



## VMGA Executive Board

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	
Betty Villers	757-481-6398
<b>VICE-PRESIDENT</b>	
Cheryl Sebera	804-861-8581
<b>PAST PRESIDENT</b>	
Cheri Haggerty	804-779-3159
<b>TREASURER</b>	
Bill Scott	703-791-2646
<b>SECRETARY</b>	
Christy Brennan	804-741-0801

## VMGA Committee Chairs

<b>COMMUNICATIONS/UNIT SUPPORT</b>	
Frank Reilly	540-286-0072
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	
Mary Ann Kincaid	757-467-6782
<b>EDUCATION</b>	
Barbara Geer	804-861-8055
<b>STATE FAIR</b>	
Christy Brennan	804-741-0801

## IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE	1
UPCOMING EVENTS	2
STATE MG LIAISON REPORT	2
NEWS FROM ACROSS THE STATE	3
THE GRAINE THUMB	5
OPPORTUNITIES	7

## Upcoming Meetings

(Short) Bi-Monthly Board Meeting,  
5 PM, 25 June, MGC, Torgerson Hall

Annual VMGA Meeting, 7 PM, 26 June,  
MGC, Torgerson Hall

## President's Message

Betty Villers, VMGA President

Wow, the last two years have gone by quickly and we have a new executive board ready to step up to lead in June at Master Gardener College for the next two years.

I have enjoyed serving you the past two years as your president. Thanks to those who stepped forward when I needed you to take on committee chairs and get the job done. Your help and support have been appreciated. The officers and committees have worked hard to make sure that we have moved forward during these past two years. Take time to thank them for their time and effort when you see them. And special thanks to our leader, Dave Close, who keeps us informed and on track.

This year VMGA is celebrating its 20th Anniversary. We have come a long way and with your continued support and your representative's attendance and support at the bi-monthly board meetings, the VMGA will continue to grow. At Master Gardener College, Cheri Haggerty will share the story of our beginnings in 1990 as an association and our history through the years to the present.

I hope to see you all at the 23rd Master Gardener College in Blacksburg, June 22-27.

- Betty



## 2010 Master Gardener College

22-27 June, Virginia Tech

Special Training: Water Stewards

Check <http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener/> to register in May.

UPCOMING EVENTS

14-15 May, The Just Gardens Tour, Northern Neck MGs, Kilmarnock, VA, [www.havenshelter.org](http://www.havenshelter.org)

14-17 May, Spring Wild Flower Symposium, Wintergreen Nature Foundation, Wintergreen Resort, VA [www.twnf.org](http://www.twnf.org)

15 May, Sustainable Gardening Workshop, Monticello, 9:30 AM, [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)

29-30 May, Richmond Rose Society Show, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, <http://www.lewisginter.org>

2 June, “Know Your Weeds”, Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, 12 PM, [www.hort.vt.edu/hhg](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg)

5 June, Pruning Practices for Woody Ornamentals, Monticello, 9:30 AM, [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)

12 June, 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Garden Gala, Hahn Horticulture Garden, Va Tech, 5:30 PM, [www.hort.vt.edu/hhg](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg)

12-13 June, Hosta Club Show and Sale, National Arboretum, <http://www.usna.usda.gov>

22-27 June, Master Gardener College, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, [www.vmga.net](http://www.vmga.net)

24 June, “Cabinet Cures and the Garden Gurus Who Come Up With Them”, Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, 6 PM, [www.hort.vt.edu/hhg](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg)

26 June, Ancient Herbs, Monticello, 9:30 AM, [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)

Send VMGA calendar inputs to Kathryn Debnar, [k2garden@cox.net](mailto:k2garden@cox.net).

State MG Liaison Report for April

By David Close, Virginia MG State Coordinator

- **Statewide Survey Results** - From the 12,000 comments, six themes emerged:
  - Value-enhanced agriculture
  - Sustainable natural resources and environment
  - Healthy living for youth (obesity)
  - Building capacity for communities
  - Healthy families and communities
  - Organizational excellence

The focus areas align with the five key initiatives of the College. During the months of April, May, & June, the Strategic Planning Committee will be writing the 2010-2015 VCE plan. Suggestions and directions from the process will be implemented on July 1, 2010. If anyone wants to read more details, Dave can share the last email from the Committee.

