

VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

REPORT



Vol. 16, No. 4

<http://www.vmga.net>

July/August 2009

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Upcoming Meetings

8 August 2009, 10 AM
Claytor Nature Study Center
1844 Woods Road
Bedford, VA 24523
*** Hosted by Hill City MGs ***

President's Message

Betty Villers, VMGA President

The 22nd Master Gardener College was one of the best and most well attended. THANK YOU to everyone who helped put it together. There were 275 attendees who spent time hearing great speakers, attending tours, participating in workshops, swapping plants, listening to music, enjoying the company of other Master Gardeners, plus enjoying college life with great food. It was hard to return home on Sunday.

It was announced during our Annual meeting that Governor Kaine proclaimed the week of June 14-29, 2009 as Virginia Master Gardener Week to celebrate 30 years of accomplishments. Thanks to Cheri Haggerty with assistance from Peggy Fox and Dave Close.

Master Gardener College is a great time to meet other Master Gardeners and share what goes on at the local unit level. Of those attending, five received VMGA Diane Relfe Education Endowment fund scholarships to MG College.

The first two days included Leadership Development Training and Tree Steward Training. Thursday brought the rest of the Master Gardeners from across the state. Master Gardeners who had reached milestones in their volunteer hours were recognized Thursday night at the MG College Milestone Awards Ceremony. Two of our highest achievers, Cheri Haggerty (Hanover) and Karen Sacasky (Lynchburg), were recognized for 7000 hours.

It wouldn't be MG College without the Brag Boards. This year, the VMGA changed requirements of the former Brag Board competition by modeling the program after the International Search for Excellence (SFE) program. We had four SFE entries. International competition, here we come!

The Silent Auction was a big hit again this year under the leadership of Leslie Paulson and Sharon Corbin. There were many more plants than usual such as Encore® Azaleas and plants from the Beautiful Gardens® introductions. Shelby Snider, of Roanoke, made another one of her three tiered leaf water fountains for a very successful raffle. All the proceeds from both events went to the State MG Coordinator Endowment. THANKS to all the units and individuals who donated items.

There is more, but space is limited. To find out more, ask those folks from your unit, who attended, to give their report. Plan on being there next year, June 24-27, 2010.

Enjoy the rest of your summer.

Betty

UPCOMING EVENTS

25 July, Woody Plant Propagation, Monticello, CHP Tufton Farm Nursery, 9:30 AM

<http://www.monticello.org>

31 July - 1 August, "The Woods in Your Backyard", Kilmarnock, VA, 1 PM

www.vmga.net

4-5 August, "Green Tonic: Urban Gardening for Health and Wholeness", Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, 3 PM

www.lewisingter.org

20 August, Blandy's Remarkable Ginkgoes, State Arboretum, 10 AM

www.hort.vt.edu/hhg

22 August, Creating an Herbal Potpourri, CHP Tufton Farm Nursery, 9:30 AM

www.monticello.org

9 September, 34th Annual Nursery, Landscape & Arboricultural Field Day, VA Tech Hampton Roads AREC

<http://www.vnla.org>

10 September, "Trees: The Ultimate Stimulus Package", Waynesboro, VA

www.treesvirginia.org

12 September, Virginia GoGreen Garden Festival, Richmond, VA, 9 AM,

www.virginiagardening.com

18-19 September, American Conifer Society, Southeast Regional Conference, Richmond, VA

www.conifersociety.org

24 September - 4 October, Virginia State Fair, The Meadow, Doswell, VA

www.statefair.com

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

Search for Excellence

Christy Brennan

This year during the 2009 Master Gardener College, VMGA launched the first "Search for Virginia Excellence" competition. Several brave units took up the challenge and entered display boards of projects for the competition. Several units also brought in traditional Brag Boards for our annual Brag Board Competition.

The panel of judges, carefully chosen by Dave Close, share in Dave's vision to have VA Master Gardener units showcase some of their outstanding projects in the International Competition.

Results of the VA Search for Excellence Competition are as follows:

Overall Top Score: 1st Place: Central VA, Louisa, Community Gardening and Service

Workshops and Presentations: 1st Place: Northern VA

Youth Programs: 1st Place: Hill City

Youth Programs: 2nd Place: Hanover

Each presentation was judged on key components of planning, originality, practicality and usefulness of the project, the number of people impacted and what significant learning took place by those who took part in the program. The judges were very enthusiastic and requested their comments be forwarded to each group in order to have each group ready for the International SFE Competition. Representatives from VCE are delighted to see the new emphasis on program development and reporting. It has been suggested a SFE program be available to all groups during the 2010 Master Gardener College. The hope is that every VA Master Gardener Unit will participate at the 2010 MG College and the winners of our state competition will be entered into the International SFE Competition to represent Virginia Master Gardeners.

