



VMGA Executive Board

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February VMGA Bi-Monthly Membership Meeting

10 AM - 2 PM, February 14, 2009
 Hanover County DSS Meeting Room,
 Hanover Human Services Complex,
 12304 Washington Hwy, Ashland



President's Message

Betty Villers, VMGA President

HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2009 is ahead of us and brings us the opportunity to increase our gardening knowledge and to share that knowledge with others. If you're like me, I plan to spend the cold evenings reading garden catalogs and magazines while deciding what changes I would like to make in the garden, whether it's my own garden or at a garden where I do my volunteer hours.

With all that we hear about "Going Green", let's make a difference in 2009 and do our part. Say "no" to plastic or paper bags and bring your own shopping bags, recycle, plant a tree, compost, and stop buying bottled water to name a few. Let me know what you're doing differently this year to "Go Green."

I asked and you responded to the requests I received from several magazines. The January issue of Backyard Living magazine published five responses from VA Master Gardeners when I asked for your best gardening tips for their "100 Best Tips from Master Gardeners" article. The request from Central Virginia Home magazine for an interview with a Master Gardener for an article on creating a fragrance garden was answered by Barbara Ann Wiederkehr (Louisa). Look for the March issue for that article. Did any of you answer the request from Horticulture or Virginia Gardener magazines?

We have a new Education Committee led by Barbara Geer (Prince George). Joining her are Bill Garlette (Newport News), Lori Hamlett (Southside), Betty Jo Hendrix (Western Tidewater), Patty Richard (Bedford) and Ira Wallace (Central VA). From the many suggestions received from the Master Gardener units, they will be planning future advanced educational opportunities to be held across the state.

The VMGA Executive Board is meeting with VCE/VT leadership on January 19 to talk about our partnership and how we can help one another. You will hear our report at the February Board meeting in Ashland.

Time to think about MG College 2009. Save the dates June 18-21 on your calendar and plan to join other Virginia Master Gardeners for education, workshops, field trips, garden tours, interacting with other Master Gardeners, and, of course, fun. The keynote speaker this year will be Allan Armitage.

-- Betty

UPCOMING EVENTS

12-15 January, Environmental Landscape Symposium, Fredericksburg Conference & Expo Center (NOTE: Save \$50 on registration with a nomination by your extension agent.)
<http://vaturf.ipower.com//5652.html>

25-30 January, 5th Annual Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course, *Green Gardening*, Founders Inn & Spa, Va Beach
www.mahsc.org

4-6 February, "Gardening in an Era of Climate Change: Is the Sky Really Falling?", Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
www.lewisginter.org/events

12 February, 26th Annual Central Virginia Landscape management Seminar, MLK Jr Performing Arts Center, Charlottesville
www.piedmont-landscape.org

7 March, Patrick County MGA 2nd Annual Spring Gardening Symposium, *Master Your Garden*, Stuart
offices.ext.vt.edu/view.cmf?webname=patrick

14 March, 7th Annual Good Gardening Symposium, *Enrich our Environment—Go Native*", Prince George
www.vmga.net/calendar.htm

21 April, 3rd Biennial Horticultural Horizons Symposium, *Conserving the Commonwealth: Keeping Virginia Green*, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
www.ramga.org/educational_events.htm

Send VMGA calendar inputs to Kathryn Debnar, k2garden@cox.net.

