

## Virginia Gardeners Recycle: Statewide Container Recycling Program

Although we don't have all the bugs worked out, we will have a statewide container recycling program for 2011. The two critical pieces that we identified with the Richmond pilot project in 2010 were volunteers for education and plastics consolidation – the Extension Master Gardeners – and partners willing to physically collect and store the pallets – Griffin Greenhouse & Nursery Supplies.

The Extension Master Gardener program is a statewide program and we have identified interest in container recycling across the state. With their assistance, we can promote container recycling to consumers, educate those consumers on how to prepare and sort their containers for recycling, and in some cases assist garden centers with collection and sorting.



*Good container sorting and nesting onsite will facilitate a statewide program.*

Griffin Greenhouse & Nursery Supplies has agreed to collect pallets from operations in their delivery area (within ~150 miles of Richmond). Wetsel (Harrisonburg) and Maryland Plants & Supplies (Baltimore) have agreed to participate in collecting and storing pallets from the rest of the state.

### How can you participate?

**You must register with the program** by contacting Joyce Latimer (540-231-7906; [jlatime@vt.edu](mailto:jlatime@vt.edu)). We will provide educational and promotional information for your use in promoting the program. You will be listed on our website as a participant in the program. If you have gardening events where you would like to have Extension Master Gardener participation to promote container recycling, contact Dave Close ([dclose@vt.edu](mailto:dclose@vt.edu)) and we will try to accommodate your request. Obviously the more notice we have, the more likely we are to be able to help.

Your garden center or growing operation is responsible for collecting and sorting the plastics by resin code onsite. The educational material will provide this information. You must provide stackable bins/boxes in which to collect the containers. Full pallets of larger, uniform containers can be shrink-wrapped to a maximum height of about 60 inches. Yes, this is a time and financial commitment that you must make to participate in the program. However, the participants in 2010 considered it worth the investment. When you have full pallets of sorted plastics, **contact Joyce to arrange for pickup of the pallets**. Do NOT foist these pallets onto the truck drivers from Griffin, Wetsel or Maryland Plants.

Be aware that any funds paid for the recycled plastics will be donated to the VMGA's State Master Gardener Coordinator endowment fund. Our program is primarily aimed at retail operations to address the consumers but we will also accept containers from commercial greenhouses and nurseries and landscapers as long as the material is clean (loose dirt knocked out), sorted and palletized. If you have large amounts of containers that you want to recycle from your own operation and you don't want the funds donated to VMGA, contact us and we can help you find a recycler that may work with you directly depending on your volume.

**To participate in 2011, contact Joyce Latimer 540-231-7906 or [jlatime@vt.edu](mailto:jlatime@vt.edu).** You can find more info at <http://www.hort.vt.edu/VaGardenersRecycle/>