The Brag Board Competition winners are:

Community Food Resources and Nutrition: 1st place: Loudoun County

Community Food Resources and Nutrition: 2nd place: VA Beach

Hort Therapy: 1st Place: York County

Thanks to the members of the VA Search for Excellence Committee, Angela Cingale, Bud Gregory, Dave Close and his expert panel of judges for making this year's competition a success.

Remember, the 2011 International Master Gardener College will be in our own back yard (West VA). Let's show them that Virginia has the best Master Gardener Program in the nation by highlighting our projects.

July News From Across the State

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

Northeast



Fairfax-Green Spring, Joan Richards
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/mastergardener.htm>

Green Spring Master Gardeners were busy on two fronts in May and June. The Speaker's Bureau filled requests for eco savvy gardening, summer bulbs, wildlife habitat, and turf care. Garden docents were busy conducting tours of the demonstration gardens in Green Spring Gardens Park.

A large number of garden clubs as well as Master Gardeners from both Maryland and Virginia visited and received tours led by GSGM. May 8 was National Public Garden Day and in celebration, MGs led tours of the gardens. Garden Day was celebrated on May 16 with Master Gardeners answering garden questions for the many attendees.

Hanover, Christy Brennan

<http://www.hanovermastergardeners.org>

Hanover Master Gardeners installed a demonstration garden including native plantings, vegetables and ornamentals at the Extension Office near the Hanover Court House complex.

Six grants were given to several schools in the county for the development of horticulture projects. Many of the recipients gave presentations during our June membership and graduation meeting. Recipients and Master Gardeners are excited to start the various educational programs throughout the county.

Northeast



Chesterfield, Lynne Foote
<http://www.cchesterfield.gov/extension>

Chesterfield County's Grass Roots drew 192 applicants this year.

Currently, there are 50 applicants for our expanded Gardening for Chesterfield Residents Program.

We have added several new public programs about vegetable gardening including fall vegetable gardening.

The MGs have formed a new partnership with a fire station to discuss naturalized plantings and have continued work with Habitat for Humanity, as well as another partnership with Senior Connections to educate senior citizens about patio gardens.

Pollinator Week was celebrated with activities at several Ukrops Supermarkets.

Chesterfield MGs assisted with the James River Cleanup.

Northern



Central Rappahannock Area, Linda Dunn

Work continues at the historical gardens in the Fredericksburg area: Mary Washington's House, Belmont, Kenmore, and Ferry Farms.

We held a fundraising silent auction with a theme of "Make it, Bake it, Sew it, Grow it."

Our July general membership meeting will feature Anita Tuttle, with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and Jamie Brunkow with the Friends of the Rappahannock.

New Virginia MG T-Shirts

Mens: Available in sizes M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL. Colors are: Prairie Dust, Kiwi, Indigo Blue
 Ladies cut: Available in sizes S, M, L, XL, 2XL. Colors are: Rose Blossom, Pistachio, Orchid, Iris
 Price: \$12.00 each.

These shirts have the Virginia Master Gardener small circle logo on the left front and the large logo on the back of shirt. Visit VMGA website, www.vmga.net, to see pictures of the shirt. These shirts are Gildan Ultra Cotton, which is the same as the existing VMGA t-shirts, but Gildan is now using finer cotton, so these feel softer. They are pre-shrunk.

Contact your unit rep to place your order or contact Susan G. at NeverEnoughPlants@gmail.com.

July News From Across the State (continued)

Southeast

**Norfolk, Don Snipes** <http://www.nmgv.org>

Three new projects have been approved: Significant Tree Project, Fellini's-Colonial Place Rain Garden and Native Dune Plant Demonstration Garden.

The Water Stewards are working on a Children's Rain Garden at the Virginia Zoo.

The Street Tree Inventory project is still active with emphasis on collecting the significance and history of the trees.

We are getting more requests for speakers and projects than ever before.

Western Tidewater, Betty Jo Hendrix

Our MGs are hard at work this summer organizing the Jr. Master Gardener/4H day camp, the Isle of Wight County Fair, which will feature an extensive plant clinic with demonstrations, yard art, and the promotion of our winter training classes. Both Isle of Wight and Southampton counties are without Ag and 4H agents. We will be working through the Surry agent, Glen Slade.

We are currently holding plant clinics at the Smithfield Curbside Market and the Windsor Tailgate Market.

The therapeutic gardening program has been expanded from the two local nursing homes to an income-restricted senior housing community with approximately 45 residential units.

Our interns are working with mentors on programs that can be used by MG speakers, complete with charts and Power Point presentations.

Central

**Amherst, Campbell, and Lynchburg (Hill City MGA), Deborah Straw**

<http://www.hcmga.org>

Our School Programs in five of Lynchburg City Schools are done for this spring. Programs included Houseplants and Geography, Life in the Garden and planting the school beds with Wave petunias. Our Master Gardeners are now helping children plant their gardens at several Community Centers in the city.