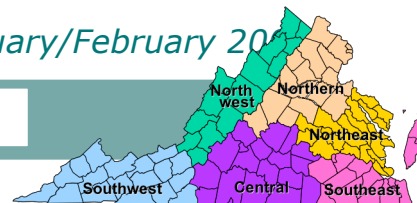
State MG Liaison Report for December

By David Close, Virginia MG State Coordinator

- The MGCAT met in November. We worked on tours and leadership training and something new: workshops (micropropagation, digital photography, floral arranging). Alan Armitage has agreed to be our keynote speaker.
- We are still working on the handbook revision. The release is delayed until summer 2009.
- The national review of the MG program was launched in late November. At least 5 states have already responded. The deadline for data collection is January 15.
- Scotts has offered and can do advanced training for MGs on a variety of topics; they have been doing this in GA for a couple of years. Dave spent 3 days in Marysville, OH at their Global headquarters participating in the Scotts Training Institute. Training contents look very good with many opportunities to partner with Scotts (email alerts, training resources: online and face-to-face, product samples).
- On December 2-3, Dave participated in the Southern Region IPM Center Advisory Council meeting. He was appointed to the council in late 2007. Dave spoke on how Extension Master Gardener (EMG) programs in the southern region can work with the SRIPMC collaboratively. He made contact with an entomologist from UGA and will work with him on a Request for Application (RFA) to pull EMG into IPM work in the southern region. IPM was changed in the 2008 Farm Bill. Former formula funding was changed to competitive. Many commodity groups are upset and trying to reverse this legislation.
- Work on Emerald Ash Borer with US Forestry Service is proceeding in the Northern District. We are working out the details for a grant to fund our efforts.
- On November 6, Dave gave a presentation, along with Barb Stewart and Frank Reilly, at the 2009 Backyards and Beyond Firewise Conference. Approximately 30 people sat in on our talk, which was moderated by Frank Turck of VA DOF. Regional firewise training was offered on December 8, in Charlottesville. Just under 100 people were registered to attend. Louisa's training was postponed due to health problems with the coordinator.
- Dean Quisenberry scheduled forums with the College on December 12 & 15 to bring everyone up to speed on the state of the College. We are waiting for Governor Kaine to announce budget decisions on December 17. Dave forwarded some information to VMGA to forward on to everyone about contacting state senators and delegates before the holidays hit for personal contacts before they go back into session in January.
- **BUDGET UPDATE:** The Governor's budget proposal holds Extension-related cuts to approximately 5 percent. The legislature still has to act, so continued activity highlighting Extension's value to the state is appreciated.

January News From Across the State

The full report of the units can be found at <http://www.vmga.net>.



Central



Hill City (Amherst, Campbell and Lynchburg), Debra Straw

<http://www.hcmga.com>

Our School Programs in five of Lynchburg's City's Schools have ended for the fall. The program that was conducted with the 3rd and 4th graders in these schools was titled "The Life Cycle of Bulbs." The children planted daffodils and pansies in their school gardens for enjoyment throughout the winter and spring.

The School Programs will resume in late February. Some of the programs will include the children potting up Spider Plants to take home and planting petunias in their respective school gardens.

Southside Master Gardeners (Halifax County), Meredith Bowman

Our unit members are very proud of themselves!! We won the Central District's along with the entire Commonwealth's Program Impact Award. We have worked hard with a water quality program, selling reusable shopping bags, and putting some sample kits in retailers' stores to change our community's attitudes and actions towards waste in Halifax County.

We finished the year with a Christmas dinner. All who attended brought canned food for our local Good Samaritan.

Northeast



Chesterfield, Lynne Foote

<http://www.chesterfield.gov/extension>

There were 18 new MG graduates on November 18 with their mentors and the press in attendance. The new MG class of 2009 has been interviewed and selected and now mentors will be assigned.

The plans for another round of rain barrel workshops are being planned for March. They will cost \$35 and about 100 barrels will be constructed.

Northeast



Chesterfield (continued)

<http://www.chesterfield.gov/extension>

The MG coordinator, Susan Edwards, has been working with Habitat for Humanity to help new homeowners with plantings for their new homes.

A display was prepared for Veterans Day and MGs provided cookies for the Veterans who came to the open house.

December was the end of the Winter Workshop series of 6 workshops. In 2008, 738 participants attended horticultural public seminars. There are more workshops planned for January and February. The first advanced training for 2009 is protecting pollinators.

Chesterfield MGs are working closely with Boulevard Flowers to have speakers and be part of the Extension Extravaganza on March 14.

This year the extension held an open house for all volunteers on 12/12 and it was a huge success.

The planning for the Horticultural Horizons on April 21 at Lewis Ginter continues. Early registration will take place starting in January with an early registration fee of \$40 before March 1, 2009.

Hanover, Christy Brennan

<http://www.hanovermastergardeners.org>

Our new Master Gardener class starts with 35 enrollees this month.

Our spring public education events include the Maymont Flower Show, Maymont's Herbs Galore, Maymont Day at Sandy's Plants, Hanover Spring Plant Sale, Lewis Ginter Plant Sale, the Giving Tree Plant Sale, and the Ashland Strawberry Faire.

Our planned youth and education programs include a Roots and Shoots program and the Lewis Ginter Children's Garden Program.

Finally, our advanced programs include an Active Landcare Stewards program comprised of composting, vermicomposting, and firewise landscaping.

(continued on page 4)

January News From Across the State

Northeast



James City County, Jim and Nelda Pressly
<http://www.jccwmg.org>

Our membership, which includes residents of New Kent County, supports major projects that include Community Outreach, Farmer's Market, Habitat for Humanity, Incredible Edible, Therapeutic Gardening, Landscape Love, a Pruning Clinic, Turf Love, a Speaker's Bureau and Mobil Master Gardeners.

