



VMGA Executive Board

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| PRESIDENT | |
| Bill Scott | 703-791-2646 |
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| Christy Brennan | 804-741-0801 |
| PAST PRESIDENT | |
| Betty Villers | 757-481-6398 |
| TREASURER | |
| Jim Kincaid | 757-467-6782 |
| SECRETARY | |
| Peggy Fox | 757-930-2174 |

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| MEMBERSHIP | |
| Mary Ann Kincaid | 757-467-6782 |
| EDUCATION | |
| Barbara Geer | 804-861-8055 |
| STATE FAIR | |
| Christy Brennan | 804-741-0801 |

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August VMGA Bi-Monthly Board Meeting

10 AM - 2 PM, 14 August, 2010
 Newport News Co-op Ext Office
 739 Thimble Shoals Blvd, Ste 1009
 Newport News, VA 23606

-- Hosted by Newport News MGs --

President's Message

Bill Scott, VMGA President

The completion of another successful MG College signals the beginning of another fiscal year for VMGA. Our first Board meeting will be on August 14th in Newport News. The meetings are open to all of the membership and are rotated around the state during each fiscal year. I invite as many of the members who can to attend these meetings and to participate in them if you have input or questions for the Board of Directors.

As I said in my letter to the membership, I am excited and confident that as an organization we can successfully meet the challenges facing VMGA and move the organization forward. I believe that we established a good line of communication with Dean Grant and the other leaders of CALS and VCE at our meetings in Blacksburg.

I look forward to meeting and working with all of our membership in the coming months. If you have any questions or issues, I can be reached at my home number, 703 791-2646 or by email: wjscott2@verizon.net. – Bill

2010/2011 Meetings

Please mark your calendars now and plan to join us as we manage YOUR organization.

2010

August 14 – Newport News (Southeast)
 October 9 – Galax (Southwest)
 December 11 – Fluvanna (Northern)

2011

February 12 – Henrico (Southeast)
 April 9 – Albemarle/Piedmont (Northern)
 October 8 – Roanoke (Southwest)
 August 18 – Fairfax/Green Spring (Northern)
 December 10 – Halifax/Southside (Central)

UPCOMING EVENTS

20 July, "Garden in the Classroom: A Professional Development Workshop, Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, 9 AM www.hort.vt.edu

24 July, "Herbaceous Plant Propagation", Monticello's Tufton Farm, 9:30 AM, www.monticello.org

28 July, "Herbs and Edible Flowers", Blandy, 1 PM, www.virginia.edu/blandy

29 July, *Botanical Illustration Workshop: Hydrangeas*, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 10 AM www.lewisginter.org

2 August, "CSI for Plants", Norfolk Botanical Garden, 7 PM, www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org

5 August, "Plant it Now! Fall Vegetable Gardens the Organic Way", Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 5 PM www.lewisginter.org

7 August, *Butterfly Walk*, Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, 12 PM, www.hort.vt.edu/hhg

8 August, "Know Your Late Season Weeds", Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, 12 PM, www.hort.vt.edu/hhg

21 August, "Creating an Herbal Potpourri", Monticello's Tufton Farm, 9:30 AM, www.monticello.org

24 August, "Building a Cold Frame", Blandy, 1 PM, www.virginia.edu/blandy

27 August, "Seeds of Summer", Norfolk Botanical Garden, 9:30 AM, www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org

Send VMGA calendar inputs to Frank Reilly, Frank@theReillyGroup.net.

State MG Liaison Report for April

By David Close, Virginia MG State Coordinator

- **State Record Keeping System Update** – VCE will be signing an agreement with the University of California-Davis concerning the use of the system. Seven MG units have volunteered to pilot the system. Target date is mid-July.
- **In-Season Newsletter** – The state MG office is in the process of updating the MG e-mail address for newsletter delivery.
- **New Gardening Blog, Ask an Expert** – The new extension consumer horticulture gardening blog, *Ask an Expert*, has started. It will be linked to Facebook and Twitter for responses by Extension 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This will amplify what agents do. Implementation in VA is 50%. Efforts are being made to coordinate with MG units in defined geographical locations, which will help connect the units and local constituents and provide area-appropriate responses.

