



Lara Haner, founder of The Tidewater Crop Mob, or volunteers who help farmers.

PHOTO: NICOLE PARK/MCT

## Diggin' In:

## Gardening Resolutions For 2013

BY KATHY VAN MULLEKOM

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NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — For many, the new year means there are pounds to shed, closets to clean and credit cards to pay.

Gardeners, however, focus on beauty that's just around the corner — the promise of another growing season with the chance to enhance a garden or try a new plant.

In the spirit of making New Year's resolutions, here's what some gardeners resolve to do in 2013. Their goals can play out most anywhere you garden.

## RECYCLE MORE

As a community project, we're going to build a greenhouse out of plastic bottles, which keeps them out of the trash and makes it a fun project for kids, as well as encouraging them to recycle. — Wendy Iles, founder of the nonprofit www.hamptongrows.org

## LET NATURE BE

Allow dead vegetation in the garden to stand over winter, furnishing habitat for birds, small mammals and overwintering insects because they lay their eggs in the stems of goldenrod and other sturdy plants. In spring, cut the old stems into small segments so they fall to the soil surface, becoming early spring mulch where beneficial insect eggs develop and hatch. — Helen Hamilton, John Clayton Chapter, Virginia Native Plant Society; www.claytonvnps.org

## PLANT MORE PLANTS

Although my rain garden slows runoff and water in an easement that flows to a creek and waterways beyond, it tends to fill with leaves and debris, so I will rake it and "plant more plants" (www.plantmoreplants.com) in and around it to keep pollutants from washing into the Chesapeake Bay and to create a fun and healthy habitat full of native birds, butterflies, insects and grandchildren. — Sara Lewis, Williamsburg gardener and volunteer with Chesapeake Bay Foundation (www.cbf.org)

## GARDEN SMARTER

Cover bare spots in my yard quickly — before erosion occurs and washes soil into the storm drain. Do a soil test to determine what nutrients my yard needs; if fertilizer is recommended apply it in fall. Install another rain barrel to keep my water bill down and my plants happy. — Ann Jurczyk, Williamsburg gardener and outreach advocate for Chesapeake Bay Foundation

## GARDEN GREENER

Mulch in the leaves on my lawn with a mulching mower instead of raking them to add nutrients to my soil. Keep a garden journal so I remember when I did tasks like sowing seeds, cutting back perennials and adding soil amendments. Reduce the size of my lawn, converting it to native plant beds that require less of everything. — Grace Chapman, horticulture director at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond; www.lewisginter.org

## WIN WAR ON WEEDS

Get weeds when they are young because youngsters are easier to eliminate using a hoe versus pulling large, well-established adults. Many spring weeds, such as chickweed, are in the garden now as babies. — Lisa Ziegler, The Gardener's Workshop, an online gardening supply house at www.shoptgw.com

## LIVE GREENER

Reuse an unwanted ladder into a vertical display of potted plants, old vinyl window blinds or silverware into plant markers or a broken teapot into a beautiful planter. Reduce the amount of grass in the lawn into a beautiful display of native flowers, shrubs and trees. Compost food waste into compost for the garden. — Julia Hillegass of www.askHRgreen.org

## USE MORE NATIVE PLANTS

Native species evolve to better perform with our changing climate, and they provide food, cover and habitat for native wildlife. — Bruce Peachee, horticulture curator with Virginia Living Museum in Newport News; www.thevlm.org

## SPREAD THE WORD

Create awareness of the benefits of volunteering at local gardens and farms, thereby building better relationships as we descend on a farm for a day to help out. — Lara Haner, director of The Tidewater Crop Mob on Facebook

## FATTEN MY WORMS

Last year, I bought the Can-O-Worms composting farm and was withholding all acidic fruit and vegetables, thinking they didn't care for them. But, a friend in Portsmouth tells me she feeds hers everything from the kitchen and they eat all of it. So, I will feed them more frequently with more scraps from my kitchen, and I will reap the benefits of more organic fertilizers to use in my garden. — Linda Pinkham, gardener and Tidewater Daylily Society member in Isle of Wight County

## GROW MORE EDIBLES

Use a square-foot gardening plan, put lime or crushed eggshells in planting holes for tomatoes, make and use compost generously and water everything mornings as needed. — Melinda Webb, Hampton master gardener; http://offices.ext.vt.edu/hampton

## PLANT MORE VEGGIES

The children that visited our Children's Garden in 2012 really enjoyed picking tomatoes, pulling carrots and digging sweet potatoes, which grow so well in the compost we make, so we are going to plant even more this year. — Becky Heath of Brent and Becky's Bulbs in Gloucester; www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com

## SIMPLIFY, SHARE AND ENJOY

If a plant flourishes and I like it, I will use more of it. I will share those plant successes by dividing them, rooting cuttings or saving seeds and pass them along to others. I will bask in the beauty of the garden because it sustains my soul as well as my energies. — Marie Butler, horticulturist with Virginia Zoo in Norfolk; www.virginiazoo.org

## Seeds Available For Educational Garden Programs

BROOKINGS — To assist educational gardens across the state of South Dakota, SDSU Extension is offering 15 vegetable packets per project, for up to 30 gardens.

