

DELMARVA ALMANAC

April 2009

Between The Shore Lines

Walk Gently On Delmarva

By Dana Kester-McCabe

Winter is finally over and it is time to get outside as much as possible! Temperatures and colors are warming up. Many local trees have red buds giving the country side a rosy glow.

April is one of the best times to be here on the Shore. As we head outdoors, just a quick look around reminds us to... "Love Our Mother." You've probably seen that bumper sticker reminding us to care about the earth.

Of course my own mother is much on my mind because she passed away recently at the end of a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. She taught me how to walk gently on the earth. With Earth Day coming up on April 22nd, it occurred to me that those basic lessons which our mothers teach us are all we really need to know to take better care of our planet. Pick up after yourself. Learn your lessons well. Appreciate what you have been given.

It shouldn't be that hard to pick up after ourselves. But, nestled in among nature's treasures are evidences of our carelessness. It really is sad to see how much trash is on our beaches and roadsides. Tracks are left by every creature. We may rationalize our own as the necessary consequence of our success as a species.

But our prosperity should not be an excuse to treat our world badly. Sometimes it is amazing how our human world is intertwined with the natural world. Our neighbors do their best to adapt to what we humans have done to the place. Our continued education about our planet is required if we are all to survive.

Here on Delmarva we have been given amazing gifts in the richness of the land and waters around us. We have also been given the great gift of each other. Among us are many fine groups dedicated to continuing the work of our mothers: reminding us to pick up after our selves, to keep learning about our world, and to appreciate all that we have been given.

So this Earth Day join your neighbors - human and otherwise - walking gently on Delmarva and remembering what our Mother's have taught us.

Delaware Environmental Groups

Delaware Audubon Society - <http://www.delawareaudubon.org>

Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, Inc. - <http://www.inlandbays.org>

Delaware Native Plant Society - <http://www.delawarenativeplants.org>

Delaware Nature Society - <http://www.delawarenaturesociety.org>

Delaware River Keeper Network - <http://www.delawariverkeeper.org>

Delaware Wild Lands, Inc. - <http://www.delawarewildlands.org>

Friends of Prime Hook NWR - <http://www.friendsofprimehook.org>

Friends of White Clay Creek State Park - <http://www.whiteclayfriends.org>

Friends of Wilmington Parks - <http://www.brandywinepark.org>

Green Delaware - <http://www.greendel.org>

Jean Ellen Dupont Audubon Sanctuary - http://www.audubonmddc.org/centers_JEDS.html

Nature Conservancy of Delaware - <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/delaware/>

Partnership for the Delaware Estuary - <http://www.delawareestuary.org>

Rehoboth Bay Foundation - <http://www.rbsa.org>

Sierra Club - Delaware Chapter - <http://delaware.sierraclub.org>

Sussex County - Citizens Coalition, Inc. - <http://www.citizenscoalition.net>

Sussex County Land Trust - <http://www.sclandtrust.org>

Thank You Delaware Bay Program - <http://www.tydb.org>

White Clay Watershed Association - <http://home.ccil.org/~wcwa/>

Maryland Environmental Groups

Adkins Arboretum - <http://www.adkinsarboretum.org>

Assateague Coastal Trust - <http://www.actforbays.org>

Chesapeake Audubon Society - <http://www.chesapeakeaudubon.org>

Chesapeake Bay Foundation - <http://www.cbf.org>

The Chester River Association - <http://www.chesterriverassociation.org>

The Choptank River Heritage Center <http://www.riverheritage.org>

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy - <http://www.eslc.org>

Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge - <http://www.friendsofblackwater.org/>

Lower Shore Land Trust - <http://www.lowershorelandtrust.org>

Maryland Coastal Bays Program - <http://www.mcbp@mdcoastalbays.org>

Maryland Conservation Council - <http://www.marylandconservationcouncil.net>

Maryland Environmental Trust - <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/met/>

Maryland Native Plant Society - <http://mdflora.org>

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance - <http://www.nanticokeriver.org>

Nature Conservancy of Maryland - <http://www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/maryland/>

