



VMGA Executive Board

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April VMGA Bi-Monthly Board Meeting

10 AM - 2 PM, 9 April 2011
 Albemarle County Office Building
 1600 5th St Extension, Room A
 Charlottesville, VA 22902

-- Hosted by Piedmont MGs --

President's Message

Bill Scott, VMGA President

VMGA's Master Gardener Day at VSU in February began a busy calendar of educational programs around the state for 2011. In addition, don't forget the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference (IMGC) in Charleston, West Virginia October 11-14. Finally, the next Board of Directors' meeting is on April 9th in Albemarle and will be hosted by the Piedmont Master Gardeners. The Board encourages the membership to attend and participate in their meetings.

I am pleased to announce that Dawn Lerch and Wesley Ford have agreed to serve on the State MG Coordinator Endowment Committee and David Mims has agreed to serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee. Fran Gregory has volunteered to help us with government relations and to serve on a committee when it is established. These two areas are so critical to VMGA and all Master Gardeners and we thank them for their willingness to assist us in these endeavors.

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.

Hope to see you April 9th in Albemarle ! -- Bill

Time to Order Seeds

(And support VMGA, too!!)

Betty Villers, Past President

Purchase your seeds from Botanical Interests and VMGA will receive 20% of the total sales. Botanical Interests offers vegetable, herb and flower seeds, all free of pesticides. There is NO TAX on your purchase and shipping is a flat rate of \$3.95 for any size order. To place an order go to the VMGA website, www.vmga.net and click on the Botanical Interests link on the home page. You will see on the Botanical Interests site, in the top right-hand corner: "Your purchase supports VA Master Gardener Association." This lets you know you are at the correct location. VMGA earns 20% from every sale. All monies earned from your purchase will go toward the endowment fund for the State MG coordinator position - a critical support position for MGs. Order away and tell your friends.

UPCOMING EVENTS

3, 10, 17, 24 March, *PMG Spring Lecture Series*, Charlottesville, VA, 7 PM

www.piedmontmastergardeners.org

10 March, *Tree Care Symposium 2011: Looking to the Future*, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, VA, 8:30 AM

www.lewisginter.org

12 March, *2011 Horticultural Extravaganza*, York High School, 9 AM

www.yorkcounty.gov

13 March, *Tallamy Talk*, VA Native Plant Society, Norfolk, VA, 2 PM

www.vnps.org

14, 15 March, *Landscape Design School, Course I, Series XXIV*, Sponsored by the VA Federation of Garden Clubs, Held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

www.viriniagardenclubs.org

19 March, *A Walk in the Forest*, VA Dept of Forestry, New Kent Forestry Center, Providence Forge, VA, 7 AM

www.dof.virginia.gov

1 April, *Backyard Fruits*, VMGA Continuing Education, 9 AM

www.vmga.net

2 April, *Survival! New Gardening Realities*, Northern Neck MGs, 9 AM

www.nnmg.org

10, 11 April, *65th Annual Garden Symposium*, Colonial Williamsburg, 8:30 AM

www.history.org/conted

16 - 23 April, *Historic Garden Week*

www.vagardenweek.org

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

Don't Slow Down!

Joe Kelly, Unit Rep, MGNV

As MG Northern Virginia (MGNV) representative to the Virginia Master Gardener Association (VMGA) board, I have the pleasure of meeting several times a year with other representatives from across the Commonwealth, other folks from Virginia Tech or Virginia State and especially with Dave Close, the State Master Gardener Coordinator. At the most recent meeting (Feb 12, 2011), one topic discussed was all the rumors of Extension reorganization and budget rewriting that will surely mean changes are coming. However, that does not give us the impetus to give up. Rather, it should make us redouble our efforts to ensure we as Master Gardeners are providing meaningful, quality programs and activities for the public we serve as volunteer educators. At that meeting, Dave Close assured us that he and all the folks in the extension hierarchy are not slowing down and don't expect us to. Dave also noted that as soon as the appointment of the new Extension Director was announced, he would set a time to meet with him and tout the MG program.

I have seen no evidence that MGNV and its membership have fallen victim to any of this corporate malaise. Rather I'm always proud to report at those meetings on all the creative efforts and significant projects we undertake. I just wanted to assure you that we have the continuing support from the people up the organizational chain.

One thing that was repeatedly emphasized is our responsibility to ensure our MG activities get as much publicity as possible. This is, of course, not meant to bring any individual notoriety, but is to let the public know what we can do for them through our programs. If you have any personal contacts with elected officials or anyone that might be considered by the budgeters as "stakeholders," try to find a nice way to let them know about the Master Gardeners and what we do.

Finally, I put in an unsolicited commercial: You can help ensure the strength of the MG program by giving consideration to becoming a member of VMGA. See www.vmga.net for details.

