



THE DIRT

Harrison County Master Gardeners

November 2009

Harrison County MGs,

By the time you receive this newsletter, it will almost be time for your annual slice of pumpkin pie! In keeping with this theme, we have two events this month that I am sure that MGs will enjoy. The first is our MG Bean Dinner & Flea Market fundraiser at the 4-H Center on Saturday. Be sure to come out to this event and enjoy a pre-holiday feast of beans and cornbread. While you are at it, stop by the flea market for some holiday bargains too.

Also a timely event is our monthly training program. Dr. Lewis Jett will be filling us in on the latest information regarding growing pumpkins and squash.

It is my understanding that we have covered the cost of our cookbook publication and are now ready to make a little profit. Be sure to turn in your monies from the sale of our MG cookbooks to Sara Howe. While you are at it sell a few more to enhance our profits. They would make a great stocking stuffer for the holidays.

Larry G. Campbell

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pumpkin Program.....	1
Shiitake Program.....	2
Daffodil Report	2
Calendar of Events	2
Apple History	3
Officers.....	3

11/19 MG Program on Growing Pumpkins

The November monthly meeting of the Harrison County Master Association will include a program on the production of squash & pumpkins. Dr. Lewis Jett, WVUES Commercial Horticulture Specialist, will be the presenter. Dr. Jett will discuss various production issues such as varieties, diseases, and marketing. All MGs are encouraged to attend this informative program.

Grow Your Own Shiitake Mushrooms

The WVU-Doddridge County Extension Office and the WV Woodland Owners Association will be sponsoring a workshop on the production of shiitake mushrooms. The workshop will be held on November 16th at 6:30 p.m. in West Union, Doddridge County, in the WVU Extension Office upstairs meeting area.

The class will be taught by mushroom expert, Paul Goland, and Dr. Dave McGill. Workshop participants will be able to inoculate and take home their own shiitake mushroom log.

Registration is \$10 to cover the cost of supplies used in the workshop. Pre-registration is required and you can pay at the door. To register, contact the Doddridge County Extension Office at 304-873-1801 or Alexandria.Straight@mail.wvu.edu.

Alice Foglesong and Daffodils

Alice and Howard Foglesong came to the September Harrison County Master Gardeners meeting so that Alice could present her expertise on daffodils, the longest lasting spring flower. Alice, as testified by a vendor at the Clarksburg Farmers' market, "Goes all over the world showing her daffodils. She is really something!" Because a breakdown in communications prevented her having a lap top, Alice could not show her presentation photos, causing her to improvise by distributing the stack of "Brent and Becky's Bulbs" catalogs she had requested for the meeting. With the Master Gardeners sharing the catalogs, Alice told what page to turn to and went right on with her presentation, giving valuable information concerning daffodils.

Alice's recommendations:

Lawn arrangement:

Plant daffodils in clumps rather than rows to make a better showing of the flowers.

Plant various varieties so that daffodils show for six to eight weeks.

Daffodils show well on a slope or at the top of a wall, but need plenty of sun.

Care and maintenance:

Plant daffodils in the fall when the ground is cool, allowing the roots to grow in the winter and be ready to flower in the spring.

Plant three times as deep as the height of the bulb. The deeper, the slower the growth – that is good. Planting shallower will allow them to multiply faster, but not flower as prettily.

To prepare ground for planting, dig or till a place; set some dirt aside; add low nitrogen fertilizer; cover with dirt; plant bulbs six inches apart; then cover with remaining dirt.

Daffodils take little maintenance, but need enough water and low nitrogen fertilizer added after they bloom.

After about three years, daffodils may be separated and replanted in multiples of the original bulbs.

Alice discussed the classifications of daffodils, how they are classified, how to use classification to find the bulb that most pleases particular gardeners and serves their particular purposes. MG members learned a great deal from Alice and urged her to come back, promising to have the necessary equipment on hand when she did.

Sharon Pierce
MG 2009 Class

Calendar of Events

November 14: WVMG 2010 bean dinner & Flea Market fundraiser 11:00-4:00 p.m. at the Harrison County 4-H Center. Cost of dinner is \$6.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under 10. All you can eat beans, cornbread, coleslaw, desert and a drink both dining in and carry out.

November 16: Shiitake mushroom workshop at WVU-Doddrige Co. Extension Office in West Union. (See details page 1.)

November 19: Monthly MG meeting at the 4-H Center at 6:30 p.m. **Note:** seasonal change to third Thursday from normal fourth Thursday schedule. Program by Dr. Lewis Jett on growing squash & pumpkins.

November 20: WVMG 2010 cookbook sale at Meadowbrook Mall from 1:00-8:00 p.m.

November 27: Cut back garden mums (Garden Calendar).

December 8: HCMG Christmas party at the Harrison County 4-H Center. **Note:** This is a change from the normal date due to a scheduling conflict with the 4-H Center.

Do You Know Your Apple History?

Second only to the banana, the apple is one of the most popular fruits in the U.S. However, did you know that the apple is not native to America? Like the European honeybee, the domesticated apple was brought over to this country by the colonists. Other than the wild crab apple, the apple as we know it today did not exist in America.

So where did the apple originate? It seems that its origins can be traced to Kazakhstan, a region in the former Soviet Union. Today in Kazakhstan, researchers are finding a rich diversity of apple trees. In this region, apple trees can be found growing sixty feet tall and as large as oak trees. There is a wide variety of leaf shapes and growth habits found among these wild apples. The fruit can range from the size of a berry to a softball. Its taste varies from sweet, bitter, nutty, and even starchy like a potato. Red, green, black, and blue are some of the colors exhibited by these native apples.

Recently, seeds have been collected from these wild apples to improve the genetic diversity of our domesticated apples. The domestic apples popular today are from grafted stock and have limited genetic diversity. While the pests of apples have continued to evolve, our grafted stock has not, making them more vulnerable to pests. It is hoped that the introduction of the wild stock will help to improve the pest resistance of our popular apples.

According to Michael Pollan in his book, *The Botany of Desire*, most of the early apples in this country were grown from seed thanks in part to John Chapman, "Johnny Appleseed". Since apples grown from seed do not produce exact replicas of the original tree, these early seedlings provided a rich diversity of apple stock in the initial settlement of this country. Most of these trees produced sour tasting apples called "spitters". Though they were not grown for their taste, they were very popular for making cider. Cider made by the colonists was essentially an alcoholic beverage and considered to be an important drink for that era. John Chapman reportedly used the seed from cider mash as a source for his apple seedlings.

Over the years apples were developed more for their sweetness and for eating out of hand rather than for cider. This was partly in response to early prohibition efforts. The old saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" was part of a late nineteenth century marketing ploy to keep the apple in favor with the public as a healthy food versus its use as an alcoholic beverage.

As you eat your "apple a day" think of both its unique origin and its journey from beverage to food for the table.

Larry G. Campbell

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- President:** Paul Howe
2 Pheasant Ridge Rd
Bridgeport, WV 26330
Phone: 624-6967
- Vice President:** Nelson (Butch) Robinson
RR 2, Box 118B
Bridgeport, WV 26330
Phone: 592-1697
- Secretary:** Nancy Stewart
73 Crystal Lake
West Union, WV 26456
Phone: 873-2929
- Treasurer:** Sara Zannino
RR 2, Box 620A
Clarksburg, WV 26301
Phone: 623-3200

STATE BOARD SECRETARY

Donna Straley
RR 1, Box 198
Lost Creek, WV 26385
Ph: 745-4906