Sassafras River Association - <http://www.sassafrasriver.org>

Wicomico Environmental Trust - <http://www.wicomicoenvironment.org>

Virginia Environmental Groups

Coastal Conservation Association Virginia - <http://www.ccavirginia.org>

Citizens For A Better Eastern Shore - <http://www.cbes.org>

Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper - <http://www.shorekeeper.org>

Nature Conservancy of Virginia - <http://www.nature.org/wherework/northamerica/states/virginia/>

The Garden Of Good Living

Let The Gardening Begin!

by Pat Hendrickson

If you're like me, you've been bit by the spring bug and want to plant annuals right now. Pansies and violas will do just fine, but we still have cold nights ahead and a few more windy weeks at the beach. So for anything else, wait until at least April 15 so your annuals will have a better chance of surviving until summer. AND there are still chores to do!

1. Mow or cut back Liriope to about 5", being careful not to cut any new growth.
2. Divide perennials once they've got foliage at least a couple of inches tall.
3. Deadhead spring-blooming bulbs to give energy back to the roots for next year's growth
4. Clear out the debris and muck from your pond or water garden and put in the compost bin
5. Plant bare-root trees, shrubs and roses; container-grown trees, shrubs, perennial herbs, and perennial flowers; some perennial fruits and vegetables.
6. Finish up most pruning this month, including roses. Spring flowering trees and shrubs can be pruned once they are done blooming.
7. Fertilize roses organically by working compost or fish emulsion in around the base of the shrub every 6 weeks or so.

Note: some rose fertilizers include a systemic pesticide which allows you to feed and prevent pests at the same time. However, these pesticides also can kill butterflies and beneficial insects.

8. If you have lawn, this would be the time to aerate and apply crabgrass pre-emergent.

This is my cue to put in a few words about lawns. Small areas of grass are nice to have. It feels good under your feet; it looks pretty and neat; mine actually takes little to no work at all. However, I am an advocate for using native species whenever possible. They sustain our natural resources in so many ways, and don't require the maintenance or money that lawns do.

Grass requires lots of water, fertilizers and pesticides. Excess use of water can cost money, and depletes our aquifers, and because application of fertilizers and pesticides are not an exact science, we end up with excess phosphorus and nitrogen in our bays, rivers and lakes, causing excess algae growth. This depletes the oxygen in our waters and harms marine life.

Grass attracts bugs like gnats and mosquitoes which sends most of us indoors. Native plants attract butterflies, dragonflies, and all sorts of insect eating critters like birds and bats. This helps to extend our outdoor time with family and friends.

Experiment this year - transform a part of your yard from grass to native plants and see if you enjoy the change. Even a little bit at a time can make a big difference.

Plant Recommendations

For a list of native grasses visit: <http://www.mdcoastalbays.org/nativegrasses/>

Also be sure to check out our Home & Garden calendar page for native plant sales coming up in May: http://delmarva-almanac.com/index.php/site/calendar_garden

Fishing & Hunting

Fishing really begins to perk up in April. Your local bait and tackle shop can give you the low down. In the mean time you can find...

- On the Upper Shore Bays & Streams: Crappy, Yellow Perch, & Shad (which is catch & release)
- On the Mid Shore Atlantic Ocean & Bays: Mackerel, Sea Bass, Blue Fish, Tautog, & Rock Fish
- On the Mid Shore Chesapeake: Red Drum, Perch & Speckled Trout
- And on the Lower Shore Chesapeake bay & Atlantic Ocean: Red & Black Drum
- As always be sure to check with your local state natural resources for licensing, seasonal, and size rules.

Outdoors This Month You Can See

The spring migration of song birds, waterfowl and raptors is well underway by the end of April. A few transient green wing teal are still in the area as of the beginning of the month. Animals also begin to shake of their winter doldrums and are sometimes more visible. Deer, unafraid with hunting season over can also be seen more frequently. In the water, look for muskrats and otters. Baby terrapins are making an appearance.

Sunrise & Sunset

At the beginning of the month the sun will rise at 5:44am.