Help Your Education Committee

PLEASE HELP! The Education Committee is still trying to coordinate a master calendar of the educational events being held by units around the state. This will help us with scheduling VMGA events, to avoid conflicts with your local dates—but we need you to tell us. When sending your event announcements to the VMGA webmaster for publication, please include the Education Committee on your emailing: vmgaedu@rcn.com or call Ira Wallace, Betty Jo Hendrix or Barbara Geer.

A Message from the Dean

Alan Grant, Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences,
February 2011

Dear Colleagues,

As of January 28, the work of the VCE restructuring implementation teams has been suspended so that additional input from our internal and external stakeholders can be used to develop a process for considering new restructuring options. Upon the completion of the current General Assembly session, we will ask our partners to be further engaged in this process and to assist us as we define Virginia Cooperative Extension for the future.

We will be seeking your ideas on developing a process to involve all of our various stakeholders. We want to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to ask questions, give feedback, and provide their suggestions. I would encourage you to be an active participant in this process as we move forward.

As previously announced, Dr. Edwin Jones has accepted our offer to serve as associate dean and the director of Virginia Cooperative Extension. He is currently at North Carolina State University where he is associate director and state program leader for agricultural, natural resources, and community and rural development for North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Dr. Jones will begin his role with VCE on April 1, 2011. He is eager to get involved and make a quick transition. In the meantime, I will keep him updated on our progress during this interim period.

Again, I appreciate everyone's patience and involvement as we transition to the next phase of this process.

Emeritus Status Awarded

Cheri Haggerty, Hanover County Unit Rep

The Hanover Master Gardener Association (HMGA) recently awarded Emeritus Status with the blessing of our MG Coordinator, Pattie Bland, to 4 very deserving Hanover MGs. All of these MGs volunteered well in excess of the 1000 hour minimum for consideration of Emeritus status.

Being awarded Emeritus status is a high honor. It is specifically for MGs who can no longer complete the requirements for remaining active VCE MGs due to health or other reasons or as determined by the coordinator but who have earned continued affiliation with VCE.

Evelyn Parker: Class of 1982, the first MG Class in Hanover. Throughout her involvement as a Master Gardener, Evelyn held the office of Treasurer of the HMGA for 20 years. Along with several state MGs she worked tirelessly to establish the Virginia Master Gardener Association (VMGA). In addition to serving Hanover and the VMGA, Evelyn was instrumental in setting up the MG Booth at the State Fair, chairing the committee until February 2006.

Deanna Kulla: Class of 1986. Deanna served in many capacities as an officer in the HMGA. She was instrumental in setting up the Hanover MGs booth at Colonial Farm Credit's AG Day for 3rd graders. She served as the coordinator for that over 15 years, just recently passing it to a new coordinator.

Bill Bonwell: Class of 1992. Bill jumped in with both feet and served as President of the HMGA at least 3 times. He represented Hanover MGs on the Virginia Green Industry Council for a number of years before the VMGA joined the council as MG representative. He is always there for Hanover MGs, even now, having started a new business venture.

Willie Mills: Class of 1998. Willie also served as HMGA President multiple times. He helped establish our Rain Barrel program and was a key player in the success of the HMGA Plant Sales. He is always there when the MGs need him and he finds it very hard to say no.

State MG Coordinator Liaison Report

David Close, Virginia MG State Coordinator

- Dr. Grant announced on Thursday, February 10, that Dr. Edwin Jones from NC State will be coming to Blacksburg on April 1 to begin as our VCE Director and Associate Dean.
- It is hoped the 2011 version of the PMG for Home, Grounds and Animals will be available March 1.
- Update on the Department of Horticulture positions:
 - Rhizosphere Biologist: Dr. Mark Williams starts June 1.
 - Tree Fruit specialist: Dr. Gregory Peck starts April 1 in Winchester (Northern Piedmont AREC).
- Landscape/Green Industry: No one from the first round of interviews was hired. More candidate interviews will take place soon.
- The Horticulture Department completed their National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA formerly known as SCREES) review. The review team will be writing up a report and submitting it to us this spring. The Department will offer a response later this summer. Overall, the report was very positive and the dean was pleased.
- MG College planning continues. It is hoped more Master Gardeners will take advantage of this excellent opportunity for continuing and advanced education. Dates are June 21-26. This year's theme is Landcare Stewardship.
- (Editor's Note) International Master Gardener Conference: October 11-14. Some of our own will be presenting at the conference this year: **Smart Yard Care – Being a Hero for Your Home**, Dave Close, Frank Reilly, and Barb Stewart.

MG College Silent Auction 2011

In December of 2004, VMGA entered into an agreement with the Virginia Tech Foundation to provide partial funding for the State MG Coordinator position with a \$1 million endowment. VMGA will again hold its Silent Auction at MG College in June to raise money for the State MG Coordinator Endowment Fund. Last year the Silent Auction brought in just over \$4,000. Our goal is to top last year!

VMGA is asking for Master Gardeners statewide to donate items for the Annual VMGA Silent Auction. All proceeds from this auction are donated to the State Master Gardener Coordinator Endowment Fund. As Master Gardeners, the on-campus Coordinator is essential for the continued success of the Master Gardener program in Virginia.

