



Backyard Views

The Backyard Gardeners

Summer, 2011

The Backyard Gardeners, Inc. was established in 2007 as a non-profit organization to provide free education to homeowners in the Hampton Roads area on gardening and horticultural practices, designs and techniques in order to encourage conservation of our natural resources, the enjoyment of gardens, garden-related activities and creative garden art.

Calendar of Events

Garden Talks, 7-8:30 pm
Chesapeake Library
298 Cedar Road

June 21

"The Many Faces of Daylilies"
Rich and Rikki Sterrett,
Sterrett Gardens

July 19

"Pests & Diseases in the Garden"
Smithfield Gardens

August 16

"Lawn Care for Everyone"
Doug Spencer,
Lowe's

Upcoming Events

September 10

Organic Workshop
9 am – 3 pm

Free and open to public.
Registration begins July 5.
Check website for more info.
www.thebackyardgardeners.org

September 17

Fall Garden Faire
Chesapeake Central Library
9 am-2:00 pm
Plants, info and education.

Musings from Local Gardening Experts by Walt & Aurie Baldwin (guest contributors)

Pests and diseases in the garden are inevitable, but with some careful planning they can be minimized. In our 35 years of experience in edible gardening in the local area, we've gathered a wealth of knowledge we'd like to share with you on reducing the headaches caused by these annoyances. To begin with, the most important way to minimize pests and diseases in your garden is to start with the best soil available. Healthy soil grows healthy plants which are more disease and pest resistant. We use the Sun-Gro potting mix from Elizabeth City, NC. It contains peanut shells, pine bark, peat moss, vermiculite, perlite and a trace of fertilizer. For more information or to purchase the soil, contact Sun-Gro at 800-334-3311.

Another way to reduce problems is by selecting native plants or disease resistant seeds or plants. This is particularly important in choosing vegetables. Choosing tomato plants with the longest list of letters after the name will help in insuring success. The more letters, the more resistant the plant is to disease. Thus, the plant will have fewer problems and produce better tasting fruit for the entire season. Even my brother listens to this advice!

For animal pests, we use a variety of methods to prevent damage such as fences and netting. The fences can be simple or elaborate depending on your needs and the type of animal you want to keep out of your garden. Bird netting can protect fruits from animal predators and spun bond material can protect young plants from insect damage. However, this bond material needs to be removed as soon as flowers appear and pollination is required.

Because the window for effectively eliminating insect problems is limited and should be based on the specific pest, check with your local extension service to learn the most effective means to solve your particular problem. Since we are the main polluters of the environment, the best option is to start with the most gentle or organic solution first and graduate to stronger solutions if necessary. Because we keep bees, we don't use any chemical sprays. Some environmentally friendly traps like Japanese beetle traps are effective if used appropriately. For the best results, keep the traps 35 feet away from your prized plants toward the main wind direction. When used properly these traps are great!

Gardening is great fun and will be more successful with just a little preparation. Nothing compares to your own home grown produce, so get going!

Mark Your Calendars Now!!!



Bring a bag lunch and join us for an Organic Workshop

Saturday, September 10 from 9 am – 3 pm

Chesapeake Central Library

Registration: 9 am, Speakers: 9:45 am – 1:30 pm

Heather Driscoll, My Sister's Garden-organic lawn care

John Wilson, New Earth Farm-organic vegetable & ornamental gardening

Vendors will be available until **3 pm** with a variety of organic information and products.

Workshop is free and open to the public, but seating is limited and registration is required.

Online registration from July 5-August 19 or until spaces filled.

Check www.thebackyardgardeners.org for more information and registration.

Spotlight on Gardens



Virginia Living Museum Has Gardens, Too! *by Patti McCambridge*

The Virginia Living Museum in Newport News has bald eagles, endangered red wolves and a loggerhead turtle, but what you may not know is that they also have an outdoor boardwalk, specialty gardens and boast the largest native plant collection in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The museum has plants native to the coastal, piedmont and mountain regions of Virginia incorporated into their animal displays.

The museum began in 1966 but was named the Virginia Living Museum in 1987. Over the years it has grown to include over 250 species of animals and accompanying plant collections. Their mission of “connecting people to nature through educational experiences that promote

conservation” is met by the variety of exhibits and hands-on displays through out the museum. They have extensive programming for students, educators and the public that encourage the conservation of natural resources.

The gardens of the Virginia Living Museum include the Conservation, Butterfly and Virginia Gardens and spotlight collections of trees, shrubs, ferns and perennials native to the Commonwealth. The Conservation Garden includes a garden that utilizes native plants and proper gardening techniques to conserve resources and garden environmentally to reduce pollution. The “Living Green House “ is an example of an “earth friendly” home and shows the practical application of a variety of environmentally sound concepts.

The Butterfly Garden is an open landscape, not an enclosed butterfly house, that incorporates over 60 native plants that provide food or nectar for the caterpillars or adults of many native butterflies. Over 200 different plants were planted in 2005 by volunteers. The Virginia Garden highlights the botanical history of the Commonwealth since 1607. From crops to ornamentals and even non-native invasive species, the visitor can trace our Commonwealth’s history through plants.