We maintain demonstration gardens at Melissa Meadow and a water-wise garden at New Kent. In addition, we actively support the Colonial Williamsburg Reid & Shields Gardens. We grow flowers & herbs in the Reid Garden and herbs in the Shields garden. We also participate in their "Meet the Gardener" program and support the orchard and vegetable garden activities, as well as the Colonial Williamsburg Greenhouse.

We have active Stewards Programs for Trees and Water.

Our Youth projects include Botanical Garden tours, Enviroscope, and support to Matthey's Garden Youth Environment Education.

Special projects include the New Kent County Farm Tour, a plant diagnostic clinic, and support to the Detention Center Garden Guidance program.

As of mid-December, there were 151 active MGs and 8 emeritus MGs. Active MGs contributed 12,908 hours in 2008. As of mid-December, we had made 25,498 contacts, 8,506 of which were via our web site.

Northern



Northern Virginia (Arlington-Alexandria), Joe Kelly

<http://www.mgnv.org>

We finished off a very busy year with a festive Holiday Party and General Meeting, where we took just enough time away from food and fellowship to elect officers and new board members for 2009 and to recognize service milestones for various members.

Northern



Northern Virginia (Arlington-Alexandria),
 (continued)

<http://www.mgnv.org>

Looking back at 2008, highlights emphasize intensified efforts to provide several new public education events. These included some very well attended programs sponsored by the combined forces of our Public Education and Continuing Education Committees. We also made some needed capital improvements to some of our demonstration gardens and, along with holding "open house" programs, increased the attractiveness and public awareness of those gardens. Perhaps our most welcomed event was when our parent Arlington VCE office returned to its permanent and beautifully renovated location after nearly two years in temporary quarters, giving us meeting, storage and lab space.

We have everything in place for our 2009 Training Class, where we anticipate more than 30 new MG volunteers; we're looking forward to continuing and expanding our mission as educators.

Green Spring, Cindi Bishop, Joan Richards

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/mastergardener.htm>

Green Spring MGs graduated 20 interns in November. Green Spring MGs are responsible for the Help Desk from November through March.

MGs act as docents, leading Green Spring Gardens strolls at the Green Spring Historic House.

MGs met Saturday, December 6, for a special education session on Winter Tree Identification led by Adam Downing, VCE Agent from Madison County, Virginia.

Green Spring MGs will present their 5th annual EcoSavvy Gardening Symposium: Techniques for Keeping our Planet Healthy on Saturday, February 28. (continued on page 5)

January News From Across the State

Northern


Central Rappahannock Area (Stafford, Spotsylvania, Caroline, King George and Fredericksburg), Linda Dunn

In November, 26 new Master Gardeners graduated from the 2008 Master Gardener class and were honored at a reception given by MGACRA in December. This month, MGACRA will host our annual awards banquet honoring those who achieved Master Gardener milestones in 2008. One of our Master Gardeners, Cathy Smith, has just launched a website: *Wildlife Gardeners*, www.wildlifegardeners.org.

Prince William, Janet Scott

<http://www.pwcgov.org/vce/enr>

Leslie Paulson, a Prince William County MG Volunteer, was named the Prince William County Volunteer of the Quarter for July – September 2008. She was nominated by Nancy Berlin, Natural Resource Specialist, and Paige Thacker, Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) agent. Paulson has been a MG volunteer since 2004, contributing 2,686 hours of volunteer service and 359 hours of continuing education to VCE, Environment and Natural Resources Programs. Paulson is involved in every one of the diverse educational programs designed to protect water quality and provide education in sustainable land management practices.

New programs for the organization include Landscaping for Home Security; Septic Systems and Acceptable Alternatives; Worm Composting; 10 Steps to a Greener Lawn; Getting the Garden Ready for Spring; Companion Planting; Right Plant, Right Place Series: Perennials, Groundcovers & Vines; and Pruning Azaleas.

Piedmont (Albemarle County and City of Charlottesville), Joyce Grunewald

At the December 2008 Holiday Dinner, Piedmont MG, Rodney Schaffer, was the winner of the drawing for a VMGA Lifetime Membership. To qualify, any member was eligible that had paid their local MG dues by early December. This was a first time event for our unit and was the "kick-off" for what we hope will be more interest in and support of the VMGA.

