



# VMGA REPORT

Summer Edition

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## President's Message

It's hard to believe that Master Gardener College is just around the corner and we are starting another VMGA fiscal year. VMGA has a lot to be proud of this year. The executive board has written a set of guidelines for the offices of Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. These can easily be shared and adapted to meet the needs of other Master Gardener groups.

Vice President, Angela Cingale chaired a special committee to encourage and educate Master Gardeners on the benefits of becoming a member of VMGA. New membership brochures and recruiting kits are very close to completion. These kits will be shared with all MG units.

Pat Reilly, VMGA Treasurer has become an expert on 501 (c) 3 application and re-certification. We have developed Standard Operating Procedures, to assure that VMGA meets all of the requirements. We have re-structured several committees for consistent reporting and have addressed all items noted by the 2014 Audit committee. We have a set of standard operating procedures for conducting annual audits which can be shared with other MG groups.

The Education Committee chaired by Robyn Puffenbarger, planned and executed a fall education event at Virginia State University on permaculture. Several well known speakers and hands-on group exercises assured that all attendees had a very positive and interesting experience. The committee is currently hard at work planning the next VMGA education event.

VMGA helped to ensure that the Master Gardener Program will continue to have faculty leadership at Virginia Tech (no matter the General Assembly and VCE budget !) Through your purchases of t-shirts and sweat shirts this year, VMGA donated \$ 1, 320.56 to the endowment. VMGA conducted the Silent Auction in 2014 that brought in \$4,285. We can't wait to see the response to the challenge that VMGA has issued, matching \$6,000 in pledges at the start of our next year.

VCE celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the 2014 State Fair of Virginia and VMGA provided funding and support to the Master Gardener booth. Over 8,000 contacts visited the booth and received education on VCE, the Master Gardener Program and saving our pollinators.

This year VMGA celebrated its Twenty-fifth Anniversary with a fun bi-monthly meeting that included several guest speakers from the Richmond area that support Master Gardener volunteers and VMGA. The meeting included VMGA flashbacks by the honored guests. Some of the original members who began the association were in attendance as well. It was a fun and educational celebration, and we even were able to fit in the bi-monthly business meeting!

A special committee presented revisions to the standing rules and by-laws to satisfy the 501(c) 3 requirements and to address recommendations from the membership. These updates have been electronically sent to all members and will be presented during the Annual meeting.

Dave Banks, the VMGA Webmaster has streamlined the VMGA.net web site. Thousands have visited the web site this year. Kathryn Debnar (with Frank Reilly as a back up ) has been busy updating the VMGA Calendar Page to inform VMGA members of events scheduled throughout the state.

VMGA Unit Representatives have been reporting on Master Gardener unit activities and answering questions relating to issues and special projects. The responses of these questions have been compiled and shared with John Freeborne and Dave Close for reporting on the Master Gardener Program to VCE.

### VMGA OFFICERS

#### President

Christy Brennan, Hanover

#### Vice President

Angela Cingale, James City  
County/Williamsburg

#### Treasurer

Pat Reilly, Prince William

#### Secretary

Joan Richards, Fairfax/Green  
Spring



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## York County Establishes its First Community Garden

By **Steve Dodson** – Master Gardener Coordinator  
York/Poquoson Master Gardener Unit

With farmer's markets popping up everywhere today, and with niche restaurants all seemingly picking up on the farm-to-table theme in using local produce, more and more localities are starting to set up community gardens; York County is no exception. Under the auspices of its Board of Supervisors, York County established its first community garden this spring. The garden is located within the County's sports complex, on Sports Way, just off of Route 17.

The entire garden complex is deer-proofed with an 8'+ high chain link fence around the perimeter. All the garden pathways are made of compacted brick dust and there are five frost-proof hydrants supplying water within the garden complex itself.

There are forty-nine plots (two are wheel chair accessible raised bed plots) and all plots have been leased to excited & eager gardeners. There is even a waiting list, should an existing plot owner "throw in the towel" so-to-speak and give their plot up.

The plots are for rent to York County residents, with a one-plot limit per family. A 10' x 12' plot cost \$15.00 and a 10' x 20' plot leases for \$25.00 per year, with a plot owner having the first-choice option in picking up the same plot in succeeding years.