- **VCE Director Update** - As of April 10, Dr. Rick Rudd has stepped down as Interim VCE Director and will be returning to the Ag Extension & Education Department as Department Head. Dr. Alan Grant will step in as Director of VCE until a permanent Director of VCE can be hired. A committee will be assembled to conduct a national search within the next couple of weeks.
- **Assoc Ext Director Update** - Three candidates were interviewed for the Associate Extension Director for Ag & Natural Resources. The candidates included two internal to VCE: Dr. Andy Overbay, acting District Director for the Southwest District & Dr. Dee Whittier of the VA-MD Regional Vet School, and one candidate from the Michigan Extension system. If anyone wants to hear the candidates' presentations, they are recorded and archived online at <http://intra.ext.vt.edu/anr/>. There is no published timeline for closing the positions.
- **Pest Management Guide** - Two meetings have taken place: one with agents and MG volunteers and one with authors and specialists. A design team has been constructed of VCE Specialists, Agents, and MG volunteers. The Design Team has had one conference call meeting and we have a second one coming up next week. We have identified three specific changes we intend to implement in the 2011 edition. This is being treated as a long-term process to develop the ultimate PMG. Dr. Joyce Latimer, Extension Project Leader in Horticulture, is taking the lead and Dave is assisting her with respect to the MG element.
- **State Record Keeping System** - Dave is looking for two units willing to pilot the new system.
- **Public/Private Partnership** - An idea has been put forth (by an agent from the Northern Neck) to market the VCE MG program as a private-public partnership. This should be more appealing to our elected officials. Dave will talk to the VCE/CALS administration about doing this in a more formal way.

(Continued on Page 7)



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

## Southeast



### Chesterfield, Lynne Foote

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

The Chesterfield Master Gardeners have been implementing the Grass Roots program. The limit of 400 applications was reached by the middle of April. This year our local NBC channel interviewed the county administrator about his experience with the Grass Roots program and what benefits he saw with his lawn. Also, that same evening, 4 MGs answered the phones during the local news.

The number of plant clinics continues to increase annually. One of the new clinics was mosquito control, along with 57 other topics.

MGs will again assist with the rain barrel workshops offered in April and May.

This spring we will be offering a clinic table out at Pocahontas State Park on weekends, focusing on native plants, gardening for wildlife and protecting/promoting pollinators.

### Gloucester, Bonnie Bernard

A three part Library Speaking Series, a booth at Celebrate Families, a booth and tours at the Daffodil Festival, hosting a VMGA Board Meeting, bi-weekly Horticultural Therapy, Horticultural Hot Line commitments and our annual Ready, Set, Grow program – and it's only April? Throw in sales of the second edition of our *Gardening in Gloucester Book* and an opportunity to dine with Andre Viette during the Daffodil Festival has made this one of our busiest springs ever.

Good to see so many folks on April 10<sup>th</sup> at the beautiful historic Ware Episcopal Church in Gloucester. Thanks for coming!

### Hanover, Christy Brennan

Hanover MG's are starting our 2010 Homeowners gardening series May 10th. Our plant clinic schedule fills every weekend during this spring with several events planned for each Saturday at different locales.

## Southeast



### Newport News, Anita Smith

<http://www.nnmastergardeners.org>

The Newport News Master Gardeners' rain barrel workshops, offered in collaboration with the Newport News Waterworks and the Newport News Public Works Recycling Office, are going great guns. There is a waiting list for workshops into fall of 2010. We even held a rain barrel workshop at our annual spring plant sale.

The Newport News Master Gardeners have been involved with the Denbigh Boys and Girls Club for three years. We estimate that about 800 kids have participated in the program since we started. This month the children will be decorating and installing rain barrels around a pavilion and in the coming summer months they will plant and maintain the vegetable garden in raised beds. They will get to take home whatever they harvest.

### Norfolk, Don Snipes

<http://www.nmgv.org>

Our Master Gardener training class concluded April 8 with 22 trainees becoming Master Gardener Interns. An additional 11 Interns became Norfolk Master Gardeners.

Lynnette Swanson, our Extension Agent, will retire June 30, 2010. She will be sorely missed. As of this date we do not have a replacement. To make matters worse, our Norfolk unit, which is part of the Norfolk Health Department, has not been included for inclusion in the new budget, which begins July 1, 2010.

### Prince George, Cheryl Sebera

<http://www.pgmga.org>

Garden Basics, which includes such topics as Vegetables 101; Rain Barrels; Fruit tree and Small Fruit Pruning; Lawns, and Ornamental Pruning, took place from February through March.

The Good Gardening Symposium was successful.

