future newsletters.

Not Getting Mail?

If you are not receiving e-mails from Charlie re: upcoming events and volunteer opportunities, it's because either he doesn't have your correct e-mail address (verify your address with the office) or your carrier is 2khiway.net, which blocks his e-mails (you will have to take care of this – Charlie can't).

Please get your timesheets up to date before the end of the year.

Charlie will be out for several weeks after the first of the year for hip surgery and he needs to get timesheets taken care of before then.

Next year's classes will include:

- Possibly two Master Gardener classes, one beginning on Tuesday, Feb. 6 and the other – if needed - beginning the following Wednesday.
- Three dates will be set up for the Turf class – watch the newsletter for the notices when the schedule is set up.
- Plant ID class will begin the end of March.
- There will be others – watch for notices.

Will we see you at the [Holiday Party](#) on December 14?

Member News

Al Powell would appreciate your cards, or better yet, a visit from MG friends. He is at Summit Place, 491 Highway 17, Little River, SC 29566.

John Kellett fell and broke his arm – we hope he’s doing well, and again he’d like to hear from you – send him a card and wish him a speedy recovery.

And **Mae Moore** is recovering from surgery. She was in a large class – if you were a classmate, let her hear from you.

Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman says “**Thank You**” to everyone who worked to make the Reunion Social a big success. And many of the MGs who attended expressed their appreciation and talked about what a great event it was. The Botanical Garden was a perfect setting, the weather was great and it was fun getting together just to socialize.

Our two entries in the Regional Fair in Wilmington netted us a First Place and Second Place award. Not only did we receive a total of \$350 in prize money, but the first place entry received a “Best in Show” ribbon, too. Thanks to the following MGs for their efforts in putting together the entries:

Barbara McCoy	Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman
Vicki Kay	Dominique Loewenstein
Maggie Hoon	Pat Hagerty
Ann Marie Bellamy	Richard Boland
	David Barkley

Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman has been elected President of the North Carolina Master Gardener Volunteer Association. Congratulations, Shirley.

Joe Loughlin will be taking over as newsletter editor starting with the January 2007 issue. Joe has a lot of newsletter experience and is a computer whiz, so you should see some exciting changes in future issues. I have really enjoyed doing this, but it’s time for a change and it couldn’t be going to a better person! If you have items for the newsletter, send them to him at jloughlin@ec.rr.com. Thanks to everyone who has contributed ideas and articles these past two years.

Becky

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In December 2005, there were 50 calls to the Hotline. The breakdown of these calls is as follows:

General: 23. Of the 23 calls, 4 requested Newcomer packets and 10 requested soil sample kits and interpretation of analysis. The remainders ask for various information such as composting and pruning.

Lawns: 1. The call was for information about Centipede grass.

Trees: 7. The species of trees varied among Crepe Myrtle, Leland Cypress, Pines and Maple.

Shrubs: 4. Camellia, gardenia and confederate rose were the subjects.

Pests: 7. Mole crickets, wasps, worms and beetle.

Vegetables/Flowers: 8. The callers requested general information about growing various flowers and winter care of inside plants.

When you work on the Hotline, write down as much information as possible about the problems and their solutions on the Hotline forms. The

back of the form has some questions to help you clarify the caller's problem.

Reminder from Charlie: **DO NOT** diagnose disease or pests over the phone! You need a specimen to make a proper diagnosis. All turf problems should go to Charlie, David, Al or Matt, in that order, other problems to Dave or Charlie.

Election Results:

If you were at the November meeting, you already know this: we elected the following "Honorable Leaders" to serve next year:

- Richard Boland, President
- Shirley Waggoner-Eisenman, Vice President
- Al Smith, Treasurer



Remember, if you provide refreshments for a MG meeting, save your receipts and turn them in for up to \$50 in reimbursement for your costs.



From Charlie:

The following Master Gardeners participated in the recently completed "Life on the Farm" series held at Funston Farms:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Joe Loughlin | Boyd Stanley |
| Ann Marie Bellamy | Barbara Stone |
| Lynn Schwartzkopf | Richard Boland |
| Judy Hilniski | Fred Mina |
| Becky Dus | Barbara McCoy |
| Judy Koehly | Nancy Einbinder |
| Hilton Holcomb | Dominique Loewenstein |
| Vicki Kay | |

And Billy Privette, who helped every day, even though he has retired.