The community garden project is headed up by Dan Nortman, York County/Poquoson Cooperative Extension Agent for Agricultural & Natural Resources and Horticulture. Dan has held an initial meeting of the plot owners, established a weekly online 'message board', and has conducted an online survey of the participants as to garden-wise learning opportunities they are interested in. Upon completion of this survey, Dan will schedule on-site events, slowly drawing from his equally eager team of 120+ Master Gardeners to assist in the educational part of the program, working with any & all of the garden's participants. In a York County press release, Dan said "This is a great opportunity for individuals who do not have gardening space at their residence or those who simply want to meet other gardeners, share growing advice, and enjoy the outdoors."

The garden was originally scheduled to open March 1<sup>st</sup>, but minor delays in completion of the project, due mainly to the lack of cooperative spring weather delayed that opening. Even after the garden was finally opened, there was no water supply as the garden's watering system is tied into that of the sports complex's irrigation system, which was still shut down for the winter.

Although the plots are leased individually, there are multiple rules & regulations in place so as to not have a detrimental impact on adjacent plots or to the environment, either. One of these rules is that the use of herbicides is prohibited, and although the community garden is not specifically "organic" in nature, all the participants are encouraged not to use chemical pesticides but to look at alternative methods in controlling insect pests.

During the gardening season the sports complex park is open to the public daily, March 1st through October 31st from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and even though York County's new community garden is a work-in-progress, stop by if you're out this way and check it out.



*York County establishes first community garden continued*



*President's message continued from page 1*

Jan Worthy, the VMGA newsletter editor has compiled articles and information from creative writers from all over the state. These articles share units' and personal success stories which have kept VMGA members well informed.

VMGA is proud to offer seven scholarships totaling \$3,100 to Master Gardener College this year and we appreciate all of the hard work Marilyn Riddle and the Scholarship committee did to make this happen.

The Association will ensure that each VCE local office has a printed copy of the new Master Gardeners Coordinator Handbook to use a reference. These will be printed in 2016.

It is the dedication of each of the committee chairs and our members that contributes to the success of the organization. Please help me in thanking each of the VMGA Board and Committee members for a very successful year. So many more have contributed to VMGA's success this year. Recognition of those individuals and committees will continue in the next issue of *The VMGA Report*.

Please consider volunteering for an open leadership role – VMGA and the Master Gardener program needs you. Currently VMGA needs a Merchandising Coordinator. This position is responsible for developing new merchandise items, locating vendor services and presenting the findings to the board. The VMGA and the Master gardener Program need you.

We also need volunteers to help on the newsletter and membership committees. I'm looking forward to a successful new year!



## The Hill City Master Gardener Association Fairmont Crossing Health and Rehabilitation Gardening Program

With the involvement of The Hill City Master Gardener Association, which serves the city of Lynchburg and Amherst and Campbell counties, Fairmont Crossing Health and Rehabilitation had another very successful and well-attended 2014 gardening program.

### **Participation:**

Participation by residents is entirely voluntary. While most participants are permanent residents at Fairmont, some participants are short-term residents for the purpose of rehabilitative physical therapy. Most participants are women, but there are a few men and they stopped by from time to time.

Twenty sessions were held in 2014.

Meeting day and start time was Tuesday, 9:30 a.m.

Sessions were held on May 13 and 20; June 3, 10, 17 and 24; July 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, August 5, 12, 19 and 26; September 9 and 23, October 21; November 18; and December 16.

Each session typically lasted at least about 1.5 hours, with some going over the two hour mark by anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. Average attendance per session by participating residents was 18, which ranged from a low of 13 participants to a high of 26 participants.

Total number of resident participation for the year was 359.

There were at least four Master Gardeners at each session and more of the sessions typically had five or six Master Gardener volunteers present and helping at each session.

### **Program and Goals:**

The sessions included outdoor projects and indoor projects.

Our outdoor projects were conducted within a protected courtyard. In the courtyard there is a large raised bed and several large barrels that are dedicated to our program's use. The courtyard is visible from the two main corridors of the building by way of a series of large windows lining the corridors. Residents can sit inside and watch nature.

Our indoor projects were conducted in a second floor community activities room that has large multiple windows located along two perpendicular walls of the room. There is plenty of window sill space for plants of all kinds.