Our unit is preparing for the next VMGA meeting on August 8th at Lynchburg College's Clayton Nature Study Center in Bedford, VA. We have planned tours of the Ramsey-Freer Herbarium, the VCE/MG Beautiful Gardens (guided by Bedford MG's) and the CNSC Memorial Garden after the meeting. Hope to see lots of folks there.



Southwest

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

"Giving Garden" at Matthews Farm Museum will host open houses and demonstrations throughout the summer. We have continued our partnership with Matthews Farm Orchard/4-H/VCE to utilize apples for cooking/preservation classes and to feed the needy continues.

Our unit held a successful first plant sale at Galax Farmer's Market.

VMGA Membership Report

VMGA membership continues to grow every year. Our 500 members represent almost every unit in the state. This facilitates continuing communication between VMGA members and our Tech and VCE partners. Membership dues are currently \$12 per year, June 1-May 31. Applications are available online at www.vmga.net or you may request a form from Mary Ann Kincaid at maryann.kincaid@verizon.net.

Virginia Master Gardener Week Proclamation

**CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION**

By virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution in the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, there is hereby officially recognized:

VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER WEEK

WHEREAS, volunteer activities greatly enhance the lives of citizens in communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Cooperative Extension responds to the needs of individuals, families, groups and organizations with educational programs through their local Extension office; and

WHEREAS, since 1979, the Virginia Master Gardener Program has been a volunteer education program under the auspices of Virginia Cooperative Extension comprised of volunteers who are dedicated to working in their communities to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticultural practices through Sustainable Landscape Management; and

WHEREAS, there are currently well over 5,000 Virginia Master Gardener volunteers who reported more than 269,000 volunteer hours and made more than 547,000 contacts with fellow citizens of the Commonwealth during the 2008 calendar year; and

WHEREAS, Sustainable Landscape Management practices provide many benefits, such as protecting water quality, improving air quality, increasing property values and promoting healthy lifestyles leading to a higher quality of life, making Virginia a more desirable place to live and work; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Master Gardeners will come together during the week of June 14-20, 2009 to celebrate their 30 years of accomplishments;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Timothy M. Kaine, do hereby recognize June 14-20, 2009 as **VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER WEEK** in the **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Kaine".

Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine F. Stanley".

Secretary of the Commonwealth

Diane Relf 2009 Scholarship Report

Paul Campbell, Scholarship Fund Chair

Donations: In addition to the VMGA budgeted amount for these scholarships, donations were received from the following individuals: Julie Denny, Debi Edwards, Penny Thompson, Seth Walton; Dawn Filipowicz in memory of Joan Pardee; Corann Kitchen in memory of Catherine Mellichamp; Susan Brock and family in memory of Louise via Burch; Alexandra Wunderly in honor of the deceased students and faculty of VT; Kathleen Turner in memory of the VA Tech students; Gretchen Fisher in memory of Dick Ewing.

Selections: Following review and evaluation of the submitted applications by the Committee, the following individuals were nominated and selected for receipt of the 2009 Master Gardener College Scholarships: Debbie Hizer, Lynchburg, nominated by Don Davis; Mary Lyons, Prince George, nominated by Scott Reiter; Sheela Macumber, Chesapeake, nominated by Mike Andruczyk; Jack Price, Rappahannock, nominated by Tim Ohlwiler; Peggy Stuart, Fairfax, nominated by Adria Bordas.

VMGA Silent Auction for the Endowment

Leslie Paulson and Sharon Corbin, Prince William County MGs

This year, working together, we raised \$4032 from our annual VMGA Silent Auction. Shelby Snider, of Roanoke, raised \$210 on her raffle for the water fountain. This gave us a grand total of **\$4242** for the State Master Gardener Coordinator Endowment Fund. Thanks to every one who donated items and, of course, to all the lucky winners for their monetary donations.

Each year, as we prepare for this event, we wonder if we will get enough donations to make a sizeable contribution to the Endowment. It's exciting to get the emails letting us know what you are donating. As they come in, we put them on our magic spreadsheet that allows us to track who gave what and eventually who bought it for what price. This is a great tool to as it helps with our records and totals everything automatically. I'm telling you all this to get your excitement meter humming so you would help VMGA organize the Auction next year. Sharon and I are stepping down. Seriously consider jumping in! You will meet and get to know Master Gardeners across the state and you will become the next heroes.

If you are interested in this position, please get in touch with Betty Villers at bettyv@cox.net.

