

THE DIGGERS

Dorchester Garden Club

March 9, 2012

Mark Your Calendars

MARCH

- 9-11 Districts III & IV "Who Dunit" Flower Show at Home and Garden Show, Timonium Fairgrounds (Please note: there is an admission fee to the Home and Garden Show.)
- 26 Reception Dinner for CAR Director Jeanne Nelson - 6:30 p.m. - Turf Valley Resort & Hotel - Contact Elyssa Baxter 410-357-0714
- 27 FGCMMD State Annual Meeting at Turf Valley

APRIL

- 10-12* District II Daffodil Show Our Shepherd Lutheran Church *PLEASE NOTE NEW DATES Benfield Blvd. Severna Park, MD Entries accepted at Noon on April 10th.
- 19 Dorchester GC- Blue Star Marker Dedication, Maryland Veterans Cemetery - Eastern Shore, Hurlock, MD 21643 11:00 a.m.
- 20-22 American Daffodil Society Convention and Show - "Blooms, Bay and Beyond" Sheraton Baltimore North Towson, MD
- 9 District II Annual Meeting Comfort Inn, Bowie, MD hosted by LaPlata Garden Club
- 11 Daylight Savings Time Begins
- 15 Landscape Design Council Meeting at Valley View Farms with speaker Carrie Engel 10:00 a.m.
- 16 Ikebana International Chapter 118 11:00 a.m. Greenhouse Classroom Cylburn Arboretum
- 20 First day of spring
- 26 Reception Dinner for CAR Director Jeanne Nelson - 6:30 p.m. - Turf Valley Resort & Hotel - Contact Elyssa Baxter 410-357-0714
- 27 FGCMMD State Annual Meeting at Turf Valley [Directions](#) [Registration](#)
- 27 *Dinner and a Show* Small Standard Flower Show to be held in conjunction with the FGCMMD Annual Meeting [Show Schedule](#)
- 31 Springtime Floral Design Workshop & the History of Tulips with Annette Richter and Marilyn Potter -10:00 a.m. Cylburn Classroom

APRIL 2012

- 10-12* District II Daffodil Show Our Shepherd Lutheran Church *Benfield Blvd. Severna Park, MD *Entries accepted at 2:00 p.m. on April 10th.*
- 12-15 [Art Blooms 2012](#) *A Floral Fiesta!* The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland
- 13 Dorchester Garden Club: *A Personal Walk through the History of the Philadelphia Flower Show & the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society* with Margaret (Midge) Ingersoll. 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Guest Fee - \$20—includes lunch & DGC Christ Church, Cambridge, MD
- 18 Potting Tower Workshop with Marilyn Potter Cylburn Classroom To register call 410-367-2217
- 19 Dorchester Garden Club will be dedicating its Blue Star Marker at the Maryland Veterans Cemetery - Eastern Shore 6827 E. New Market Ellwood Road, Hurlock, MD 21643 11:00 a.m.
- 20-22 2012 American Daffodil Society Convention and Show "*Blooms, Bay and Beyond*" Sheraton Baltimore North Towson, MD 22 Earth Day
- 24-26 Flower Show School Course III Bowie Comfort Inn, Bowie MD

MAY

- 5 Moonflower Garden Club presents a vegetable gardening lecture & plant sale: "The Seven Secrets of Successful Organic Gardeners" with Mike McGrath OurShepherd Lutheran Church Severna Park, MD.
- 9 Dorchester County Garden Club Standard Flower Show "Our Living Heritage", Dorchester County Historical Society, 1:30 – 5:30 pm

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Jammin' in the Garden



Deeply colored flowers can add a striking accent to garden beds and container plantings. And there are few that offer a more dramatic hue than Vinca 'Jams 'N Jellies Blackberry', one of the 2012 All-America Selections Flower Award winners.

The velvety, deep purple flowers accented with a small white eye are of such a deep hue that in some settings they appear almost black. The color combines well with both hot and cool shades. Imagine the "pop" when combined with bright orange flowers or the smoldering drama when mixed with shades of pink, blue, and lavender. The possibilities are endless!

Vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*) is an easy to grow tender perennial grown as an annual. The shiny dark green foliage sets off the flowers that bloom from summer to frost on 10-24 inch tall plants. It does best in full sun and tolerates heat and dry soil when established. It works well in mass plantings, in the flower border, as an edging plant, and in containers. Wait until the air and soil are warm and all danger of frost is past before setting this heat-lover out in the garden.

All-America Award winners are new varieties selected by independent expert AAS judges on the basis of their superior garden performance in trial gardens all across the country.

For more information on Vinca 'Jams 'N Jellies Blackberry', go to: [All-America Selections](#).

Bats in Trouble



In 2006 a previously unknown disease was discovered killing bats in northern New York State. Since then the disease, now called white-nose syndrome for the symptom it causes in infected bats, has spread to colonies in sixteen states and four Canadian provinces, killing as many as 6.7 million bats in the process. This huge die-off threatens several species of bats with extinction if the disease continues unchecked, and so far research into the problem has produced more questions than answers.

The new mortality figures were released recently at the Northeast Bat Working Group's annual meeting held in Pennsylvania, one of the states whose bat population has been hard hit by the epidemic. Although a few bats were found in Vermont last summer that were confirmed survivors of the disease, raising hopes for a resurgent population resistant to the disease, severely decimated populations are very vulnerable to other pressures such as habitat loss and environmental contaminants.

So far white-nose syndrome hasn't made big inroads into the bat populations in the Midwest and South, areas with some of the largest bat populations in the country. This is one of the reasons scientists are working hard to

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understand the disease so they can come up with a way to stop its spread. Congress has recently allocated \$4 million in the effort to control this disease.

Bats feed on an enormous number of insects, and their decline could have a big impact on pest populations affecting both agriculture and home gardening. Some estimates are that the number of pest insects eaten by bats save farmers from having to spend between \$3.7 billion and \$53 million annually on pesticides -- a whopping figure that doesn't take into account the benefit to the environment as a whole from reduced pesticide usage.

To find out more about the Northeast Bat Working Group, go to: <http://www.nebwg.org/>

To learn more about white-nose syndrome, go to: [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](http://www.fishbase.org/2012/03/white-nose-syndrome/).

Understanding Flower Arranging

If you're ready to dive into the waters of fresh flower arranging, it's important that you understand the placement guidelines. You can't just stick flowers wherever you'd like, there is an art to placing the materials. Here are some rules to adhere to:

- The largest and darkest flowers are usually placed close to the base of the design.
- The smallest and lightest flowers are generally placed at the outer edges of the arrangements.
- In symmetrical arrangements, flowers should be spaced evenly throughout the arrangement.
- In asymmetrical arrangements the materials should be placed in a way that visual weight is distributed evenly throughout the display.

Source: <http://flower.lifetips.com/cat/62113/how-to-arrange-flowers/index.html>

My Wife the Gardener



She dug the plot on Monday –
the soil was rich and fine,
She forgot to thaw out dinner –
so we went out to dine...
She planted roses Tuesday –
she says they are a must,
They really are quite lovely
but she quite forgot to dust.
On Wednesday it was daisies –
they opened up with sun,
All whites and pinks and yellows –
but the laundry wasn't done...
The poppies came on Thursday -
a bright and cherry red,
I guess she really was engrossed –
she never made the bed...
It was violets on Friday –
in colours she adores,
It never bothered her at all –
all crumbs upon the floors
I hired a maid on Saturday –
my week is now complete,
My wife can garden all she wants –
the house will still be neat!
It's nearly lunchtime Sunday –
and I cannot find the maid,
Oh no! I don't believe it!
She's out there WITH THE SPADE!

Source: <http://www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com/gardening-jokes-gardening-quotes-garden-poems.html>

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The Headache of Bermudagrass



Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) is a terrible nuisance in gardens in the southern half of the United States. Improved turfgrass strains often behave themselves, but primitive forms are very difficult to control. It spreads by creeping stems, underground stolons, and seeds.

Maintain a broad buffer area between your garden and stands of wild bermudagrass. **Dig** out sprigs several times each year, and **mulch** to make digging easier. Brush with an **organic herbicide** containing acetic acid monthly if this grass grows so close to other plants that digging is impossible.