This has to be one of the best, if not the best, Master Gardener organizations in the entire state. You all deserve to be known as the best. Thanks for everything you do for Extension and our Association.



The International Master Gardener Conference will be at Little Rock, Arkansas in March 2007

CONGRATULATIONS TO AL HIGHT

who is now officially Extension Director- and to **GINA BRITTON** who is "our" secretary. We're lucky to have them both. Al has some great ideas for Extension and the gardens. And Gina is always a great help with everything!



On Tuesday, December 19, the Extension will hold a Poinsettia and Luminarias event. Our main purpose is to try to encourage the Hispanic population to come to the Extension and discover what we have to offer. Poinsettias were brought into SC from Mexico by Joel Poinset. Luminarias are a Latino Christmas tradition. The event will be from 4 to 6 pm so visitors can walk through the gardens as they follow the luminaries path. If you can help - meeting and greeting visitors, lighting candles or manning the MG booth - let Charlie know.

**Do you know an outstanding MG Volunteer?**

Why not nominate that person for The NC Master Gardener Volunteer Association's Outstanding Volunteer Award? The Guidelines and a Nomination Form are attached to this newsletter, or you can go to the website at www.ncmastergardeners.org/Master_Gardener_Awards.htm to print them out.

Have You Paid Your Dues??

Your \$5 dues are due by January 2. A form to use when you send in your payment is printed on the back page of this newsletter. Remember, you can pay more than one year if you want.

Gardening Tips for December**TREE AND SHRUB PLANTING TECHNIQUES**

People tend to think that plants can take care of themselves. They don't bother to follow through on some of the critical planting strategies, or they may be so afraid what they have done will never be enough that it is easy for them to simply kill their plants with the "over-care syndrome." After selecting the recommended plants adaptive to your area, buying good quality plants free from insects, diseases and other problems, why would anyone not take the time to properly plant the landscape according to a landscape plan which should specify how to plant the trees and shrubs correctly? This huge investment in time and money can pay off big dividends whenever you sell your house.

Before planting, first have in mind where the plant is to be located and know the purpose of the plant. Often this will determine how the plant should be planted. Consider the ultimate size and growth rate, shape, color, form and texture of the plants to be planted.

A modern trend in landscaping is to plant shrubs in large beds. It is best to prepare the entire bed by incorporating any soil amendments such as lime, organic matter or fertilizers as recommended from a soil test by tilling the amendments into the soil thoroughly. Once the bed is prepared, the plants can be placed into the bed and planted once their final location has been determined.

To plant the material, knock the plants out of their containers, cut on four sides of the root ball and loosen the roots so they can

grow outward instead of continuing in a circular fashion. Never plant too deep. The first roots of the plant should be just below the surface of the soil. Plants deeper than 4" usually will die from root rot or suffocation.

Have wide planting holes dug to receive the plant's root ball instead of narrow and deep planting holes. Water the plants as they are being planted. Usually it is best to set the plant, fill with half of the backfill, water in to settle fill and remove air pockets, fill the rest of the way, then water again.

Remember, mixing of the soil amendments is very important. It is better to have a unified blend of backfill. Throwing a shovel full of organic matter or dumping fertilizers into the planting hole in this fashion does more harm than good.

"It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas"

Holiday plant care is very important now if you want to preserve the beauty of poinsettias and other Christmas plants. Remember, they are actively growing plants unlike many of your other house plants that have been brought in to rest after their peak growing season. Keep them watered (moist to touch) and provide them with enough light to continue their growth. Avoid cold or hot air drafts.

Christmas trees can be used as landscape trees after Christmas if they are properly cared for while in the home during the holidays. Too much or too little water are common problems associated with "Christmas Tree Shortlife." Also, keeping the area near the tree too hot will cause the needles to dry out and fall off. Try having the decorated tree in the house for a

minimum time and plant as soon after Christmas as possible.

