

The Garden Master News

Newsletter of the Atlantic Master Gardeners Association

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ALL ABOUT VOLUNTEERING !

- By Anita Sulley

Hi Everyone

It's hard to believe April is already here and the end of our year is fast approaching ... at least our Master Gardener year. It's time to count up those Volunteer Hours and submit them. No worries, there is still lots of time to accumulate more hours.

Here's a TIP how can you earn volunteer hours without even leaving your easy chair!

It's easy , tell us about your projects! If you have been working on a project we'd love to hear about it. This will give other members volunteer ideas for their area and you will accumulate even more volunteer hours as well . Just send your information to me:

anitasulley@gmail.com,
(Volunteer Coordinator)

or to: suestuart@accesswave.ca
(Newsletter Editor).

Remember to send pictures too. Share your project experience with us.

We have been keeping track of the hours cumulatively since the beginning and its obvious many of you contribute much more than the minimum requirement of 25 hours per year. We think it's time we recognize our hard working community minded members for their many service hours. So we will be awarding Lapel Pins. When you reach a goal of 200 hours you will receive your first Award Pin. The next Award Level will be for 500 hundred hours of Volunteer work.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- By Heather Connors-Dunphy
AMGA President

Hello AMGA members.... is it spring where you are? I am hopeful that soon the snow will be gone and daffodils and crocuses will emerge. I bet some of you have this going on in your gardens at the moment. It always amazes me how tree peony buds begin to swell with the barest touch of spring sun. Here it has been a hard winter on boxwoods with too much snow load. Rhodos fared well in my garden.. everything else is still sleeping.

Your Executive has had another good meeting. With the help of various members we have pulled together all the documents produced since the birth of the AMGA. This provides great reference as we move forward and reminds us of our roots and the obligations of the organization. We also want to have a audit or review of the books of account. These two things are fundamental to what the organizational press calls "good governance". If any of you know someone who might do this financial review, please let me or Johanne, our Treasurer, know.

We are excited about the events planned around our annual get together at the AGM and Summer School. This is really our community experience. We have added some events which we hope you

will all enjoy. These include a plant exchange at the AGM and a sponsored luncheon for Level I and II Summer School participants.

Graduation, certification and recertification will be one event, there will be a cash bar and finger food. We are adding a recognition of hours volunteered piece to the event this year.

Speaking about volunteering.. one of the topics at Summer School this year is partnerships. This is one place where I am convinced that MGs can make a huge contribution. We'd welcome your articles in the newsletter or on the web or Facebook about your experiences with school and community gardens, environmental and preservation groups, parks, hospital and seniors' gardens etc.

I was just looking on the NSAGC site. I see the convention is the end of May and first couple of days of June. Here in NB the Fundy Gardeners' annual event is May 4.. see more details at <http://fundygardeners.blogspot.ca/p/garden-of-dreams-may.html>. There are many, many plant sales coming up, enough for us all to indulge our need for green. Several of us will be putting up the MG booths at plant sales in Rexton and in Fredericton in May.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 2

I am also participating in a garden event for the Connaught St. Elementary School in May.



Teddy bear sunflower seedlings

My husband and I are holding a “wood in the garden” workshop here, for AMGA members, on September 7. Each participant will build and take home a small garden bench and an obelisk. More details on this will be available at Summer School. My husband is the woodworker.. I am the organizer!

The robins are calling.... more later...

Heather

AMGA SUMMER SCHOOL LUNCHEON MENU "GROWING & COOKING WITH HERBS"

Tomato Salad w/ Fresh Mozzarella,
Watermelon and Fresh Mint

Pan Seared Tarragon Mustard
Boneless Breast of Chicken

Oven Roasted Mini Rosemary Potatoes

Roasted Root Vegetables

Strawberries w/Lemon Sugar & Lavender Syrup
w/ Lavender Shortbread Cookie

From the Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie University

-by Joy Galloway-Jones

Greetings to the Master Gardeners from the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus!

Spring brings many gifts of hope and promise. I hope that you are all happily getting reacquainted with the earth and soil, and nurturing your plants as they grow and mature.

Our on-campus Summer School will be here before we know it. Level II sessions this year include: Growing, Harvesting and Cooking with Herbs, how to protect yourself from Lyme disease, Sustainable Gardens, and Supporting Pollinators and Other Useful Insects. As requested, the multiple forms have been combined into one, are fillable and available online. If you haven't already registered, sign up now.