Weed Control Techniques

Digging. Weeds that regrow from persistent roots must be dug. Use a spade or digging fork to dig spreading perennials, such as bindweed, Canada thistle, and quackgrass. Start digging a foot away from the plant's center to loosen the soil. Then lift the weed from beneath, which reduces how many root pieces are likely to break off and regrow. Dandelion, dock, and other weeds that grow from persistent taproots can be dug the same way, or you can use a special fork-like tool called a dandelion weeder to pry them up. Dig very large taproots that are difficult to pry loose. In lawns and other places where digging dandelions is not practical, use a sharp knife to slice off the leaves and the top inch or two of taproot at a diagonal angle. Some weeds that are easily pulled when the soil is moist must be dug from dry soil.

Mulching. Mulch that's more than 2 inches thick can deprive most weed seeds of the light they need to germinate and grow. In vegetable

and flower gardens, you can mulch with wheat straw (which has fewer weed seeds than hay), chopped leaves, grass clippings, or many other organic materials. Where weeds are numerous, try covering the soil with four to six sheets of newspaper. Then cover the newspapers with 2 to 3 inches of organic mulch. Pieces of scrap carpeting make a good weed-suppressing mulch to use in pathways between rows. When mulching beneath shrubs and trees, place a sheet of landscape fabric over the soil, then cover it with 3 inches of organic mulch. An edging (a 4- to 6-inch-wide strip of rot-proof material driven into the ground vertically) of brick, stone, or metal will help the mulch stay put, halt invasion by creeping weeds, and make the bed look neat and well groomed.



Organic herbicides. There are several herbicides made from natural ingredients. Those that contain clove oil (eugenol) give the best control of young broadleaf weeds. Products containing acetic acid, often in combination with citric acid, do a good job on young grasses. Some products contain both clove oil and acetic acid, so they are useful for a broad variety of weeds. Soap-based herbicides dehydrate leaves by cutting through their protective layer of cutin. All of these types of organic herbicides work best on young weeds and pose only a temporary setback to well-rooted perennial weeds. To minimize damage to neighboring plants, spray only in dry, still weather. To maximize effectiveness, spray young weeds when temperatures are above 70 degrees F and the sun is shining brightly. Be aware that repeated applications of a product containing acetic acid (which is very strong vinegar) can lower the soil's pH, making it more acidic. <http://www.garden.org/weedlibrary/?q=show&id=2371>

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Design Day with Dottie

Dottie Howatt, NGC Accredited Judge, NGC Flower Show Instructor provided a colorful and informative program on Exhibition Tables at our February Meeting. Some of the designs are shown below.



Exhibition Table Type II



Exhibition Table Type II



Exhibition Table Type I



Capsule Functional Table for one person.

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Exhibition Table Type II



Exhibition Table Type II

Great Gardens Start with a Soil Test!

In agriculture, a **soil test** is the analysis of a soil sample to determine nutrient and contaminant content, composition and other characteristics such as acidity or pH level. Tests are usually performed to measure the expected growth potential of a soil. A Soil test measures fertility, indicates deficiencies that need to be remedied and determines potential toxicities from excessive fertility and inhibitions from the presence of non-essential trace minerals.

Three Good Reasons to Test Your Soil...

- Most soils are deficient in one or more nutrients
- Poorly prepared soil leads to poor growth & plant stress
- Results provide vital information for diagnosing problems

The Maryland Master Gardener Website contains a number of materials to help you do this.

1. **Soil test bags** - Maryland residents may request a bag by calling 800-342-2507 between 8am and 1pm, Monday - Friday or request a bag via the "[Send a Question](#)" section of the Master Gardener website <http://www.hgic.umd.edu/fag/sendquestion.cfm>.. Fill in the requested information and in the description section type "soil test" and your complete name and address. A soil test bag and information sheet will be mailed to you in 5-7 days.
2. **An online video** with instructions on How to collect a soil sample: <http://www.hgic.umd.edu/content/SoilTesting.cfm#Collect>
3. **A list of testing labs**, their cost and what is covered: <http://www.hgic.umd.edu/content/SoilTesting.cfm>