Northern


Fairfax County, George Graine

<http://www.fairfaxmastergardeners.org>

The annual logistical and time-consuming effort to sign up 260+ Master Gardeners for service hours will take place on a Saturday in January before the new training class commences later in the month. This new and novel approach will result in timesavings that will allow for another day of training. Space will be reserved for volunteers to commit to various "competing" programs such as plant clinics at farmer's markets, county public libraries, help line, and special events. Additionally, Master Gardener support will be required for Ready-Set-Grow, Senior Citizen Outreach programs, and others. A "recruiting" desk will be available to encourage membership in VMGA. Master Gardener College will be promoted via a looped power point presentation. Pledge forms for the State Master Gardener Coordinator Endowment will also be available. This special desk will alert intern and experienced Master Gardeners that our program definitely extends beyond the Capital Beltway. Handouts on VMGA and Master Gardener College-2009 will be available. Other Units can easily modify copies of the handouts for use.

Fluvanna, Joann Henry

<http://www.fluvannamg.org>

The Unit's ongoing projects and programs are: the Children's Garden at Fluvanna Elementary School; the Help Desk in the County Office Building; Farmers' Market Help Desk (seasonal); the Senior Garden in Fork Union; the Beautification Corps at Lake Monticello; the Community and Demonstration Gardens at Haden House, as well as the garden at Holland-Page Place; Old Farm Day; and the Heritage Harvest Festival Participation. No new projects have begun. We are evaluating our current projects and their impact in the community.

The unit has 45 active volunteers and the 2009 Master Gardener Class begins this month.

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January News From Across the State

Southeast

**Norfolk Master Gardeners, Don Snipes**

<http://www.vbmg.org>

The Norfolk unit wrapped up the year in the green. For the second year in a row we made and sold holiday table arrangements and, this year, netted around \$1700.

Our Street Tree Inventory MG's logged over 1,023 hours and 19,686 trees and planting sites.

A new Steering Committee for 2009 was elected and applicants for the 2009 MG training class are being interviewed.

Virginia Beach, Fran Shelton

<http://www.vbmg.org>

The Virginia Beach Master Gardeners will be working the Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Course this month and also the Mid-Atlantic Home and Flower Show in February.

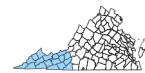
The City of Va. Beach has given the VBMG an area at our Farmer's Market to begin an educational Kitchen Garden. The city will provide the materials, soil, fence, etc., and the MGs will develop the garden and educate the citizens of Va. Beach about the garden. We will also be available for school tours, as many children are not aware of from where the food comes and how their food is grown. The foods grown will be contributed to our local food bank.

Southwest

**Master Gardeners of the Blue Ridge (Carroll, Grayson, City of Galax), Charlie Whittle**

We are 54 members strong, with 17 new interns completing the training class in November. Our volunteers contributed 4025 service hours in 2008.

Southwest

**Master Gardeners of the Blue Ridge (Carroll, Grayson, City of Galax), Charlie Whittle** (continued)

Extension agents and members are planning pruning sessions to restore the heirloom apple orchard at Matthews Historic Farm & Forest. This is part of a larger effort to utilize heirloom produce from the orchard and farm for local food banks and to teach food prep and nutrition and entrepreneurial skills working with the 4H Youth Development. Agents from both counties, with MG assistance, will conduct apple grafting sessions for the general public in March in Carroll and Grayson Counties.

Northwest

**Rockbridge Area, David Mims**

<http://www.ramga.org>

2008 ended with a plethora of activities and accomplishments, including a new web site.

Our Fall Education Event, "Restoration of a Pasture, brought the insights of Phyllis and Fred Fevrier, who shared their ongoing labor-of-love at their 27 acre homestead in the shadow of Jump Mountain.

Mary Adkins, our "Queen of Dig & Divide", led a dozen MGs in potting seedlings of trees and ornamental shrubs at Boxerwood Gardens for our Spring Plant Sale.

The MG Emeritus Award was presented to Caroline Norrington of Raleigh at a ceremony in Richmond.

We have 75 members, who contributed 5000 volunteer hours in 2008. We look forward to our new class in January 2009.

2009 MG College Scholarships



VMGA will offer \$100 MG College Scholarships through the Dianne Relf Educational Endowment Fund to selected Master Gardeners who have been nominated by their Extension Agents/Coordinators. Each Extension Agent/Coordinator has the opportunity to nominate two Master Gardeners from their Unit. The applications for 2009 will be forwarded via ListServ and available on the VMGA website this month. For more information, contact Paul Campbell, VA Beach MG, Panda91@cox.net or (757) 412-0696.