You will be receiving a letter in April asking for donations from units and individuals. Invite and encourage donations from local retailers and nurseries as well. You can help by generously donating any of the following suggested items:

gardening tools	planters	pre-planted containers
new & gently used books	baskets	plants
bird feeders	bird houses	gardening gloves
fountains	hats	hand crafted items
garden art	bird baths	

If you have any questions or would like to assist, please contact Betty Villers at bettyv@cox.net or 757-481-6398. This year Virginia Beach Master Gardeners are being assisted by James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners. Please consider joining us on Thursday and Friday evening at College to see and hear how this event is put together. For the future, the handling of the Silent Auction will be rotated among units each year. Volunteer to help this year so you will be ready when it's your turn.

The Graine Thumb

What's Not to Like About Hymenoptera?

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

"I like butterflies in my garden, but I'd prefer that the caterpillars stayed at the neighbors."
-- Author Unknown

Happy spring! Now let me address Hymenoptera, a group of insects that are crucial to maintaining the biological balance in gardens and, by extension, to many farms because they are the key to pollination of vegetables, fruits and flowers. Many "hyms," as they are sometimes called, have an innate ability to recycle nutrients in the soil and they tend to keep in check those insects we sometimes refer to as bad actors. A new book, *Bees, Wasps, and Ants: The Indispensable Role of Hymenoptera in Gardens* (Timber Press, 2010) by Dr. Eric Grissell, while it sounds like a field guide, is actually a valuable resource. Why write a book about bees, wasps, and ants? This is what the author says in his own words. "Although this may seem like hyperbole to some, the goal of this book is to consider the role that Hymenoptera play in the environment and our daily lives, to see if they really are as important as hyperbole suggests, and to provide an introduction to one of the most intriguing insect groups of them all." Dr. Grissell understands the confusion and misconception about hymns and his writing clearly shows not only their relationships to each other, but also their biological position in the natural world.

A hot topic these days is recycling. This effort goes on in the garden too, although often hidden from view. We know the job earthworms do, but do you know that ants are stupendous churners of the soil? As they move organic matter around they are aerating the soil. Meanwhile, other organisms, such as bacteria and fungi, are activated so we end up with humus. Biodiversity, another current topic, will help to stabilize your garden because of complexity of the interaction between organisms. Of course, you can aid this situation by providing the "right kind" of plants that offer moisture (nectar) that will attract insects to your garden. Even a mud puddle will help.

Surely you are aware the use of synthetic pesticides will reduce both prey and host insects, but did you know that organic pesticides (e.g., Bt) are not a cure-all because they kill off hymn hosts? Simply put, insects tend to restore balance in the garden and biological control is an important job that hymns perform. Often these insects have proven to be effective in suppressing other destructive insects that lead, or hopefully lead, to a sort of ecological balance. We need to be realistic about our gardens. Many of us like to attract butterflies into our gardens, but the fact remains bees, predatory wasps, parasitoids, and ants are more beneficial for a garden's health than are butterflies. Lest we forget, butterfly larva will eat plants down to the ground. We also need to develop a healthy respect for hymns. In fact, we need to get over our phobia about insects, especially those that might sting or bite us. You will be amused and amazed by the world occupied by bees, wasps, and ants as you read how Dr. Grissell has uncovered the obscure hymn world. We can gain knowledge and a deeper appreciation of our gardens by bringing nature home and inviting these fascinating creatures into our gardens.

About the Virginia Master Gardener Association....

The Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc. is a statewide association of Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) employees whose 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. We are a non-profit educational organization as described by section 501(3)(c) of the US tax code. Join us! See how at www.vmga.net.

VMGA Report

The VMGA Report is the bimonthly newsletter of the Virginia Master Gardener Association. Submissions should be received by the 20th of December, February, April, June, August, and October. Send inquires and submissions to:

Peggy Fox,
peggyfox@hotmail.com

Dawn Meyerriecks,
dmyrix@hotmail.com

P. Diane Relf Scholarship 2011

The P. Diane Relf Educational Endowment Fund Scholarship Committee for 2011 has been formed. The committee is made up of 6 members from both large and small units from around the state. Each member is a former recipient of the Award. All VCE Master Gardeners who will be attending MG College in 2011 are eligible for the scholarships but preference is given to those who are members of VMGA.

Each unit may nominate two candidates. The VCE Extension Agent or Unit Coordinator submits the application forms. Each scholarship carries a stipend of \$100.00 to be applied toward MG College.

The Master Gardener with the greatest number of service hours isn't always a winner. The Committee will seek those who have shown leadership and initiative. Also 2 of the scholarships will be given to members from a smaller unit. The applications for 2011 will be forwarded via ListServ and available on the VMGA website. If you have a question, contact Leslie Paulson, MG Prince William at ljp6651@comcast.net or 703-330-9441. The deadline for the application is May 13, 2011.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity!

VMGA Report
3172 Westwood Road
Mechanicsville, VA
23111