VA State Fair

Christy Brennan

The VA State Fair, September 24-October 4, 2009, is coming to a new location this year: The Meadow, located one mile past King's Dominion in Doswell, Caroline County. MG Volunteers are needed to staff our booth and conduct demonstrations on The Strawberry DNA Experiment; Good/Bad Insects; Vermicomposting; Pruning; Mulching; Composting; and Fire-Wise Landscaping. Get your group signed up early to participate in the Grand Opening! To pick a date and time for your unit, contact Christy Brennan, ctb47@comcast.net. Tickets for free volunteer admission are limited to 12 per day. A parking fee of \$5 per day may be in effect for volunteers, so carpooling is recommended. New this year: If your unit has a JRMG Program and/or VA Master Naturalist Program, showcase opportunities are available for these groups. JRMG's will be spotlighted on Sept 27; VMN's will be highlighted on Oct 4. Also, Education Exhibits will open at 9 am on weekdays, instead of 10 am. Competition at the State Fair is open to all. You can enter your houseplants, plants and harvest for cash prizes at the Fair. Just follow the link below for directions, competition rules and entry forms. <http://www.statefair.com/>

How to Photograph Your Garden

Jim Davis, Rockbridge Area Master Gardener

The tips that follow are not for expert photographers, but rather for casual picture takers who would like better results with their garden photos. There are only a few simple rules to follow for quick improvement. Most everything I say will apply to both film and digital cameras. Both kinds, even the less expensive ones, come with a great variety of settings and abilities, but I don't assume great facility with the camera.

Rule 1. Some acknowledge only *three* rules in photography: Light, Light and Light. Like many catch phrases, this one holds much truth, and we can't cover the whole subject here. Be aware, though: the best light occurs in those magic hours of early morning and late afternoon. Then you'll have the advantage of soft shadows and avoid harsh glare that washes out color and detail. The light is often even more effective just after a rain, the wet leaves supplying a richer color. If you encounter unwanted shadows in close-ups, use a reflector to brighten them. White poster board works well; it can be propped up or held by a bored friend who takes instruction well. I'd avoid using flash, but if you need to fill dark space you should experiment with it.

Rule 2. Sharpness is almost as important as light, so keep the camera steady. If a tripod isn't an option, put the camera on a bench or ladder. If a cable release isn't an option, use the self-timer, so as not to shake the camera when tripping the shutter. Avoid shooting on a windy day. Mornings and evenings are often less windy than other times—another good reason for shooting early or late.

Rule 3. Give careful attention to composition. First, fill the frame with interesting matter. Everything you see in the viewfinder or LCD monitor should be worth gazing at and should enhance your overall purpose. Moving in close to the main subject of your shot will likely exclude what you *don't* want, such as parts of the house. Even so, be careful to choose an interesting background. In the process, decide whether to make the photo vertical or horizontal. Most amateurs like us rarely turn the camera for a vertical shot, although to capture height or sometimes length (of a path, say) that format is essential.

Examine these two illustrations and decide which follows the tips in this section better.



Finally, for even greater interest, break the eye-level syndrome (whether photographing the garden or people); shoot while kneeling or perching on something. Many stunning photos in gardening magazines, would look like weed fields if shot from a careless angle or at eye level.

Rule 4. This is really a special part of Rule 3. It's called the rule of thirds. Divide the image into thirds horizontally, positioning the horizon and sky in the upper third. Then try to make two additional fairly distinct layers for the other two-thirds of the picture. You can, of course, leave out the horizon, allowing the eye to concentrate on details. It's also a good idea to include a diagonal somewhere in the photo. Examine these two illustrations and decide which is the more interesting.



Rule 5. Take several shots of every subject, varying light direction, composition, camera angle and anything else you can. Film, after all, is cheap nowadays.

Now, if a viewer says, "Your camera takes good pictures," smugly remember—it's the photographer and not the camera that gets the good shots.

VMGA Report

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

Peggy Fox, peggyfox@hotmail.com

Dawn Meyerriecks,
dmyrix@hotmail.com

USDA MG Press Release

WASHINGTON, July 9, 2009 – Looking for some free gardening advice? Has your well-intentioned 'green thumb' resulted in your garden looking a little brown? USDA has a cadre of volunteers who provide free gardening tips and have a wealth of science-based research to answer your questions. Trained by USDA's Cooperative Extension Service, Master Gardeners provide information in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia. To find MGs, visit www.extension.org/pages/Extension_Master_Gardener.

"Master Gardeners are a valuable resource for people who want to get some tips on gardening and growing their own food from a real expert," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Growing fruits and vegetables in your own garden not only promotes a healthier lifestyle, but helps communities develop a safe, nutritious and sustainable source of food."

For the rest of this article, go to:
http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/?ut/p_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentonly=true&contentid=2009/07/0298.xml.

VMGA Continuing Ed Event

Mark your calendars now for Tuesday, 13 October, when we will convene at the Thomas Jefferson Center for Heritage Plants, Tufton Farms, to address "Moving Toward Sustainability". Registration begins August 15th and will be available via our web site: <http://www.vmga.net>.

VMGA Report
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