Consider the Living Museum the next time you want to check out some great gardens!! For more information, directions and hours contact them at (757) 595-1900 or check them out at www.thevlm.org.

Tool Corner *by Gary Bennett*



Gardening Tool with Seven Personalities

The [Ames 7-In-1 Planter's Buddy](#) is a tool that defies logic and contrary to the claims of many multi-function tools, it actually performs all the tasks advertised with ease and efficiency. This tempered steel tool is a weeder, sod cutter, twine cutter, bag opener, ruler, tamper and trowel all in one compact and sturdy tool. The ergonomically designed handle is long enough to hold easily and has a comfortable poly grip. The blade is very sharp and will cut easily through a

variety of materials, so care must be taken when using it.

I just used mine for the first time and can honestly say it's very well made and does everything it says it will. If you have some planting or digging to do, give this tool a try. You won't be disappointed!

Help Us Raise Needed Money!
Bloomin' Bucks
with Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Brent and Becky's Bulbs offers a fundraising project for non-profit groups. If you wish to order from them, click on the logo above and select our group, The Backyard Gardeners, from the list. We will receive a portion of the sales. This a great way for you to help us help you!! For more info on this program, check www.thebackyardgardeners.org.

Garden Hints *by Patty Bennett*

- ✿ To keep plants healthy and prevent spread of disease, sterilize pruners between cuts. Use bleach or disinfectant wipes for an easy no muss cleanup.
- ✿ To keep cut flowers fresh, prepare a solution of equal parts lukewarm water and lemon lime soda. Add a teaspoon of bleach and mix. This solution feeds the flowers and keeps the water clean. For best results, replace every 3-4 days.
- ✿ When onion tops fall over in late July or August it's time to pull the onions. Use immediately or store in an area free from moisture and sun for 2-3 weeks. Then cut off the tops and store in a cool, dry place for future use.

You may request to be added to the newsletter mailing list at www.thebackyardgardeners.org or by emailing gardenguru@thebackyardgardeners.org.



Summer Garden Events Calendar 2011

JUNE

- 1- 30** Norfolk Botanical Gardens-"Bike Night" Every Mon, Wed, Thurs night from 4 – 7 pm , free with garden admission
- 2,9,16, 23** McDonald Garden Center in Virginia Beach "Senses in the Garden" at 5:30 pm
- 4** Clean the Bay Day – Help Clean Virginia's Waterways email ctbd@cbf.org
- 4 & 5** 15th Annual American Indian Festival at Chesapeake City Park
- 6-Sept. 30** Elizabethan Gardens "Behind the Scenes Tour" 1 pm
- 11** Lee Hall Mansion-Newport News 8th Annual Summer Celebration Wine Festival
- 11** Norfolk Botanical Gardens –Beach Garden Tours. Visit the fabulous residential Gardens of Virginia Beach \$65.00 (\$45 for NGB Members)
- 11 and 12** 29th Annual Rogallo Kite Festival at Jockey's Ridge State Park, Nags Head
- 12** Norfolk Botanical Gardens Daylily Society –AHS Daylily Show & TDS Plant Sale in Rose Garden Room
- 16** Hermitage Museum & Gardens "Sunsets on the River" 6-9 pm. Refreshments & Live Music on the Lawn
- 18** Smithfield Gardens Annual Flower Festival
- 18-Sept. 5** Norfolk Botanical Gardens "Get Lost Be Amazed". Navigate through themed mazes all summer long
- 18** Weyanoke Sanctuary Monthly Bird Walk 9 am in West Ghent
- 19** Elizabethan Gardens - "Father's Day Gift and Plant Sale"
- 25** Norfolk Botanical Gardens "March into Spring", 2 mile Family Fitness Walk, 2 -4 pm, free with garden admission (check website to register)
- 30** Hermitage Museum & Gardens "Sunset on the River" 6 –9 pm, refreshments & live music on the lawn

JULY

- 4** Elizabethan Gardens – Fourth of July Plant Sale
- 9** Portsmouth Summer Tasting Tour at Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve for more information call 757-686-8684
- 16** Weyanoke Sanctuary Monthly Bird Walk 9 am in West Ghent
- 16 & 17** McDonald Garden Center- Crepe Myrtle Festival at the Virginia Beach and Chesapeake Locations
- 22-24** Chincoteague Blueberry Festival at the Chincoteague Center on Chincoteague Island
- 23** Portsmouth Early Bird Walk at Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve 8-10 am. For more information call 757-686-8684

AUGUST

- 6** Portsmouth Butterfly and Dragonfly Tour at Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve. For reservations call 757-686-8684.
- 18** Elizabethan Gardens "Virginia Dare's Birthday" Plant Sale
- 20** Weyanoke Sanctuary Monthly Bird Walk 9 am in West Ghent
- 27** Portsmouth Early Bird Walk at Hoffler Creek Wildlife Preserve 8-10 am. Call 757-686-8684.
- 27** Smithfield Gardens "Plant a Fall Vegetable Garden" 10 –11 am