## Southeast



### Northern Neck, Ted Munns

<http://www.nnmg.org>

The annual Gardening in the Northern Neck Seminar attracted over 250 people, two dozen vendors, and our District's Delegate to the Virginia House: The Honorable Albert Pollard. The program of lectures and breakout sessions included Mr. C. Colson Burrell speaking on the use of flowering plants and other flora with attractive foliage to enhance landscapes. He focused on native plants and those resistant to deer dining. Arborist Greg Paige spoke on ways of protecting and preserving our largest single investment: Trees.

We prepared bare root river birch saplings for the annual Arbor Day events at both Lancaster Primary and Northumberland Elementary schools. Over eleven hundred plants were distributed to the students there. Our demonstration Shoreline Garden was cleaned up after this disastrous winter, and our demonstration vegetable garden at the Northern Neck Farm Museum was tilled up and cold weather crops planted.

### Western Tidewater, Betty Jo Hendrix

The Founder's Point clubhouse was the setting for our Winter Social to welcome our interns into full Master Gardener volunteer status.

Our president, Lisa Meunier, is in the Santa Cruz, CA area helping the church where she grew up to set up a community garden for the church and community.

## Southwest



### The Blue Ridge, Charlie Whittle

Thirty-three new members completed MG training this month. Our unit will support Matthews State Forest Earth Day April 21-22 and Spring Heritage Day planting May 1 at Matthews Living History Farm Museum.

## Northern



### Albemarle/Charlottesville, Joyce Grunewald

<http://www.PiedmontMasterGardeners.org>

Our annual plant sale will be held on May 1. The new class propagated many of the vegetables being sold.

Advanced training for Farmer's Market and Horticultural Help Desk volunteers began with an introduction to dissection Microscopes. May training will include a class and workshop on "Plant Pathology".

MG Fran Boninti co-chaired the Albemarle County area Historic Garden week, recruiting members to host at the gardens. MG Jay Gillenwater's garden at "Grand View" was featured on the tour.

Tree Steward Training began in February and ends in May with a fieldtrip to the old forest at James Madison's Montpelier.

2010 "Through the Garden Gate" 9th annual series of visits to informal local gardens in the Charlottesville area begins on July 10th. This is a project Piedmont MGs co-sponsor with local garden groups.

### Arlington/Alexandria, Joe Kelly

<http://www.nnmg.org>

Members are working on the final touches to launch our MGNV Speakers Bureau. We have had training sessions as continuing education and in our recently graduated 2010 training class.

In a partnership with the Alexandria Housing and Redevelopment Authority, MGs are assisting seniors planting raised beds, advising up to 30 families at garden plots donated by the city and working with elementary age children (another trainee class project) on a year-round gardening/nutrition program.

At the graduation program for our 2010 class, we were honored to have in attendance Sen. Mary Margaret Whipple (Dist. 21) and Alexandria Council Member Alicia Hughes, both of whom expressed appreciation for and support of our programs.

(Continued on page 6)

## The Graine Thumb

## Dare to Be Different: No Color Errors

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners



Are you afraid of making a color error in your garden? Color should be fun. Color is not just the plants. In fact, color includes everything else in your half-vast estate. Think yard art, color of your house, mulch, grass, earth, and even the sky above. All have color. Keeyla Meadows in her book *Fearless Color Gardens: The Creative Gardener's Guide to Jumping Off the Color Wheel* (Timber Press, 2009), presents an antidote to color unlike traditional plant color books such as Sandra Austin's *Color in Garden Design* or plant guru P. Allen Smith's *Color for the Garden*. Not that there is anything wrong with these two books, it is just that they miss the Gestalt of how color is so much more than pretty plants.

As noted, other color in the garden design books are usually filled cover-to-cover with plants. Meadows' book contains 230 color photos and drawings of whimsical garden art coordinated with plants. You are guaranteed (?) to think of color in a new way. The author has a lyrical writing style that speaks to you without a lot of mumbo-jumbo. It is easy to relate to her prose because she has an uncanny way of explaining what various colors mean. It seems reasonable that her dialogue concerning color relationships could be adaptable to your sense of color. Additionally, *Mary Engelbreit's Outdoor Companion* (ISBN 0-8362-1085-9) makes a wonderful adjunct when considering freedom of expression that yard art can bring to a garden design.

No doubt you have a nodding familiarity with the color wheel. This is where color is defined somewhat scientifically as primary, secondary, tertiary, and then on to aggressive (warm) and receding (cool) colors. The color wheel also goes into greater depth and uses such terms as hue, tint, tone, shade, and more. Is all of this detail really necessary for gardeners? The watchword should be "simple." Start with a single idea and only one color, that is, one for plants and one for hardscape materials (more on that below). If you recall your first experience using watercolor paint do you remember why your painting looked like a mud puddle? It was because you used too many colors.