With the population of residents, Master Gardeners tried to work on projects that would provide sensory stimulation, improve attention, promote exercise, trigger memories and positive reminiscences, help with manual dexterity, and promote a sense of pride of accomplishment. We feel our program accomplished all these goals as well as promoting ambulation and providing a pleasant environment, views of nature and indoor plants to tend. Residents were able to express individually while working within a group. We also noted a gardener-teaching-gardener aspect among certain residents. Intergenerational activities were provided when a Master Gardener's young granddaughter helped out during several summer sessions. At our December session, a Master Gardener brought her dog to provide stimulation.



*Fairmont Crossing Health and Rehabilitation Garden Program continued*

### **Projects:**

Our 2014 program with the Master Gardener volunteers officially kicked off on May 13, 2014 with residents meeting in the activities room to plant various herb and flower seeds, including basil, oregano, cilantro, chives, and parsley, into numerous window boxes. These window boxes were taken outside to the courtyard where they germinated and grew well until transplantation. Even before our initial "official" session with the Master Gardeners, residents had been busy growing marigold seeds in containers.

The residents and Master Gardeners weeded the outside raised bed. The petunias that had re-seeded were thinned and supplemented with marigolds and impatiens. Existing perennial herbs and seedlings were transplanted into two large barrel planters. In June, four tomatoes were planted in the courtyard. Also in the courtyard, hellebore, donated by a Master Gardener, and Solomon's seal, donated by another Master Gardener were planted and the roses pruned. Impatiens were planted in the ground where they could be easily seen from a large window designated by the residents as a favorite place to sit and enjoy the view. Fairmont's chef was invited to use the herbs for cooking.

By far the most favorite resident activity was arranging fresh flowers in bud vases for their rooms. While most flowers and greenery were donated by Master Gardeners from those growing in their own gardens, purchases of fresh flowers for our early and later sessions were needed.

Residents also helped to pot-up some small boxwoods (donated by a Master Gardener), and enjoy rooting house plant cuttings and cuttings for overwintering tender perennials indoors.

During our July 1 session, we watched a DVD entitled "*Secret Gardens of England*" and at our November 18 session, a Master Gardener gave her "*The Garden City, Christchurch, New Zealand*," presentation. We attempted to get resident involvement and promote mental stimulation and memory by talking about the flowers we were seeing, naming the flower, and whether or not they can also be grown in our area.

Our October 21 project involved making floral arrangements using artificial flowers. The participating residents just loved this one. Our last session of 2014 was December 17 holiday session. We had small boxwood plants to decorate, bulbs to force and winter greenery to arrange and decorate with mini ornaments, bows and icicles.

Even before the end of 2014, residents were saying "can't wait until spring to start gardening again."

A 2014 DVD was prepared by a Master Gardener that included a slideshow of the many pictures taken during our 2014 year with a background of gospel music. Our residents love to hear and sing along to this type of music, and to see themselves and fellow gardening residents. They enjoy watching, reminiscing and singing.

### **2015 Plans:**

Very similar activities are planned for 2015.

While there are a few lance-leaf Coreopsis, blanket flowers, Shasta daisies and small Black-eye Susans growing in the courtyard that can be cut if needed, we plan on planting some Gloriosa Daisies and small sunflower seeds in the courtyard in early spring 2015. These were some favorites. They will provide a nice visual display for the residents and also serve as an emergency supply of cut flowers should the flowers brought in by Master Gardener volunteers for a particular project prove inadequate in number.

The Master Gardeners plan to get another interesting speaker lined up for 2015. A talk on birds is hoped for since the residents enjoy looking at birds and have several bird feeders and a bird bath located in the courtyard.

As you can see the Hill City Master Gardeners not only work with the youth, we also enjoy working with the young at heart.



## edible landscaping

### Top Ten Edible Landscaping Ideas

Want to be more sustainable, but still need to keep your Homeowners Association happy? Step out of the comfort zone of traditional landscaping and try a more aesthetically pleasing approach to edible landscaping. It does not have to be unattractive or entail tilling under your lawn. Why not try incorporating edible landscaping into your existing landscape beds or spruce up your patio with attractive containers planted with edible plants? The edible plants in this list are top performing that will pay for themselves by way of fruit, herbs and veggie value.