Please note that the online courses will be closed as of June 30th to allow for system clean up and upgrades. Our next intake for the courses will be in October. For those who miss that deadline, there will be an additional opportunity to register the week of November 15th, and the final registration for the 2013-2014 Academic Year will take place in February. These dates will allow all

intakes a six month timeline to complete the course.

Finally, I would like to formally announce that our Continuing and Distance Education unit is now *Extended Learning*. Our new tagline is: *Extended Learning extends research, learning, and practice for agriculture and for life*. If you would like to know more about this transition, please see our new website at <http://www.dal.ca/faculty/agriculture/extended-learning.html>.

May the weather be favourable and your gardens abundant; and I hope to meet many of you in July.



AMGA NEWS

Favorite Plants Template

This template is intended to guide you, not to dictate what and how you write. Sharing the information asked for in the template helps others learn more about your plant, then decide if it could be part of their garden.

Common Name	Botanical Name
Family	Hardiness zone

Description of why you think the plant is worthwhile

Growing conditions required by the plant – light, soil, moisture, pH, fertility

How to propagate it, and how often it should be divided (if applicable).

Special characteristics (range of colours, available cultivars, deer resistant, fragrant, good for cooking, etc)

Atlantic Master Gardeners Association AGM Plant Exchange

We all have something special in our gardens, and sometimes we have enough of it to share a bit. At this year's AGM, we will be having a plant exchange. Bring one and get one – or bring two and get two! If you don't have a plant to bring, there will be extras and you'll get a plant anyway! It would be a shame to miss it – especially since the whole event is going to be coupled with a dinner at Truro's Saltscapes restaurant. Come one, come all – and share in a bit of fun!

Carol D. Goodwin
Associate Professor
Faculty of Agriculture
Dalhousie University



Scattered Seeds

- By Carol Goodwin

I mentioned to someone that winter seemed to have flown by. She gave me 'the look' and said it had been the longest one yet! We all perceive things differently, something I have to keep reminding myself of when I think 'what?' in response to someone else's comments. I must be reaching the same stage of maturity as many of the garden writers. Several of my recent magazines contained articles from regular contributors which revealed what they really thought about colour themed gardens, changes in garden styles and trends, and the new ways we use our outdoor spaces. The general idea was that they were tired of doing the 'in thing' and from now on were going to garden for their own soul. One of them suggested her garden would, from this point forward, cheer her up by looking like a box of Smarties - all colours mixed together in random places. This snapped me out of my pre-sleep quiet place and had me wondering whether we garden for ourselves or someone else. Something to think about!

I had another epiphany. I was in the audience for a Talking with Artists evening at the Truro Marigold Centre. Joy Laking was musing on her preference for landscape scenes in her paintings, which often contain seascapes. She just happened to mention how we are shaped, heart and soul, by the landscapes of our youth.

She had grown up by the water and felt most at peace there. I felt the thrill of discovery! I mean yes, I knew that, but I suddenly understood it, and I'll always be grateful to her for opening my eyes. I've always been a tree person, and love the forest. When I purchased my house in Truro, I bought it because it had a partially wooded back yard. I did my graduate research in urban forestry and was hired to teach arboriculture. I grew up in the Dingle Park in Halifax. As children, we explored all of the paths, animal trails, and treasures to be found in the forest that made up the bulk of the park. There's no question, I have a tree spirit.

Of course, this led me to contemplate my current pet peeve in a new light. Kids need to play outdoors. In fields, by shores, in parks and woodlands. OUTSIDE. I've been a bit freaked out by the 'sit in front of the TV or computer' culture that seems to predominate our society. I think those among the Master Gardener group who enjoy kids should consider getting involved with a school, a cub or scout pack, brownies or guides, or where ever we can engage them in the outdoors. I feel a responsibility to help them prepare for their future as stewards of the earth. Many of them are afraid to play outside because it's such a foreign place - the ick factor is overwhelming! So please think about it - the possibilities are endless... netting insects, planting a small garden, climbing a tree....

Winter is fighting the last fight for this year. It always makes me philosophical.