By the end of the month the sun will rise at 5:02am.

At the beginning of the month the sun will set at 6:25pm.

By the end of the month the sun will set at 6:55pm.

Moon Phases

April 9 - Full Moon

Full Moon names include: Growing Moon, Hare Moon, and the Seed or Planter's Moon

April 25 - New Moon

Other Sky Events

April 1-15 - Virginid Meteors - These can be seen coming from just south of overhead (northern hemisphere) from April 1 - 15 with no definite peak.

April 7 - Delta Draconid Meteors - Beginning 10pm look to the northeast by midnight they should be overhead.

April 13 - Mercury at greatest illuminated extent

April 14 - The April Fireballs - These are seen late usually after midnight across the night sky.

April 16 - 22 - Lyrids Meteor Shower - Up to 20 meteors per hour can be seen at their peak on April 21 & 22.

Look for meteors radiating from the constellation of Lyra after midnight.

April 17 - Sigma Leonid Meteors - A minor shower, if visible it will be seen due south of overhead at about 9:30pm.

April 25 - The Mu Virginid Meteors - Look south of overhead about 1am.

April 23 - Grigg-Skjellerup Meteors - If visible, they will be seen early in the evening, originating south of overhead.

April 28 - Alpha Bootid Meteors - Start looking about 3-4 hours after sunset when the thin waning crescent moon will be setting.

Celestial Navigation

by Valerie Morrissey

If you know your moon sign and ascendant (rising sign) it will be helpful to read the forecasts for those zodiac signs as well. You can consult an ephemeris for the moon and planets, which can be found on the internet, or have your chart set up by a competent astrologer.

The actual movements of the planets are called transits. Each sign has a ruling planet (sometimes two co-rulers) and sometimes events reflect on where your ruling planet is transiting. The New Moon and Full Moon are often referred to as lunations, and frequently they set off events or milestones when transiting through the signs. Sometimes nothing happens, but if an important event or new acquaintance comes into your life, it's possible that a lunation has occurred in your sign.

When the moon is new, it is the best time to make wishes. Start projects, make beginnings of all kinds. When the moon is full, things come to fulfillment. Any difficult conditions come to a head and either explode or are resolved. Projects can be finished or presented at this time.

You will notice that some signs have no planets there at this time, but they still have their influences. Also, most people are a combination of signs, not just their Sun signs. After you have considered what I wrote for your sign, no matter what your life situation is, remember that you have free will and can make your own choices.

Aries *(Born between March 21 - April 19)*

Venus and Mars, the planets of love and sex, are together here from the 24th on, and, with Mars ruling Aries, the sparks will fly! You may fall passionately in love at first sight. Look before you leap. Because of Pluto's interference, you may be strong tempered and demanding. This is a great influence for creative projects. You can accomplish a lot.

Taurus *(Born between April 20 - May 19)*

The new moon here on the 25th brings new beginnings. Spring activities are highlighted, such as planting gardens, sprucing up your property, spring cleaning and making changes in your lifestyle. It's a good time to buy property if you are able. The sun arrives on the 19th, so you will be in the spotlight. Enjoy the attention, don't be shy.

Gemini *(Born between May 20 - June 20)*

Venus, Mars and Uranus in your career house early in the month may bring creative opportunities. Even if your life is a quiet one, it could be a good time to make contacts or go on interviews. If you have ambition, keep your eyes open because a new job or connection could be right around the corner. If not, well, bring flowers in to work.

Cancer *(Born between June 21 - July 22)*

If you are planning a vacation take it early in the month. Later, things might heat up in your career, similar to Gemini. You make good networking connections and meet people of influence. Watch, listen and take your time making decisions. Partnerships (including marriage) could be difficult, enlightening or both. Enjoy the roller coaster ride.

Leo *(Born between July 23 - August 21)*

Because of the new moon some Leos will move in new career directions. Romance is also picking up, especially if you take a vacation. You and your spouse could rekindle the flame, or if single, you could meet a new partner on the beach, possibly someone who marches to a different drummer. To say the least, it certainly won't be boring.