1. Raspberry Shortcake (*Rubus idaeus* 'Raspberry Shortcake') and Peach Sorbet blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum* 'Peach Sorbet'), are both dwarf compact shrub options best applied to patio containers or even in-ground installations. This dwarf raspberry cultivar is thornless and sun loving. Blueberries in general are an easy care option and not only do they produce blueberries, but they provide great fall color in the landscape as well.
2. Utilizing a fruit tree espalier instead of an ornamental espalier along a fence or wall is a great aesthetically pleasing way to spruce up a fence without spruces. There is an apple espalier that has many apple varieties grafted onto the tree as sort of a fruit cocktail. This is a great crowd pleaser giving everyone more fruit variety options and may be available for special order if not from your local garden center.
3. Variegated lemon thyme (*Thymus vulgaris* 'Variegated Lemon') or oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) instead of sedum both work as perennial walkway companions. Both culinary herbs can tolerate light foot traffic as well as prevent weeds from growing in between the walkway cracks since they have a slow spreading habit. Please remember that mints will need to be in a container since they have more of a fast-paced spreading habit, unless you don't mind where they take over.
4. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) and lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*), are both perennial herbs with similar texture and can be used for many purposes. Meringue topping for pie flavored with a hint of lavender is surprisingly delicious. Both herbs can also be utilized in homemade soaps as well as herb sachets.
5. You can plant Globe Artichoke (*Cynara scolymus*) to add silver-green and gray-green color with amazing foliage texture. You will not get an artichoke the first year if started from seed as they are more of a longer season crop, but will potentially produce the second year if protected with mulch over the winter since they can come back again.
6. Tricolor Sage (*Salvia officinalis* 'Tricolor') is one of my favorites for the variegated white, green, and almost purple leaves. Sage is often paired with turkey dishes, but the bush itself looks well in your landscape in a full-sun location. Perhaps planted in front of an evergreen backdrop or used as a specimen focal plant.
7. Most of our grandmothers are famous for their crabapple jelly, but hardy orange marmalade might become a new family tradition. The hardy trifoliolate orange (*Poncirus trifoliata*) tree produces very small fruit that is too bitter to be desirable for fresh eating, but great used in marmalade. The Virginia Tech Hahn Horticultural Garden in Blacksburg, VA has a beautiful hardy orange tree specimen located in a hardiness zone much lower than Warrenton, VA due to the higher elevation. The lowest USDA hardiness zone it can tolerate is a zone 5.
8. Everbearing strawberries (*Fragaria x ananassa* 'Everbearing') intermixed with edible pansy flowers make a good combination. I personally do not go out of my way to eat pansy flowers, but they are great for decorating cakes and dessert plates. Strawberries will produce small flowers before fruiting and offer some foliage interest. This variety of strawberry will bear fruit all season whereas the pansies will have to be planted in early spring and then again in the fall since the hot summer temperatures are not conducive to its desired temperature range.

*Top Ten Edible Landscaping Ideas continued on page 7*



*Top Ten Edible Landscaping Ideas continued*

9. Wisdom is knowing that the hardy kiwi (*Actinidia arguta*) and the high performing Super Sweet 100 hybrid cherry tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum* 'Supersweet 100') are both fruits, but knowledge is knowing not to put the tomato in a fruit salad. The hardy kiwi has a climbing habit and is great planted along a fence or next to a permanent trellis. The kiwi fruit is a lot smaller than the kiwis you buy at the store, but is still a great option. Supersweet 100 is an indeterminate tomato, which means it bears fruit over a longer period and has a climbing habit. This tomato will need a trellis or tomato cage and will do well planted along a fence or amongst your ornamentals.

10. Bright Lights Swiss chard (*Beta vulgaris* var. *cicla* 'Bright Lights') and red-veined sorrel greens (*Rumex sanguineus*) will add edible foliage color to both your landscape and dinner plate. This rainbow colored Swiss chard is nutrient dense and has many brightly colored stems. The sorrel greens, also known as Dock is a perennial that is best used in the baby-leaf form for soups and also in your landscape to replace the overused Liriope since they have a similar small mounding growth habit.

After presenting these exciting edible cultivars, some new and some timeless, I hope that you will look at your landscape and visualize new edible possibilities. Whether you try all of the edible plants or just a couple, it is only the beginning of a landscape that can help save money on your grocery expenditures by producing fresh sustenance located outside your front door. There isn't a better experience than picking your very own fresh fruit, culinary herbs, and veggies from your property that happens to be conveniently disguised in your landscape. By following the basic design elements and pairing appropriate edible plants with ornamentals you can achieve a more sustainable and literally tasteful edible landscape.