Notes From the Secretary

- by Bonnie Snow



I must apologize for missing the December Newsletter. Your Atlantic Master Gardener Association Executive has been very busy and I will try to bring you up to date.

We are putting together an exciting agenda for the AGM in July. This will be held at Saltscapes Restaurant and will include a members' plant exchange. More specific information will be coming to you. Topics for Level II Summer School include herbs, sustainable gardens, pollinators and useful insects to name a few. Level I and II participants will have the opportunity to lunch together on Thursday. This will also be the first year to recognize the volunteer efforts of our Master Gardeners with an award pin. Keep track of all your hours and report them to Anita Sulley, your Volunteer Coordinator. For those of you who may not be able to attend the full two days of Summer School, we are looking into the possibility of half-day registration.

Master Gardener students are being made aware of other Master Gardeners in their area who may

be able to offer support and answer questions.

I know how much I appreciated the support, especially with project assignments.

Thanks to Lynn Brooks for planning the Garden Trip to Maine. Sadly, it will not be happening due to lack of participants. David Orr-Laycock's Open Garden proposal received a general interest response from members but no commitment to participate this year. It is certainly something to think about for the future as we are always eager to visit the gardens of fellow members.

The possibility of Advanced Master Gardener Training is still being explored. If you check other Master Gardener websites you will see a sample of the horticulture related topics covered. Conservation, ecology, native plants, sustainable landscaping, soils are a few of the courses offered elsewhere. If this is something that interests you as a member of the AMGA let us know.

Roger LeDrew will be attending the Canadian Master Gardener Convention in Huntsville. He will be taking part in a panel discussion and we will look forward to reading a report on his experience there. Sherry Chaisson will be presenting a document on the direction in which the AMGA is going.

Fredericton. This will take place September 7th and participants will complete a garden bench

Notes From the Secretary

(Continued from page 7)

Our President, Heather Connors-Dunphy will be hosting a workshop at her home in Fredericton. This will take place September 7th and participants will complete a garden bench and an obelisk. How great is that! More info to follow.

Master Gardeners will be participating in a Plant Sale at the Fredericton Botanical Gardens. Johanne Robertson, your Treasurer, will also have a booth at the Plant Sale in Rexton on May 18th.

Don't forget AMGA has a website, blog, Facebook site and twitter account. Our map is being updated to indicate where members are located in the Atlantic Region. There are also several new Plant Descriptions if you are looking for ideas for your garden. Carol Goodwin is going to be adding a template or suggested format to the website to make it easier to compose your description.

As AMGA members we are spread all over the Atlantic region, Quebec and Ontario. Communication and staying connected are important goals for us. Please feel free to contact any of the executive with your suggestions or concerns.

Bonnie Snow
Secretary
AMGA



Be A PlantWatch Partner !

- by Sue Stuart

PlantWatch is part of the national NatureWatch series of volunteer monitoring programs designed to help identify ecological changes that may be affecting our environment. It's goal is to encourage Canadians to get involved in helping scientists discover how, and why, our natural environment is changing.

The Program involves recording flowering times for selected plant species and reporting these dates to researchers through the Internet or by mail.

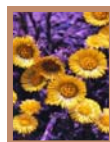
Who better to be a part of this important volunteer work than Master Gardeners!

The following website should provide the information you need to get involved in this worthwhile event:

http://www.naturewatch.ca/english/plantwatch/how_to_plantwatch.html

We all look forward to seeing the first blooms of the season!

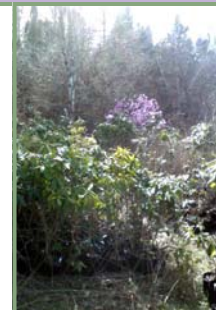
By recording our observations we are actively assisting in protecting our environment. By encouraging and assisting other adults as well as children to get involved we are helping to educate the public on the importance of protecting our environment.





REMEMBERING DIANA STEELE & BAYPORT PLANT FARM

- by Diana Smith



Diana Steele passed away on March 12, 2013.



When I came to Halifax a decade ago a third of my Toronto garden came with me - this was courtesy of my dad, who gladly potted up any plant I wanted and brought it with him in a U-Haul, arriving just in time to sink my little ones into the ground before winter. The familiar would assuage my grief at leaving all that I knew, and I came to realize that the great plant extrication of 2002 was an act of pure love. As gardeners know, plants are more than their biology and those who care for them more than mere stewards. Plants are personal.