Meadows reinvented the rules of the color wheel by introducing the concept of the color triangle where "All sides are equal, with a color star at each end of the corners. The stars at the points are the primary colors: blue, red, and yellow. Between blue and red is the blue-red leg, road or path with purple in the middle. On the red-yellow path, orange is in the middle; and between yellow and blue there is green." The basic principle is harmony and contrast wherein the primary concept is in making color relationships. This means that colors are in harmony with each other or they are in contrast with each other. If you stay with harmony, then your color scheme will be colors that are similar to each other and close in hue (stretching towards another color). The opposite of harmony is contrast. This approach to color will make your garden pop and give it pizzazz.

Just as color in the garden has a harmony-contrast equation, at the same time you should also factor in the plantscape-hardscape equation in your design. As you design your garden, always consider the two elements of 1) plants and 2) everything else, which includes the hardscape (e.g., pots, benches, arbors, sculpture, rocks, wall art, fountains, etc.). If you work both sides of the equation you will have successfully completed your garden design and end up with a "voila" landscape. Following many of the ideas presented in the Meadows book, you will find it supportive and empowering at the same time. You will see color from a different perspective. Use your intuition and have fun as you go about creating your own garden paradise.

## Election Results

Congratulations to the new officers who will be installed at our Annual Meeting on June 26<sup>th</sup> at Master Gardener College. They are:

President: Bill Scott  
 Vice-President: Christy Brennan  
 Secretary: Peggy Fox  
 Treasurer: Jim Kincaid

## April News from Across the State (continued)

## Northern

**Central Rappahannock Area, Gwen Pote**

Newly graduated interns have set up an outdoor lat at the Hartwood Elementary School, along with a number of other community projects.

In March, we started the first of 4 monthly lecture series at the Salem Church Library in Spotsylvania.

**Fairfax, George Graine**

<http://www.fairfaxmastergardeners.org>

Utilizing Fairfax MG survey information, it was determined that we could better support our multi-lingual citizen population by having the ability to communicate in languages other than English. A dozen MGs joined this effort and language signs will be posted at plant clinics "advertising" this capability when available. We have fluency in seven languages including, Spanish, French, German, Chinese (Cantonese), Swedish, Dutch, and Hindi. If you are interested in learning more about this program, contact: Pat Casciato, [patspins@yahoo.com](mailto:patspins@yahoo.com).

**Fluvana, JoAnne Henry**

<http://www.fluvannamg.org>

April sees Master Gardeners offering education and support for a variety of projects for children: County Ag Day, school activities for planting the Children's Garden at the elementary school and at Palmyra's historic house.

Fluvanna MG, Irene Burke, has started her second year as a writer for *Rural Virginian*.

**Green Spring, Joan Richards, Cyndi Bishop**

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/PARKS/gsqg>

The Eco-Savvy Symposium was held on February 27 with more than 80 participants. MG docents began providing tours of the gardens at Green Spring Gardens on April 7. This is the earliest tour given in a number of years.

## Northern

**Loudoun, Larry Burk**

<http://www.fairfaxmastergardeners.org>

Our MGV Training Class has 32 folks this year.

Our first annual symposium, held in late March, was very successful with 115 attendees each day. Speakers included Joe Lamp'l, Ellen Ogden, Mike Raupp, Donna Williams, LCMGVs and Debbie Dillion.

The mid-April Leesburg Flower and Garden Show was a great success.

Garden to Table team will receive an award 4/19 for Outstanding Volunteer Project for 2009 in Loudoun County. Educational and mentoring services are provided throughout the year to various groups, organizations and individuals.

**Louisa**

We were participants in the "Mineral Beautification Day" on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Our Rain Barrel demonstration was very popular.

Our Relay for Life team "Master Gardeners Weeding Out Cancer" is busily raising money for the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life on June 26 – 27, 2010 in Louisa.

**Prince William**

MG Paul Gibson put together a 5 part series on Bio-Intensive Vegetable Gardening.

Our BEST Lawns program has brought many homeowners into the fold of getting their soil tested before fertilizing.

## Central

**Hill City, Deborah Straw**

<http://www.hcmga.com>

Our School Programs in five of Lynchburg's City's Schools are in full swing.

Festival of Gardening, our only fund raising event, is slated for Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup> from 8:30 to 1 pm at the Aviary in Lynchburg's Miller Park.