Kae Yowell

Master Gardener ,VA Certified Horticulturist ,B.S. in Horticulture from VT





## THE GRAINETHUMB

### BEAUTY BEYOND BLOOMS – REALLY!

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

*Perhaps our best hope for gardening as an art is that gardening is an activity whose never-achieved aim is progress towards a never-completed work of art*

---Geoffrey Charlesworth in *The Opinionated Gardener* (1988)

Recently Grainethumb saw a horticultural trade publication advertisement extolling the virtue of beauty without blooms. My take on this ad is really beauty beyond blooms. To be sure, this is an interesting departure from the usual approach to gardening. Why? Because most of us are taught (hammered) that flowers are a must key element for the garden aside from magnificent trees and shrubs. The problem is that flowers are transient and it is difficult to orchestrate four seasons of color.

This article is a means for proselytizing about foliage in plants. The karmic value you will receive from foliage is actually a natural form of nature's art. Heretofore you may have only given this a passing glance in a garden catalog or a visit to a nursery or your own garden. Perhaps it is time to give foliage a break especially when considering the longevity of foliage when compared to most flower blossoms. If you carefully planned a garden that will produce a succession of blooms, that is all to the good. The question is how many of us have done this successfully, especially when having to cope with the often uncooperative Mother Nature. You cannot rely on flower production without a lot of effort and often financial resources. Think about this for a moment. Foliage can be subtle or powerful depending on your leafy palette. With an infinite variety of leaf forms you are sure to find many that should suit your taste in design. Of course the horticultural breeding hype about the plant du jour and the major advances in hybridizing makes it easy to overlook beauty beyond blooms.

Getting back to the basic question, why would anyone want to consider foliage plants as a mainstay in the garden and by extension, the entire landscape? We know that flowers and flowering trees and shrubs are an important element in garden design. As previously noted, with careful recognition of flower production you can surely have a colorful display. Is that it? Just to be able to choose a riot of color or a mono-color and you are done. Really - of course not. When the flower is finished, as already noted, you could have interesting shaped leaves of many sizes, texture and color. Aside from these attributes many foliage plants have vertical and horizontal stripes, sprinkles, mottled patterns and unexpected variegation. No doubt with careful plant selection and an eye towards foliage you will add zest to your garden and landscape.

Gardeners can design a colorful flower garden but with careful planning you can also have interesting foliage as a bonus that will last for almost the entire growing season. The point to remember is that foliage is a critical design element for the garden and ought to be factored in regardless of sun, shade and other environmental variables. If you accept the idea of beauty beyond blooms you will have a panoply of discovery that you might not give much thought or attention to. Perhaps it is time to put to rest the idea that foliage plants should be relegated to only a natural shade or woodland garden. That is pure nonsense. Challenge yourself by combining flowers and foliage so that you create a mood that reflects the real you rather than a pre-planned by-the-book landscape design. Having an awareness of what plants will look like and knowing flower color AND foliage will ensure that you are achieving the right balance that suits your personality and sense of design. Of course you need to account for environmental conditions, soil quality and the like. Sometimes it can even be an interesting challenge to push the boundaries beyond accepted cultural "requirements" such as a plant hardiness zone.

*Beauty beyond blooms continued on page 7*

*Beauty beyond blooms continued*

What beauty beyond blooms boils down to is not complicated. Rather it is a blend of horticultural relationships that recognize a variety of factors that create harmony between you and your garden. Strive for year-round interest beyond the growing season and at the same time use principles of good design. Do not lose sight of the fact that you must also consider your property variables such as a severe slope, rocky soil or a need for screening, etc. Know the habits of plants before you install them because this is really important as you go about planning your garden space. In other words, plants grow in two directions – height and width. Have in mind whether you desire an informal, formal, Japanese-like setting or any other type of design feature because this will have great bearing on your choice of plant material.

Go for it! This is your garden. Be creative! Be bold! Be strategic! By mixing plants with out of the ordinary foliage, you are bound to create visual interest because foliage is considerably more than just a bunch of green leaves.