December Gardening Chores

Landscape plantings still can be made at this time of the year. The one major consideration at this time of year is the soil condition. Wet soils, especially wet, clay soils, are rather unforgiving. Find something else to do until it dries out. If you have purchased plants and are waiting for the soil to dry, be sure the plants don't dry out in the meantime. Keep them watered and consider winter protection if necessary. Keeping them in a barn or garage for a few days to protect the root ball from freezing should be considered.

- Draw up a landscape design that can be installed in the spring while the winter takes you away from outdoor activities.
- Order supplies for the coming spring gardening plans.
- Repair, maintain and store equipment needed for the coming season. Now is a good time to shop around and bargain for some good prices on equipment you will need later.
- When the weather is bad bring out your notes from gardening last year and devise strategies to overcome problems you faced last year.
- Don't have notes? Try to summarize your garden's performance and make yourself a promise to keep detailed notes of plant performances for the coming year. Sit down at a computer and enter your notes for fast retrieval for next year.
- Enroll in classes! Read and study up on ideas you would like to achieve for next year. Don't forget to include your New Year's Gardening Resolutions...Thou Shalt Not...

- Tip pruning can be done this month. Many evergreens are used in various Christmas decorations. Both the foliage and the berries of many favorites including the holly species, nandina, pines and cedars are popular for decorating the house. Remember not to make heavy "renovative" type pruning cuts until late winter.
 - Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs.
 - Think water garden and have it ready for spring. There are numerous sources of information and construction materials for these type projects. Garden centers and mass merchandising garden stores are handling pool liners, pumps and aquatic plants.
 - Give gardening tools and subscriptions to landscaping magazines as gifts.
 - Order fruit trees adapted to your area now and designate shipping dates that avoid hard frozen ground problems when planting. *Order now, plant later* philosophy.
 - Continue mulching and composting chores. Your plants will love the added benefits and mulching landscape plants now may help them survive the winter. Along with the mulching, you will need to watch out for animal damage to the trunk base. Voles love to feed on the bark of plants and may become a pest in the winter.
 - The dead tops of many perennials can be removed. Frost has killed back the top growth of most of our favorite perennials. This includes Mexican Bush Sage, Pineapple Sage, Cannas, Coneflower, Rudbeckia, Peonies, and Veronica.
 - The tops of others are still green, and they don't need to be completely trimmed back. These might include Liriope, Daylily, Tansy and Hollyhock. Just a general cleanup of any brown foliage is necessary at this time. Some perennials, although dormant during the winter, offer winter interest. Don't cut the tops back until the early spring cleanup. This list includes Sedum, and the many ornamental grasses we're now growing.
 - Apply broadleaf herbicides to control winter annual and perennial weeds. Watch for dry, windy conditions with low relative humidity that can damage turf. It may be necessary to irrigate periodically to help the grass survive.
 - Coastal lawns, if not already dormant, will soon be. Continue to mow, rake leaves and water during dry spells.
 - Good soil preparation is essential for winter annuals and spring flowering bulbs. Try to till as deep as possible to eliminate any compaction problems, incorporate topsoil, organic matter and lime before planting, and finish with a 2-3 inch layer of mulch.
 - Continue planting container grown ornamentals this fall; be sure to loosen the roots and the media before backfilling. For slightly pot-bound roots, cut on 3-4 sides, shake the roots and media to a loose condition and then plant.
- What kills plants?** Answer: Mostly planting too deep, underwatering, overwatering and overfertilizing practices. Sometimes new plantings are sensitive to cold damage in the winter. Extra care may be needed to get the newly establishing plants through a cold winter. Mulches help and so do some of the wraps. Better yet, make sure they are planted in the right location.

2007 Dues Notice

Dues are payable by January 1 each year.

Make checks payable to: Brunswick County Master Gardener Volunteer Association (BCMGVA)
\$5.00 per Individual

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Mail checks to: Linda Lemieux

3882 Members Club Blvd.

Southport, NC 28461

If you have an item for the newsletter, be sure to submit it to both Joe Loughlin (jloughlin@ec.rr.com) and Lisa Miner (webmaster@bcmastergardener.org)

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