The donated seeds are only intended for newly starting and established educational gardens for youth or adults in the state of South Dakota.

Eligible projects include gardens for schools, learning centers, daycares, 4-H clubs or other non-profit groups, where the produce will be used as part of the program or freely shared with those of need in the community.

Qualified projects must include an educational component with at least 15 participants, meaning they must have a formal program where the garden is being utilized as a tool for teaching and learning.

Seeds are given on a first-come, first serve basis, based on application date. Applications will be accepted until Feb 28 or until 30 gardens are awarded packets.

To apply participants must complete the Seed Bank Application located at: [http://igrow.org/up/articles/2012\\_Seed\\_Bank\\_App.pdf](http://igrow.org/up/articles/2012_Seed_Bank_App.pdf). Deliver or mail the application to the SDSU Extension Regional Center in Sioux Falls, at 2001 E. 8th St., Sioux Falls, SD 57103. Or email the application to Christina.Zdorovtsov@sd-state.edu.

Participants must complete a short follow-up report to summarize participation and project impact by Oct. 14, 2013, to be considered for future seed grants. Participants should be prepared to track pounds of produce grown/donated during the project.

Seed packets were donated from a number of individuals across the regions to assist with these types of gardening efforts. The Extension Service is storing the seeds and coordinating the seed bank effort.

If individuals are interested in donating seeds packaged for the 2013 growing season, contact Zdorovtsov at 605-782-3290 or Christina.Zdorovtsov@sdstate.edu. Unopened seed packets less than one year old are preferred.

## Searching For A New Pet? Try Petfinder

BY RONNIE GILL

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Thinking about adding a new nonhuman member to your household? Adopting a rescued animal can be tremendously fulfilling for both you and your new pet. To get an idea of animals awaiting placement, Petfinder is a great place to start.

The website, which is updated daily, currently lists more than 375,000 animals seeking new homes from nearly 14,000 adoption groups.

Though the majority of the site's listings are for dogs and cats, you can also search for rabbits, rodents, horses, amphibians, birds, pigs and barnyard animals.

Shelters from the United States, Canada and Mexico post potential adoptees here, but you can narrow your search by ZIP code, the type of animal you desire, its breed, age, size and gender. You can also search for shelters in your vicinity by clicking the Shelters & Rescues tab.

An average listing usually provides the animal's photo, name, breed, sex, size, approximate age, a small description and information such as whether it has been spayed or neutered, if its shots are up to date and whether it has issues with children or other animals. There is also phone or email contact information for the organization that has the animal.

Petfinder also has forums, species-specific care information, and tips on volunteering with animals or fostering them.

## On Gardening:

## Deodar Cedar, Simply Unbeatable In The Winter Landscape

BY NORMAN WINTER

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When you think Afghanistan, plant material is probably not the first thing to come to mind. Yet this is precisely where one our landscape's most elegant and beautiful trees originates. The tree I am referring to is the deodar cedar, and to be honest it is not just from Afghanistan but the Himalayas as well.

Columbus, Ga., has more of them planted than any other community I have lived. We have ones that appear to be very old and stand so statuesque as if they have a story to tell to all who pass by. In the city we have them in all ages, including an abundance that must have been planted 15 to 20 years ago. These look like paintings in the landscape with their silvery blue green pendulous branches.

During this time of the year, my eyes seem to pick out every conifer in the landscape, especially the deodar cedar. Conifers are the cone-bearing trees or shrubs, and when everything else goes brown or dormant, the

evergreens really stand out. They are important to the winter landscape, giving us that needed evergreen structure.

Deodar cedar, or just deodar, is known botanically as Cedrus deodara and is used in the landscape along with Cedrus libani, or cedar of Lebanon, and the Cedrus atlantica, or Atlas cedar. Deodars can reach more than 150 feet tall, but we typically see them maturing in the 50- to 70-foot range after 30 to 40 years. Lower branches bend gracefully downward and then up again. The stiff, needle-like, silvery blue green leaves are about 2 inches long and borne in dense whorls.

Most are sold generically, which in this case is just fine but keep your eyes open for cultivars. Argentea is fast growing and has silvery bluish foliage. This one is my favorite. Aurea is smaller, reaching to 30 feet and has golden yellow new foliage. Pendula has long, weeping branches and grows no taller than 10 feet. The deodar cedar is cold hardy to zone 7, but Shalimar released by the Arnold Arboretum is known for superior

cold hardiness for landscapes in zone 6.

The deodar is fairly fast growing for the first decade or two, reaching as high as 30 feet in its first 10 years. I think it is most beautiful at this stage. Between years 10 and 20, it will slowly broaden at the top. Older specimens generally show some top die-back, but don't let this keep you from experiencing 10 to 20 years of deodar bliss in your landscape.

They perform best in full sun and are drought tolerant once established. This tree likes well-drained locations. Most deodar cultivars will grow into large, handsome specimen trees that need plenty of room. Plant them in the back of a large landscape so they can be seen in their entirety.

Deodar is the most popular landscaping cedar in America, transforming the winter landscape like few other trees can do. I hope you will give it a try in yours.



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The deodar cedar is one of the truly elegant trees for the landscape making the winter landscape a living picture.

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