**VMGA will make reasonable attempts when emails to you bounce, but you can do your part:**

Email the [Membership Chair](#) with changed email addresses

Make sure you have no blocks on emails from VMGA

Don't let your Inbox get "full"!

Renew online



All units: remember when planning unit events to go to VMGA.net to the calendar page to update unit event information including dates, times and location.



## Plants that Repel Mosquitoes

By Laura Collingsworth

I came across an interesting post on Facebook, of all places, about plants that repel mosquitoes. It got my attention because we've used citronella candles only to find them almost useless unless you sit directly in the path the smoke is blowing. That's as appealing as asking the husband to blow his cigar smoke my way. Ditto for torches that burn citronella oil. We used a fog that killed everything—the good insects as well as the bad bugs. Then the breeze blew the poison cloud away and a fresh crop of mosquitoes blew in. This year I am looking for a more natural approach.

The first step is simple; don't provide a habitat for mosquitoes to breed. Mosquitoes breed in standing water. Female mosquitoes lay eggs that hatch in 48 hours and mature 7-14 days later. Standing water can be found in bird baths, pet bowls, ponds or pools, even the saucers placed under pots. Other breeding grounds are found in water collected in the bottom of open garbage cans, in gutters that are clogged with leaves or debris, open hoses, open pipes, toys and trash. Any container that collects water is a potential breeding ground. These are basic steps but worth mentioning. Replace the water in bird baths and pet bowls every day. Create movement in ponds or pools with a small fountain. Use a spray nozzle to close hoses. Cover or close garbage cans. Any container that collects water should be emptied daily. A little effort can make a big impact. It is especially important when we consider the diseases spread by mosquitoes.

Now about those plants mentioned earlier. They are: Lemon Grass, Catnip, Marigold, Rosemary, Wormwood or Artemisia, Mint, Ageratum, Lavender and Lemon Balm. These plants may have some repellent properties but like all insect repellents, they only work when used correctly. Plant them close to where you spend time outdoors. Planting Marigolds by the front door won't help you in the back yard. As much as I like them, Mint and Lemon Balm spread like wildfire and will take over a garden spot quickly. Once they are established it can be hard to completely weed them out so they are best grown in pots. All of these plants are available locally and can easily be found in our garden centers. I will try a more natural approach...how about you?

I'd like to hear how you battle your garden pests.

Please email me at [l.collingsworth@verizon.net](mailto:l.collingsworth@verizon.net) with your past successes (or failures) in the garden.

*Thank you to Laura Collingsworth from MGACRA for this timely and helpful article.*

### Looking for some summer educational activities?

Now through June 21 (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond)  
 "Van Gogh, Manet, and Matisse: The Art of the Flower." Explore French floral still life through the 19th century.

June 20 (Williamsburg Botanical Garden, Freedom Park) 10:00am  
 The program is Barrels and Bins." " Suggested donation \$5.

September 11-12 (Monticello, Charlottesville)  
 9TH Annual Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello. Sponsored by the Southern Exposure Seed Exchange and Monticello. Lectures, vendors, demonstrations, food. More information at : [www.heritageharvestfestival.com](http://www.heritageharvestfestival.com).





**Can't make MG College this year?  
Here is another educational opportunity.**

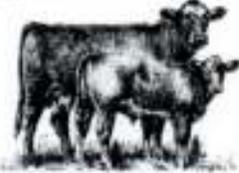
 **Virginia Cooperative Extension**  
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

# TAKING ROOT

## Farm Tour



**SUNDAY**  
**June 28, 2015**  
**1:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

**Visit different kinds of farming operations and learn about New Kent agriculture.**

*Featuring:*

**Lightning Ridge Farm**  
10341 New Kent Highway  
New Kent, VA 23124

**Couch's Corner Berry Farm**  
8201 Poindexter Road  
New Kent, VA 23124






OR Sites located in New Kent, VA Area OR

From Interstate 64 take Exit 214 (Route 155) towards New Kent Courthouse (Route 249), travel 2.12 miles., turn left at Stop sign onto Rt. 249 towards Quinton & follow signs to Farm Sites.

Sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension, New Kent County, Farm Bureau, and the JCC/NK/Williamsburg Master Gardener Assoc.