Summer in the Garden

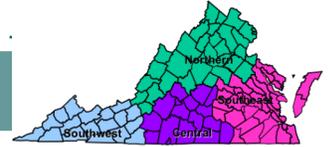
By Linda Shotton, Loudoun County Master Gardener

It's summertime and we've all planted our annuals, mulched our beds (well, most of us), and are ready to sit back and enjoy our hard spring work.

But wait, what's that? A weed dares to encroach into our meticulous beds? It's a fact of life. No matter how well we prepare our garden, the weeds show the reason they are classified as pests. And, if we aren't pulling weeds, we are hopefully harvesting some wonderful produce from a vegetable bed. It looks like there will be time spent out in the hot Virginia sun after all. We polled the Loudoun County Master Gardeners for hints on how to keep cool while doing those gardening chores:

- **Earlier is better** – get outside before the sun is at its hottest. During the summer months, the Demonstration Garden Team alters the normal 9 – noon hours so we don't have heat stroke (trust me, it's happened!). We work from 8 or 8:30 until 11 or 11:30 on the hottest summer days.
- **Drink a LOT of water** – believe it or not, it's very easy to pull weeds, deadhead, or do general plant maintenance, and before you know it two hours have passed. Bring an insulated drink cooler into the garden. This way, it's convenient and you are more likely to keep hydrated.
- **Buy Sure Moist products for containers** (the ones which swell with water) and sew a little bandana with 2 Tablespoons of the bead. Before gardening, soak the bandana in water, and you have a collar/ring of fabric to wear around your neck to help keep you cool. Make sure to use non-bleeding fabrics!

(continued on page 4)



The full report of the units can be found at <http://www.vmganet.net>. (Editor's note: Due to technical difficulties with email transmission, only a few unit reports were received for publication. We hope to have the bugs worked out for our next issue's crop of unit reports. -- PF)

Southeast



Chesterfield, Lynne Foote

<http://www.offices.ext.vt.edu/chesterfield>

The Chesterfield MGs have started several new projects: an information table at Pocahontas State Park every Sunday all summer; Pattie Bland from the Hanover VCE office approached us (as well as Henrico) to assist in several projects at McGuire VA Hospital in Richmond. This work will be done in conjunction with the American Red Cross. It will involve therapeutic gardens in which the veterans will garden as well as help with a greenhouse and education (for those returning to the workforce).

The advanced training continues with exciting offers such as a tree scavenger hunt at Maymont and training on how to use a key to identify trees. Also, Dr. Doug Tallamy, Professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware, and author of *Bringing Nature Home*, will be speaking on November 1.

Newport News, Anita Smith

<http://www.nnmastergardeners.org>

The Newport News Master Gardeners are scheduling workshops over the summer to get caught up on the long waiting list of residents who are anxious to construct rain barrels. The response to the collaborative effort between Newport News Waterworks and Master Gardeners has been overwhelming.

SAVE THE DATE: September 25, 2010, Newport News Master Gardeners are holding their third annual GO GREEN-\$AVE GREEN event. The event is open to the public free of charge (You will be able to download the registration from our website.) The theme this year is *Sustainability in the Home Landscape*. Laurie Fox from the HRAREC facility in Virginia Beach will be our keynote speaker. Plan to attend.

Please mark your calendars: Newport News will host the VMGA August 14, 2010 meeting at the Newport News Virginia Cooperative Extension Office, 739 Thimble Shoals Blvd., Suite 1009.

Southwest



The Blue Ridge, Charlie Whittle

Our unit is providing support to Matthews Living History Farm Museum's Spring Heritage Day. We are participating in a plant sale at Galax Leaf & String Festival. We are embarked on a joint effort with Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway preparing for its 75th anniversary events.

Central



Hill City, Deborah Straw

<http://www.hcmga.com>

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

Festival of Gardening, our only fund raising event, was a huge success. The event included a huge plant sale, Foggy Café' (bake & beverage sale), a used book sale, Gardener's Bounty (items produced from the garden), garden art and various demos and speakers.

