



Dutchess Dirt

A gardening newsletter from:



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Dutchess County

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CCEDC MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2014 By Joyce Tomaselli, Community Horticulture Educator

CCEDC's Community Horticulture programs deliver education through lectures and classes, showcase gardening best practices with the demonstration gardens at our offices in Millbrook, and provide identification and diagnostic services for county residents. All this would not be possible without our CCEDC Master Gardener volunteers.

The designation of "Master Gardener" is national. Formal training is required to become an MG. In order to remain an active MG volunteer, individuals must meet yearly requirements of hours of community service, continuing education and meeting attendance.

CCE Dutchess County was the first county in New York State to institute the Master Gardener program. One of the MGs from the class of 1984 and a few from the 1990's are still very active MG volunteers in Dutchess County.

MG Training occurs every 2 years, and just completed for 2014. Training is rigorous, with formal lectures, quizzes, a public presentation assignment, and a final exam. But it's fun too!



Lecturers came from as far away as Ithaca, Vermont and Long Island, and shared their vast experience on topics like Botany, Polyculture, Wildlife, Lawn Care, Plant Diseases, Tree Fruits

and Berries. Experts from counties nearby taught Insect Identification, Woody Plants and Pruning. Local county horticultural educators covered Soils, Compost, Weeds, Structural Pests, Garden Design, Invasive Species, Diagnostics and Climate Change. Fellow MG volunteers taught Vegetables, Seed and Plant Propagation and Native Species. Students enjoyed hands-on exercises with botany, weed and insect identification, and garden design.

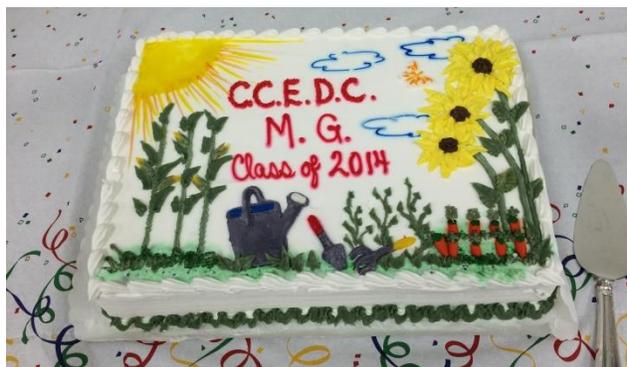
Did I mention that this was fun? It was!



This year's trainees were enthusiastic attendees and diligent with their homework, admitting it had been years since their last quiz! All have many years of gardening experience, but confirmed they learned more each week. Three have recently moved back to New York from other states (Texas, California and Michigan); two to homes with unique established gardens so they are also busy identifying plants and learning about our local hardiness zones and weather patterns.

The class presentations gave an indication of the wonderful breadth of interest and knowledge the new volunteers bring to our community:

- "So, What Do You Do With Quince?"
- "*Mespilus germanica*, The Medlar Tree"
- "Art in the Garden"
- "Big Bulbs, Small Bulbs, Spring Bulbs, Fall Bulbs and all Bulbs In Between"
- "When the Voles Come Marching In"
- "Winter Sowing"
- "Hellebores"
- "Olfactory Herbs – Can You ID Me?"
- "Gardening in the Shade"
- "Fungi's Can Grow Shitakes"



Wednesday's Graduation Day for the MG Class of 2014 was celebrated with a luncheon and cake. CCEDC active MG volunteers happily welcomed the new class and started talking about volunteer opportunities (especially next year's Plant Sale, May 15 & 16).

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

By Mary Nisley, Master Gardener Volunteer

The old aphorism 'knowledge is power' applies to gardening as well as most other endeavors. The knowledgeable gardener knows the conditions favored by each variety and she strives to provide the appropriate conditions. In return, the gardener is rewarded with more blossoms and bigger, better harvests.

The knowledgeable gardener knows what problems to expect and works to prevent the problems or to stop them early, before they become major problems.

Would you like to become a more knowledgeable vegetable gardener? Please join me when I teach **Vegetable Gardening A-Z on Friday evenings, 6:30-9:00, February 20-March 20, 2015** at the Cooperative Extension.

The detailed course description is available at ccedutchess.org/gardening.

Register by calling Nancy at the Cooperative Extension 845-677-8223 ext. 115. The course fee of \$95 may be paid by credit card or check.

What better way to pass the cold, dreary days of late winter than by improving your 2015 vegetable garden?

MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE GIFT CERTIFICATES

A Great Holiday Gift Idea for Gardeners!

Gift certificates are now available for our Master Gardener Plant Sale on May 15 & 16, 2015. Our plant sale features a wonderful selection of healthy annuals (flowering and foliage), perennials, vegetables and herbs. All plants are grown by our Master Gardener volunteers. We offer personal service! Volunteers will be available during the plant sale to answer gardening questions, to help make plant selections and to help bring plants to cars if needed.



These certificates are a welcome gift for any gardener! Certificates may be purchased for any amount and are not redeemable for cash.



To purchase a Master Gardener Plant Sale gift certificate, please contact Nancy Halas by e-mail nh26@cornell.edu or by calling 845-677-8223 x 115. (Please contact Nancy before stopping by our office). Credit cards, checks and cash accepted.

P.S. The cuttings are already started and growing quite nicely!

WEB SITES TO VISIT

- [Cornell Storage Guidelines For Fruits & Vegetables](#)
- [Winter Storage of Geranium, Canna, Gladiolus, Caladium and Begonia](#)
- [About Birds & Bird Feeding](#)
- [Plant a Peck of Pickled Paperwhites](#)
- [Hardy Kiwi Fruit Cornell Fact Sheet](#)
- [Dutchess County Christmas Tree Directory](#)

PLANT ID QUIZ



Last month's clue was:

This is another vine originally planted for its glossy leaves, which has been classified as invasive in a neighboring state. It has yummy fruit in fall. You can purchase fruit from a non-hardy variety of the vine in most grocery stores.

Answer:

This is a hardy Kiwi vine, *Actinidia arguta*, which produces small delicious fruit (about the size of a large red grape). It tastes just like the Kiwi you find in the store, *Actinidia chinensis*, but its skin is not fuzzy. It is tolerant of our zone 5 winters, but can suffer with late spring frosts. It is a dioecious plant – both male and female vines must be planted to produce fruit.

This poor confused plant was photographed on November 14. If you saw it growing at its normal time, you would probably recognize it. Do you know what it is?



***Need Soil pH Testing? Need Lawn or Plant Diagnosis?
Have any gardening questions?***

The Horticulture Hotline, (845) 677-5067 is closed for the season. Samples for identification or diagnosis can be submitted all year long. Visit our [Horticulture Diagnostic Lab](#) website for reliable resources and information on our services.

Learn more about CCEDC and its activities. Subscribe to our new monthly E-newsletter. Text CCEDC to 22828 to get started, or email Nina Doyle at nm62@cornell.edu

HELP SPREAD THE DIRT! Please forward a copy to anyone you think might be interested. To be added or removed from our e-mail list, or submit upcoming gardening events, contact Nancy Halas at nh26@cornell.edu, www.ccedutchess.org.



Websites mentioned in Dutchess Dirt are provided as a courtesy to our readers. Mention of these websites does not imply endorsement by Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension or by the author.

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