

Common Wealth Award Finalists 2004

by Mary Wynn McDaniel, Common Wealth Award Chairman,
The Rappahannock Valley Garden Club

The Common Wealth Award Fund was established in 1979 to support and promote community projects of GCV member clubs or GCV committees in the fields of conservation, beautification, horticulture, preservation and education. The name Common Wealth was chosen to describe the "wealth" that is "common" to all Virginians.

The Common Wealth Award Committee has selected two very worthy project proposals as the two finalists for the year 2004. The Boxwood Garden Club and the Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton have proposed a beautifully prepared Environmental Education Plan for Bandy Field Nature Park. The Charlottesville Garden Club has proposed a unique garden web site: Gardening in Virginia.

According to The GCV Treasurer, income available from the Common Wealth Award Fund 2004 is \$7,000. The Common Wealth Award Committee decided to award the first place winner \$5,000, and \$2,000 will be awarded the other finalist.

The following are the narratives for the two project finalists:

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PLAN FOR BANDY FIELD NATURE PARK

*Proposed by The Boxwood Garden Club and
The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton*

The acceptance of this application for the 2004 Common Wealth Award would contribute to the environmental education of the student population and the broader community regarding wetlands and natural habitats by providing educational programs, materials and signage for BANDY FIELD NATURE PARK, Richmond, Virginia. This would include conducting Field & Teacher Days, providing Ecology Boxes to local schools, installing signage and maps, and educating and training volunteers to develop and conduct environmental programs for all ages.

In alliance with "FRIENDS OF BANDY FIELD," an organization to protect and preserve the park, The Boxwood Garden Club and The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton have done the following:

- Lobbied Richmond City Council to add Bandy Field to the city's park system, removing it from availability for sale.
- Contributed to the "Trust for Bandy Field" for park maintenance.
- Helped fund a wetland area, butterfly reserve, woodland paths, and native plant identification areas working with an Advisory Board of all four GCV member clubs in Richmond, the Virginia Native Plant Society, the Alliance of the Chesapeake Bay and environmental planner, Robert Wright.
- Provided volunteers to assist with the inventory and removal of invasive plants.
- Conducted habitat planting with the help of local school students and Boy Scouts.