The Graine Thumb

Tall Oaks from Little Acorns Grow



By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

"Planting nuts requires a vision for a future that goes beyond one's mortal reach."

-- Bernd Henrich (Prof Emeritus, Biology, Univ of Vermont, *Growing Trees from Seeds*)

It is winter. You've shoveled snow, looked at a handful of garden catalogs, and drawn up some real or wishful thinking landscape makeovers. Perhaps you got an early season itch and started seeds in some kind of hothouse contraption. Let's take this seed-starting thing a step further, assuming you are not a Type A personality and have time to spare. In fact, about ten years ought to do because here is the deal: The late Henry Kock, in conjunction with Paul Aird, John Ambrose, and Gerald Waldron, wrote a book for patient people with foresight called, *Growing Trees from Seed: A Practical Guide to Growing Native Trees, Vines and Shrubs* (Firefly Books, 2008). In this book the authors reveal the "secret" of knowing which seeds to collect, how to treat them in order to have success with germination and how to care for them.

Surely you are familiar with the expression "*Parvis e glandibus quercus.*" ("Tall oaks from little acorns grow.") Is this a reasonable expectation for the home gardener to achieve? The Grainthumb answer to this question is a positive maybe. The thesis of Kock's book is that growing trees from seeds could be included in the grand scheme of your horticultural endeavors. In other words, this is something that can become a practical enterprise given sufficient time. If, at Master Gardener College or elsewhere, you learned some rudimentary techniques of grafting and budding, then you have already taken some early steps towards the process of growing trees from seeds.

The early chapters of the book (about 60 pages) include an introduction on how to go about plant identification, searching for seeds (not always as easy as you might imagine), preparing the seeds, germination, planting, and lest we forget, the importance of restoring the landscape. Many critical sidebar comments and black and white illustrations complete the introductory material. Following these chapters (about 160 pages) is an indispensable resource of material on about 200 species of trees, vines, and shrubs. Of course, the ultimate goal is propagation and to this end the authors arranged the book in alphabetical order by genus, the botanical group of species. The textual material is written in such a manner that you can understand the plant in question and thus get to the all-important seed. Sounds simple, doesn't it? You are in for a lot of nature's surprises. Lots of illustrations show distinctive aspects of fruit and seed which accompany each genus whenever appropriate. The illustrations are mostly life size and, as an additional aid, more than 90 color photos provide further reference.

One last point. Even if growing trees from seed is not your thing, Grainthumb guarantees that you will enjoy the written descriptions about the plant material. You can read about some of your favorites, such as dogwoods, redbuds, maples, many conifers, popular vines, and dozens more. All are given an elegant treatment!

MG College 2009 Goody Bags

As we all reminisce on the holidays gone by and start to set our sights on the new spring projects just around the corner, your help is requested. The annual Master Gardener College program is fast approaching: five months, to be exact. Master Gardener College has anywhere from 225 to 250 attendees, along with guest speakers. VMGA would like to give everyone a goody bag. We need 300 to be prepared before the program begins. If you know of a unique horticulture item that would be interesting to MGs or our speakers, or you know someone who can make arrangements to acquire 300 donated pieces of that item, then please contact Patty Gamache at (540) 587-0524 rgama37@aol.com. All items for the goody bags should be sent to Patty at 1714 Kingston Circle, Bedford, VA, 24523.

Items such as pencils, bookmarks, magazines, soil samples, and creams work very well for this. Any help provided will be greatly appreciated, not only by Patty, but also by everyone involved in the preparation of our annual Master Gardener College program goody bags.

General Announcements

VMGA Report

The VMGA Report is the bimonthly newsletter of the Virginia Master Gardener Association. Submissions should be received by the 25th of December, February, April, June, August, and October. Send inquiries and submissions to:

Peggy Fox, peggyfox@hotmail.com

Dawn Meyerriecks, dmyrix@hotmail.com

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Please help us keep your listing current. When you have changes to your e-mail address, street address, zip code, phone number or name, please forward these changes to the Membership Chair, Mary Ann Kincaid. She can be reached at maryann.kincaid@verizon.net OR 1549 Beechwood Cove, Virginia Beach, VA 23464.

About the Virginia Master Gardener Association....

We are a non-profit, educational statewide association of Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) employees organized under 501(c)(3) of the US tax code. Our mission is to foster communication, education and fellowship among Master Gardeners, and to give support and input to the state leaders of our VCE effort

VMGA Report
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