Virgo *(Born between August 22 - September 22)*

Early in the month is good for smoothing out relationship issues. Patience and understanding are needed. Virgos like to serve and help others, and this month you may be called upon to do so. Also someone who owes you a favor may do the same thing for you. A good time to work hard behind the scenes and finish building projects.

Libra *(Born between September 23 - October 22)*

Read about Aries. The Venus-Mars conjunction will highlight marriage and all one-on-one relationships, which is very important to Libras. A good time to get engaged if that's where you are headed. If not, then go out with friends, especially to concerts, museums or other artistic pursuits. Get out your guitar or sketchpad and have some fun.

Scorpio (Born between October 23 - November 21)

There will be high energies since the Venus-Mars conjunction is also aspected by Pluto. You could get into a battle of wills. Try to compromise. There may be conflicts in the workplace. The stress may affect your health so take it easy. Find an outlet for this energy. Try hiking, biking or yoga. Work by yourself, you'll get more done.

Sagittarius (Born between November 22 - December 21)

Because of Jupiter and Neptune, this will be an inspired time for Archers. You will make big plans for the future and might get a little carried away. Archers love to take chances no matter what risk is involved. Be realistic, research the subject, get good legal advice. This is a good time to write, take classes, buy computers or software.

Capricorn (Born between December 22 - January 20)

Probably Pluto's influence here has been subtle, beneath the surface, but with Venus and Mars aspecting Pluto this month, there could be more action. You may run into old friends. New relationships could develop from these contacts with your past. Old issues could be resolved. Present relationships could end or go through a transformation.

Aquarius (Born between January 21 - February 19)

Jupiter and Neptune are closing in on the conjunction now, and this could be very interesting for Aquarians. You can attract new and unusual friends. People will offer you money or aid if you need it. You could have psychic dreams or experiences. You could see things in a new light and come to a better understanding of your purpose in life.

Pisces (Born between February 20 - March 20)

Mars is here until the 22nd. It is not a strong influence but when joined by Venus around the 21st, there will be an inspired romantic feeling. Not as supercharged as in Aries later, but gentle and sentimental. Uranus here could bring sudden events or encounters. This is great for writers. Originality will flourish. Cultivate the poet within.

Delmarva History This Month

April 6, 1650 - Maryland General Assembly divided into an upper & lower house.

April 19, 1774 - The last colonial General Assembly was suspended in Maryland.

April 28, 1788 - Maryland Convention was the 7th state to ratify US Constitution

April 10-13, 1877 - Strong coastal storms caused beach erosion.

April 15, 1964 - The Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel opened - named one of the 7 modern engineering wonders of the world.

April 24, 1987 - Thunderstorms dumped up to seven inches of rain in Virginia over three days.

April 17, 1990 - Strong winds associated gusted to 75 mph in the Chesapeake Bay area of Virginia.

April 30, 1990 - Thunderstorms moving over the Chesapeake Bay flooded U.S. Route 50 on Kent Island Maryland, with several inches of water. This caused a seventeen-mile long traffic jam.

April 19, 1999 - The second (parallel) span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge tunnel opens

Holidays & Observances This Month

April 1 - April Fool's Day

April 2 - World Autism Awareness Day

April 5 - Palm Sunday (Christian)

April 9-15 - Passover (Judaism)

April 10 - Good Friday (Christian)

April 12 - Easter Sunday (Christian)

April 15 - Income Tax Day

April 16 - Librarian Day

April 19 - Orthodox Easter (Orthodox)

April 21 - John Muir Day

April 21 - Holocaust Memorial Day (Judaism)

April 22 - Administrative Professionals Day

April 22 - Earth Day

April 23 - Take Our Children To Work Day

April 24 - Arbor Day

This Month's Flower - Sweet Pea, Daisy

This Month's Birthstones - Diamond, White Sapphire

This is: American Cancer Society Month, National Garden Month, Alcohol Awareness Month, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month, Stress Awareness Month, National Humor Month, National Poetry Month, & Child Abuse Prevention Month