The following spring I was eager to start our new garden when I realized I hadn't a clue about where to find, as I like to call them, "interesting plants". Local offerings paled in comparison to those back home and it wasn't until I discovered Jodi DeLong's blog (www.blommingwriter.blogspot.ca), complete with a "Top Ten Nurseries" list that I got it - you had to drive around the province to get the good stuff. So, armed with the list, off I went.

When I first arrived at Bayport Plant Farm, situated on the south shore near Lunenburg, it was immediately apparent that I had stumbled upon something special...no gimmicks or accoutrements, only plants, wondrous and unique, displayed in their natural setting. This is it, I thought, *this is*

what I've been looking for. There were rhododendrons, chamaecyparis, magnolias, and other rare and unusual ericaceous beauties everywhere you looked. And the front section was just the beginning!

Captain Richard (Dick) Steele created Bayport in 1973. His bio, from an episode of the "Recreating Eden" television series, reads: "After surviving two major wars as a Naval Officer, Steele rediscovered the beauty and serenity of earth through one of the world's oldest plants - the Rhododendron. Now recognized as one of the great plant breeders in North America, Steele not only transformed Bayport Farm and nursery into a magnificent Rhododendron forest, he used the power and beauty of plants to transform lives." (<http://www.recreatingeden.com/index.php?pid=8&season=02&episode=14>)

His great contribution was in breeding rhododendrons hardy enough for our Eastern Canadian climate. He passed away in 2010 and while I never met this wonderful man I did, in recent years, have the pleasure of meeting his daughter, Diana. She was Captain Steele's invaluable right hand in hybridizing rhododendrons, caring for Bayport's many plants, and running the business.

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Remembering Diana Steele & Bayport Plant Farm

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My visits to Bayport Plant Farm were such a treat, made all the more special by the presence of Diana who always took the time to chat, take a turn around the grounds, and introduce me to new and exquisite cultivars that she was passionate about. Funny, forthright, and enthusiastic, she encouraged exploration and made you feel like you were discovering things together. I think plants were personal for her too. Her knowledge of botanical nomenclature and plant taxonomy never ceased to amaze me - it was evident that she was in her element.

One day last spring while friends were busy digging up some vintage Pieris, she and I wandered up to the rhododendron hybrids. After several minutes of poking around she became troubled by the fact that she couldn't locate her namesake, "Diana Steele", the rhodie that her father hybridized and named after her. So we searched... and searched...and after 10 minutes I spotted it. Well isn't this funny, I thought. Here's Diana, helping Diana, find Diana. A finer day I couldn't have imagined. I feel so blessed to have known this brilliant plantswoman and will treasure the knowledge she imparted as well as the beautiful ericaceous plants now in my garden, courtesy of Bayport and the woman who made it magical.

I don't know what will happen to Bayport Plant

Farm or it's current residents, most rooted in place, now that Diana's not there to tend them...

Spider
Web



Like many other gardeners in this province, I'm glad to keep a little piece of Bayport protected in my garden and in my heart, another act of love from one gardener to another.

Links:

<http://bloomingwriter.blogspot.ca/2013/03/farewell-fellow-plant-addict.html#more>

- read Jodi DeLong's very moving tribute to her longtime friend and learn about "Steele's Legacy"

<http://www.recreatingeden.com/index.php?pid=8&season=02&episode=14>

-read about Captain Dick Steele

[http://www.atlanticrhodo.org/hybrids/Steele/Diana Steele Main Tribute.html](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org/hybrids/Steele/Diana_Steele_Main_Tribute.html)

-the Diana Steele Tribute Page, from the Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society

To leave your own words of tribute to Diana Steele, please e-mail:

atlanticrhodo@gmail.com

Remembering Diana Steele & Bayport Plant Farm

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Rhodie
Buds



Magnolia
Fruit



Red Bark
Tree

2013 AMGA EVENTS TO REMEMBER

- **June 30** - Deadline for submission of Volunteer Hours -See "Members page" : http://www.atlanticmastergardeners.ca/html/members_page.html
- **July 8-12** - Level 1 Summer School
- **July 11-12** - Level 11 Summer School
 - AGM - Saltscapes Restaurant, Truro (Meeting, Dinner & bring plants for Plant Exchange)
 - Graduation, Certification and Award Presentation
- **September 7** - "Wood in the Garden" workshop - Fredericton, NB
- **September 7-14** - International Master Gardener Conference & Cruise <http://www.uaex.edu/imgc2013/default.htm>
- If you have a Community Event or a location in your Community that we could coordinate as an AGM Workshop or Get-Together for AMGA members please contact **Bonnie Snow**, Secretary at: bonniesnow1649@gmail.com