On a sad note, May 31st saw the retirement of our Extension Agent, Don Davis. Don started the Master Gardener program in Lynchburg over 20 years ago. As of July 1st we will have a new agent in town. Agent Kevin Camm is transferring here from Amelia County. We are excited to have the opportunity to work with Kevin. Welcome Kevin!!



June News From Across the State (continued)

Northern



Northern Shenandoah, Fran Gregory

GardenFest 2010: "Master Gardeners Show You How" will be held this year at Belle Grove Plantation on Route 11 in Middletown, VA on Saturday, June 5, from 8 am to 3pm. Subjects include water conservation through proper garden design, proper use of rain barrels and everything you want to know about Daylilies and even the Emerald Ash Borer. The Good Bugs, Bad Bugs display should be a popular site. Children's activities include the MG Passport to Gardening, where kids make the rounds and receive a passport "stamp" of various gardening themes from bees and birds in the garden to a hands-on tour of the herb garden. A seasoned Blacksmith will be on hand to display his talent and garden tools will be sharpened for a nominal donation. MG grown plants and "slightly used" garden themed items will be on sale. Rain or shine there will be something for everyone. Join us at GardenFest.

Northern

Albemarle/Charlottesville Piedmont,
Joyce Grunewald

<http://www.PiedmontMasterGardeners.org>

Piedmont MGs are in full swing manning both the VCE office and on site "help desks." Farmer's markets being served by our members include Charlottesville, Crozet on Saturdays and Meade Park on Wednesdays. A help desk was also staffed at The Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Tufton Farm near Monticello. A big cheer goes out to HD coordinator, Debbie Miller - expert organizer, beggar and arm-twister!

VCE agent, Peter Warren and PMG, Ralph Hall, skillfully fielded bug questions during a local CBS station interview.

Billie Dietz, Kathi Marshall, Sally O'Neil and Joyce Grunewald completed the 2010 Tree Steward class. We now have a total of 36 volunteers who have completed the program.

Summer in the Garden (continued)

- Another trick with a bandana is to **place a wet bandana in the freezer** the night before you plan to garden. As it thaws, the water evaporates, keeping you cool!
- **Place a small freezer pack into your hat** — this keeps your head cool.
- **Wear a loose-fitting, long-sleeve white cotton shirt** open over a t-shirt.
- **Hose yourself down** before you begin gardening. You will be cool and dry by the time you finish.
- **Eat frozen grapes** while gardening — they're better than ice!

Finally a couple of more tips for summer gardening:

- Hate gnats? Hate bug spray all over your body? We do too! Take your bug spray and spray the inside bill of your gardening hat. Gnats fly to the highest point and search for moisture. Spraying the bill of your hat keeps the bugs from your eyes and face and you won't be covered in bug spray!
- Too many tomatoes and peppers? Not enough time to can? Throw them into the freezer straight off the vine for soups, sauces, and stews in the cold months! When the vegetables thaw, the skin is very easily removed. It slides right off!

Keep everything watered: 1"/week. Supplement rainwater, if needed.
Control weeds with mulch, cultivation, and/or handpicking.
Controls pests with insecticidal soap or soapy water.
Control mosquitoes by ensuring there is no standing water.

Fund-Raisers

**Support State MG Coordinator Endowment**

Purchase your seeds from [Botanical Interests](http://www.botanicalinterests.com). VMGA receives 20% of total sales. Tell a friend!

Botanical Interests is a seed company that offers great vegetable, herb and flower seeds, all untreated with pesticides. These are exceptional seeds that are unconditionally guaranteed and come in beautifully illustrated packets that contain much more information than the usual seed packet. The seeds are available at many retailers (never at discounters like Wal-Mart), but I encourage you to order them directly from the Botanical Interests website. The folks at Botanical Interests have offered us the opportunity to earn **20%** of all seed sales made to our members (and any of your friends who use the link). There is no tax on the seeds and the shipping is a flat \$3.95 for any size order, so you may want to combine orders with your friends. To place an order, go to the VMGA website, www.vmga.net and click on the Botanical Interests link on the front page or go to the link http://www.botanicalinterests.com/store/register_affiliate.php?AffiliateId=446

You will see in the top right hand corner, "Your purchase supports **Virginia Master Gardener Association**". This lets you know you are at the correct location. From here, just click on the seeds icons and shop, knowing that when you checkout, 20% of your purchase will be donated to the VMGA and in turn to the VCE State MG Coordinator Endowment Fund. Thank You! from your Virginia Master Gardener Association.
-- Betty Villers, Virginia Beach

NEW VMGA LOGO ITEMS!