## State MG Liaison Report (continued)

- **MG College Advisory Team Meeting** – The team met in March. The registration fee for 2010 will be \$150, up \$25 from the past 5 years. Sunday morning has been added back into the schedule and is when Kirk Brown will appear as John Bartram. We will also have a picnic on Sunday as in years past. There will be three options for on-campus housing: New Residence Hall West, New Residence Hall East, and the GLC (former Donaldson-Brown hotel conference center). New Res Hall East: \$38 (double), \$43 (single); GLC/New Hall West: \$40 (double), \$46 (single); there is also a one-time \$2.50 admin fee; meal cards are \$24.70/day.
- **Land Care Steward Project** – The books, *Smart Yard Care: Big Rewards from Small Investments in Stewardship*, are printed and sitting in my office! We are working on setting up an account to be able to print and sell more copies. They will retail for \$19.95 for orders of 100 or more. We will be pre-selling them with registration for MG College. The 'author' has agreed to do a book signing at college and offer signed 8.5x11 glossy photos.
- **Restructuring VCE** – As you may or should be aware, the General Assembly modified the biennium budget and removed language to close offices, consolidate others, and eliminate targeted VCE programs. They have charged the VCE admin team to complete their strategic plan and report to the budget finance committee as to how they will implement the \$1.1 million dollar budget reduction for 2011 and the \$5.5 million budget reduction for 2012. If you want a detailed explanation, Dave can share an email from Dr. Grant from mid-March that explains what will happen. There are also some talking points for stakeholders to use to continue talking with legislators now that they are back home. Dr. Alan has stated he will develop a task force to begin working on a restructuring of VCE in conjunction with a white paper being prepared to outline the process. Dave has asked Dr. Grant to appoint either the current president or president-elect of VMGA to the task force since VCE depends on MG volunteers to advocate on their behalf. Similarly, VESA (VA Extension Service Assoc.) is developing an advocacy group to educate stakeholders on the value of VCE. Dave volunteered to serve on that group and nominated one VCE MG volunteer as a non-paid advocate of VCE to serve on the group too. Designs will be pending until April 16 as to who will be selected to serve.
- **Positive Press** – Great article in the Washington Post on April 1: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/30/AR2010033003046.html>. The article talks about the value of the MG program and the shortsightedness of VA's legislators in how they wanted to 'prune' it.
- **Recycle!** – Dave has asked VMGA to endorse and be a co-sponsor of efforts to recycle plastic pots/containers through some cooperating local independent garden centers. This will take place in the Richmond area and hopefully expand beyond Richmond in the future. We will encourage VCE MGs to participate as needed in these events by providing educational materials and answer questions for consumers.

## Opportunities

**2010 Master Gardener College Activities:**

- P. Diane Relf EEF Scholarship nomination deadline by unit agent or coordinators is 14 May.
- New MG logo items will be available, including window clings and a long-sleeve sweatshirt.
- Leslie Paulson will be contacting all units for Silent Auction contributions.
- Start preparing your Search for Excellence Posters & Brag Boards. Christy Brennan will be contacting each unit. Check the vmga website for helpful hints and the newsletter for more info.
- Coordinator Endowment Reception on Friday night following dinner. Current endowment total is nearly \$318K, but we still have work to do!
- Bring plants to swap at the Plant Swap!

We are looking for someone to take over as **Fund-Raising Chairman**. Contact Betty Villers, [bettyv@cox.net](mailto:bettyv@cox.net) or Bill Scott, [wiscott2@verizon.net](mailto:wiscott2@verizon.net).

**VMGA Report**

The VMGA Report is the bimonthly newsletter of the Virginia Master Gardener Association. Submissions should be received by the 1st of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Send inquiries and submissions to:

Peggy Fox, [peggyfox@hotmail.com](mailto:peggyfox@hotmail.com)

Dawn Meyerriecks, [dmyrix@hotmail.com](mailto:dmyrix@hotmail.com)

**Search for Excellence**

Search for Excellence (SFE) is a recognition program for Master Gardener groups to showcase a particular project at Master Gardener College. The competition is modeled after the International Search for Excellence Program for US and Canadian Master Gardeners.

Every Master Gardener unit in Virginia is encouraged to participate in this program at MG College. The winners of our state competition will be entered into the International SFE Competition and represent Virginia Master Gardeners. Presentations should explain and demonstrate one of the SLM objectives:

1. Protection of the environment
2. Youth education
3. Value of the landscape (literal economic value)
4. Community food resources and nutrition
5. Health and quality of life

Each presentation is 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.

Please let Betty Villers know by June 1st if you would like to reserve a table to display your unit's accomplishments this year and if your display will require electricity or the use of other items.

VMGA Report  
 1549 Beechwood Cove  
 Virginia Beach, VA  
 23464