FUTURE ROLE OF MASTER GARDENERS

ATLANTIC MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

- by Heather Connors Dunphy

Part of the program at the Canadian Master Gardener Meeting, April 2013 was a Panel Discussion at the Future Role of Master Gardeners. I wrote this document to help AMGA members participate in this discussion.

A few notes/observations about the Atlantic Master Gardener Program

The learning part of the program was developed by and is delivered by Faculty of Agriculture of Dalhousie University, FA Dal (formerly the Nova Scotia Agricultural College). The Virginia Master Gardener structure and formation was a key input to the program. The learning part of the program was launched 2004; the first group graduated in 2007. Since the beginning of the program more than 160 individuals have graduated. The MGOI (Master Gardeners of Ontario, Inc.) recognized the learning program as fitting its requirements in 2007.

The certification part of the program is the responsibility of the Atlantic Master Gardeners' Association (AMGA). The AMGA came into existence in 2007 as a not-for-profit corporation. Its goals are the certification of MGs and the "care and feeding" of those who have graduated from the program. It seeks to link an interested public to MGs in the Atlantic provinces.

It certified the first MGs in 2007. Some members have recorded well over 500 hours of MG volunteer work.

Due to geography of the four Atlantic provinces, the AMGA founders recognized that MGs would need to be autonomous in their areas, that it would take a period of time and a concentration of MGs for a chapter structure to emerge, and that to create an MG "community" would require opportunities for members to get together and combine learning experiences with fellowship opportunities. One such opportunity occurs in July each year when groups of Level I and Graduate (Level II) MGs get together at FA Dal in Truro for MG Summer School, MG Graduation and Certification Celebrations and the Annual General Meeting of the AMGA. This year the AMGA is sponsoring a "mixer" luncheon as another opportunity for the groups to get together.

The Future

The MG program has a steady enrollment level. Membership in the AMGA remains at steady levels too. We have recently been interacting with MG students via the FA Dal software (Moodle) that delivers the on-line courses. We are trying to make the transition from student to certified MG more understandable and attractive to the students.

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FUTURE ROLE OF MASTER GARDENERS ATLANTIC MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

(Continued from page 12)

The AMGA Executive is planning and seeking member input to scope out the next levels of learning. This will likely involve advanced MG I learning opportunities in areas such as landscape design, soil and water conservation or integrated pest management. There is also a desire among members for more hands-on experiences of a “train the trainer” nature. Topics such as presentation skills, use of social media and technology for use in presentations are also of interest. These new learning experiences may be developed with FA Dal, or by the AMGA itself, or with other partners or MG groups.

AMGA members are a diverse group. There are life long learners, those who want to help gardeners and gardens in their communities and those who want the learning to help them to be better gardeners at home.

Atlantic Canada faces a reduction in the numbers of volunteers coming forward. We all have to be ambassadors of research-based agricultural practices which are kind to the environment. There are many many sources of information on the web and elsewhere and we have to do our part to have the voice of this research heard. With things like the slow food movement and the 100 mile challenge and the notion of growing a vegetable garden gaining traction, we need to be involved.

Our best opportunity is to partner with other like -minded groups to bring the message of

audiences. Children and young families are key target audiences for our messages.

Given the explosion of interest in the environment, growing food and gardening, there is surely a role for MGs. We need to seize these opportunities.

It may be reasonable at some point to form a Pan-Canadian MG organization. Given that the relationship between local agricultural representatives and MGs does not exist in the Atlantic Provinces, perhaps we need to band together to get some of these messages out.

There have been some discussions about having a common learning requirement for MGs across the country. Different areas have different certification practices as well. The AMGA has had limited experience certifying MGs who have done their course work and volunteered in other Canadian provinces.

In a subsequent issue of the Newsletter you will see some notes and observations about the Canadian Master Gardener meeting.