For more information visit: <http://offices.ext.vt.edu/new-kent/> or call the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office, New Kent County (804) 966-9645.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact us at (804) 966-9645 during business hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to this event. \*TDD number is (804) 828-1128.

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## Master Gardeners in the News

Master Gardeners invite you to become one and help grow more green thumbs

In the **Home & Garden** section of Sunday May 17<sup>th</sup>, *Daily Press*, there is a terrific full-page feature, by Kathy Van Mullekom on the master gardeners of the Gloucester, York/Poquoson, Hampton, and Newport News Master Gardener units, and their ongoing projects and training. In the article, Kathy profiles our very own **Jill Schuff**, among others.

In case you are not a subscriber to the *Daily Press* or just missed the article all together, here is the link (<http://touch.dailypress.com/#section/3520/article/p2p-83558331/>) to the newspaper and the article itself.

Steve Dodson – Master Gardener Coordinator  
York/Poquoson Master Gardener Unit of the Virginia Cooperative Extension

## **Pyridine Herbicides, BEWARE**

**By Ralph Hall, Piedmont Master Gardener**

We recently had a helpdesk client who'd bought some straw and applied it as mulch to her tomato and some other vegetable plants. The straw killed her plants. She called us this year to find out how to test her soil. Somehow, she found out that a Pyridine herbicide had been used on the straw. We suggested she try some quick-to germinate seeds like beans or radishes to see if they would come up. If they did, the soil was fine, and we submitted the belief that the herbicide would have degraded by this time. We found that soil testing for this material requires some special lab work at private sites.

For straw, the herbicide will likely degrade very quickly, with it applied on top of the soil. It would have been exposed well to oxygen and bacterial action, which will degrade this material (as well as compost the straw).

HOWEVER, according to this VT article: [http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/VTTP/VTTP-6/VTTP-6\\_pdf.pdf](http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/VTTP/VTTP-6/VTTP-6_pdf.pdf), pyridine herbicide in compost or manure can take several years to degrade, unless these materials are regularly stirred or aerated (e.g. exposed to air). The material applied to grass, straw or hay can be ingested by cows or horses and excreted in their urine and feces. It apparently does not affect mammals, including humans. It will kill any broadleaf (e.g. pretty much anything but grass) vegetation.

Pyridine on straw should have no effect on grass, if people want to buy it to cover newly seeded areas, as it's designed to work on broadleaf plants (apparently similar to the way 2,4 D works).

Here's a scathing article by Mother Earth on some experience in Vermont with toxic compost from pyridine source herbicide: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/herbicide-damage-zmgz13fmzsto.aspx> This article mentions a lab that could analyze for the chemical.



### ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENERS AND VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Virginia Master Gardeners are volunteer educators who work within their communities to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management education and training. As an educational program of Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Master Gardeners bring the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the commonwealth.

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments. Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative Action employer.

#### VMGA Bi-Monthly Board Meeting

**When:** June 26, 2015

**Where:** MG College Blacksburg, Virginia at 5PM in Torgesen Hall. The annual meeting will be held on June 27th.

#### VMGA

A Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners

**Deadline for September/October Newsletter is August 15th, 2015**

**Please submit any announcements or articles to be included in the next issue to:**

Jan Worthy, editor  
Central Shenandoah Valley MGA  
jancwva52@gmail.com

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VCE Master Gardener Program

**International Master Gardener Conference** in Council Bluffs, Iowa will be September 22-25th. This conference is a joint project between Iowa and Nebraska to present horticulture workshops and tours with a Midwest flair. Call Susan DeBleck at 515 294-6764 or go to <https://www.facebook.com/2015InternationalMasterGardenerConference> for information.

## Grow Some VA



Grow Some VA!™ Is a social action campaign of the Virginia Green Industry Council that encourages homeowners to reduce water runoff from their yards and gardens into local waterways that flow to the Chesapeake Bay by applying recommended conservation practices and by planting 'Virginia Grown' plants. Improving water quality in our streams, rivers and Chesapeake Bay is everyone's responsibility. Plants grown in Virginia are acclimated to the local growing conditions, varieties that do well in the Virginia climate are readily available in local nurseries and more and more 'native' plants are also available for the benefit of wildlife. So Grow some VA is more than a catch phrase; it is a challenge to everyone to do their part at home, at the work place and in your community.

**Like them on Facebook. /www.facebook.com/growsomeva**