VMGA is now offering indigo blue sweatshirts with the VMGA logo printed on the front in white. Price: \$18.00 each. A must have for those chilly evenings or rainy days when manning the Master Gardener information booths.

VMGA is also offering vinyl window clings. Great for your car window, they adhere without glue or tape. Easily removed and put back with no fuss. They are white with green lettering with the VMGA logo in the left hand corner and MASTER GARDENER in bold lettering. A "must have" for all Master Gardeners! A nice gift for new MG graduates. Price: two for \$5.00 or \$3.00 each.

VMGA MGC 2010 Scholarship Winners

The purpose of the Diane Relf Educational Endowment Fund (EEF) Scholarships are to (1) Assist VMGA members to attend MGC; (2) Further the VMGA goals of providing continuing education; (3) Increase the number of MGC attendees; (4) Encourage those members who have demonstrated exceptional potential in their local units. This year VMGA received 22 applications and gave scholarships to the following Master Gardeners:

Small Units (less than 70 members)

Susan Tipson, Northern Neck
Karen Craig, Bedford

Agent/Coordinator

Matt Lewis/Agent
Scott M. Baker/Agent

Large Units

Paul Gibson, Prince William
Jim Kincaid, Virginia Beach
Margie Bassford, Loudoun
Tom Bolt, Norfolk
Kandy Keith, Chesapeake

Agent/Coordinator

Nancy Berlin/MG Coordinator
Susan French/Agent
Debbie Dillion/Agent
Lynette Swanson/Agent
Mike Andruczyk/Agent

Judy Burton received a scholarship, given in memory of Bud Gregory. Lisa Sanderson is her Agent.

Thank you and Congratulations!! -- Leslie Paulson, EEF Scholarship Committee Chair

The Graine Thumb

Six Indispensable Books for the Master Gardener

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

Dear Reader: Over the course of many years, The Grainthumb has accumulated an "outrageous" number of horticultural books. Many of these books are species specific such as conifers, Japanese maples, hostas and ornamental grasses. Some books cover wider subjects including landscape design, trees and shrubs, lawn and ground covers, and shade gardening. Since 2001, it has been my distinct pleasure and yes, an honor to be included in 50 issues of our state Master Gardener newsletter. Perhaps most important is that while I am increasing my horticultural knowledge, so too do I take seriously the idea of helping others with this endeavor. Whereas The Grainthumb is not an oracle of horticulture, he will keep trying to get it right and deliver the message on time. Does one really need so many books? More to the point, which books are indispensable to a practicing Master Gardener? The half-dozen books noted below are most helpful because they contain answers to many problems that Master Gardeners are often called upon to solve. Each book has a unique aspect and they are, in the author's opinion, "must have" based on my experience.

If you are a fan of Michael Dirr's writing style, you will appreciate his pithy and personal feelings about the plants he either likes or (to be kind) feels otherwise, based on his growing and observation of plants. ***Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses*** (6th ed.) (Stipes, 2009) is considered by many to be the *sine qua non* of horticultural books. Most of the plant descriptions have been reworked and they include all of the information contained in the book title. This is not a colorful book; however, it continues to be the most informative and comprehensive book on the subject of trees and shrubs. One reviewer referred to this book as the "yellow pages" of trees and shrubs and no other single reference comes close.

When you hear about a ten-pound book you probably think coffee table book. This is not true of ***The American Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants*** (revised), edited by Christopher Brickell and H. Marc Cathey (DK, 2004). The meticulously illustrated introductory section on how to use this comprehensive encyclopedia will ease you into the plants arranged alphabetically by their botanical names. Not to fret because a separate common name index is included at the end of the book. The book jacket claims that 15,000 garden plants are profiled and more than 6,000 color photos augment the diverse forms and colors of a spectacular array of plants.

The Pruning Book by Lee Reich (Taunton, 2010) has been revised and updated. It is clearly illustrated with many line drawings and color photos. This easy to understand text explains how and why to prune. Also, the importance of how a plant responds to pruning is clearly and unobtrusively presented in just a few pages without obtuse scientific explanations. For those interested in specialized pruning techniques, basic information on pollarding, pleaching, topiary, creating standards, bonsai and espalier is provided. To paraphrase the carpenter's mantra, read twice and cut once.

Books about perennials abound but most seem to miss the key aspect after pretty and that is, how to maintain these so-called forever plants. Tracy DiSabato-Aust's expanded bestseller ***The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting & Pruning Techniques*** (Timber Press, 2006) shows what steps are appropriate and how to get the most out of any perennial plant. Her explanations are clearly spelled out and if followed you should achieve horticultural nirvana or more accurately, a spectacular perennial bed or border or even a focal point in your garden. Half of this book is devoted to the subject of maintenance. The remainder is an excellent encyclopedia of perennial plants with color photos that add to the plant descriptions. As a "bonus," there are 29 pages where you can write down your own perennial maintenance journal. Two valuable appendices are (a) month-by-month planting and maintenance schedule and (b) lists of perennials for specific pruning and maintenance requirements. Both should enhance your perennial experience.

The Graine Thumb (continued)

Another tome from the American Horticultural Society is ***New Encyclopedia of Gardening Techniques: The Indispensable Illustrated Practical Guide*** by Mitchell Beazley (AHS, 2010). As a how-to book, this is so well organized that your gardening skills will be enhanced. Think three P's – planting, pruning and propagation. All of these topics are treated with easy-to-follow detailed explanations including step-by-step color illustrations and full-color photos to help you achieve success. Chapters on growing ornamentals, vegetables, herbs and fruit are covered. Lawns, water gardening, container gardening and even attracting wildlife are also featured.

What's Wrong With My Plant? (And How Do I Fix It?) by David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth (Timber Press, 2009) is one of the best books for guiding you through the maze of plant pathology and entomology via the judicious use of illustrated flow charts. This book is an extremely valuable tool if you are directly involved in clinical work. See VMGA newsletter of Jan/Feb 2010 for The Grainthumb article, "No Excuses: Plant Diagnosis Revisited."

P.S. Thank you for encouraging me to continue as your garden communicator.

George,
 May your pencil always be sharp.
 May your pen never run dry.
 May you never be at a loss for words.
 Congratulations on 50! -- editor

My first article for the *VMGA Report* was printed in the Mar/Apr 2001 issue. I've covered a lot of ground since then with nary a repeat. I am unsure but it might have been Pat Reilly who encouraged me to write a bi-monthly article for the state newsletter. Now it has become a habit! -- George

Silent Auction Thank You!

The VMGA 2010 Auction for the State Master Gardener Coordinator Endowment was a huge success this year. We made \$3,700 in a very challenging year. We could not have done it without all the generous donations from Master Gardeners around the State. Sharon and I would like to thank you for supporting this worthy cause.

To all of you who bid and won the great items we had, we thank you as well. It was you reaching into your pockets to shop for great bargains that increased our total for this year.

I also want to thank our helpers for this year. It was their hard work and patience that enabled us to have a successful event.

Paul Campbell, Virginia Beach
Patty Gamache, Bedford
Paul Gibson, Prince William
Don Peschka, Prince William
Pat Reilly, Prince William
Janet Scott, Prince William
Maryann Sparks, Fauquier
Hank and Marilyn Spencer, Prince William
Spencer Williams, Prince William
Jane Wyman, Prince William

A special thank you for all his assistance and patience goes out to Dave Close who goes out of his way to fulfill our requests. We could not have done it without you. -- Leslie Paulson

VMGA Report

The VMGA Report is the bimonthly newsletter of the Virginia Master Gardener Association. Submissions should be received by the 30th of December, February, April, June, August, and October. Send inquiries and submissions to:

Peggy Fox, peggyfox@hotmail.com

Dawn Meyerriecks, dmyrix@hotmail.com

Please Help Us...

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.

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About VMGA

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
1549 Beechwood Cove
Virginia Beach, VA
23464

