



VMGA Executive Board

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October VMGA Bi-Monthly Board Meeting

10 AM - 2 PM, 9 October 2010
 Virginia Department of Forestry Office
 106 Matthews Lane
 Galax, VA 24333

-- Hosted by Galax MGs --

President's Message

Bill Scott, VMGA President

The October Board meeting will be on October 9th in Galax. The meetings are open to all of the membership and are rotated around the state during each fiscal year. I encourage 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 have previously said, I am confident that as an organization we can successfully meet the challenges facing VMGA and move the organization forward. However to do that, we must fill the critical volunteer positions that are currently open. We still need a Membership Committee Chair and a Coordinator of Fundraising Item Sales. Without a Coordinator, we won't have the sales, which generated \$3,000.00 for the State Coordinator Endowment last year.

Volunteering not only gives you an opportunity to support the VMGA directly, but also lets you meet and develop friendships with a dedicated group of volunteers who are supportive and helpful when you need any assistance. Please consider volunteering your time to a very worthwhile cause.

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 in Galax!

-- Bill

2010/2011 Meetings

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

2010

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

1-2 October, *American Community Garden Association's Growing Communities*, Fairlington Community Center, 8:30 AM, www.vmgga.net

2 October, *Dividing Plants Successfully*, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 9 AM www.lewisginter.org

2 October, Tufton Fern Walk, Monticello's Tufton Farm, 9:30 AM, www.monticello.org

3 October, "Innovations in Container Gardening", National Arboretum, 4:30 PM, www.usna.usda.gov

9 October, *Grow Your Own Farm-to-Table Program*, Rappahannock County HS, www.vmgga.net

9-10 October, Arborfest, Blandy, 10 AM, www.virginia.edu/blandy

9-11 October, Orchid Show and Sale, National Arboretum, 9 AM, www.usna.usda.gov

16 October, *School Gardens and Outdoor Strategies*, Natural Bridge Gym and Community Center, Natural Bridge Station, Rockbridge County, 8:30 AM

16 October, *Seed Saving Techniques*, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 9 AM, www.lewisginter.org

29 October, *Bulbs as Companion Plants*, Hahn Horticulture Garden, 6 PM, www.hort.vt.edu/hhg

30 October, Virginia Master Well Owner Network Training Workshop, Albemarle County Office Bldg, 9 AM, www.vmgga.net

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

State MG Liaison Report for August

By David Close, Virginia MG State Coordinator

- Nine agent positions have been advertised. It includes ANR, 4-H, and FCS agent positions across all districts.
- A national search is underway for an Extension Director. The College hired a consultant to oversee the search.
- Restructuring Task Force Update – Three subcommittees have been collecting data from surveys. MGs have been invited to provide input on one of these and the survey is due by August 20. Information will be summarized and presented to the Dean in early September. The Task Force will meet and begin working on recommendations for three additional focus areas: create efficiencies, reduce administrative costs, and evaluate programs. Their goal is to have a preliminary plan to the Dean by late September.
- Pest Management Guide – Updates and changes for the 2011 edition will be presented and discussed with agents at the annual pesticide safety training conference in September.
- State Record Keeping System update –Have seven units willing to test the new system.
- MG College Advisory Team will meet on August 25. The 2010 MG College had around 225 attendees. Dates for MG College 2011 will be June 21-26. The theme will be Land Care Stewardship.
- Land Care Steward Project – the books are printed and sitting in my office! It is titled *Smart Yard Care: Big Rewards from Small Investments in Stewardship*. Can purchase online: \$20/copy including shipping. Cases of 50 for \$600/case. Will be going to Gettysburg, PA, to attend the 2010 Mid-Atlantic Firewise Conference to present our work along with Frank Reilly and Barb Stewart of the National Park Service.
- Will be making a presentation at the 2010 State MG Coordinators conference in Davis, CA, on Funding MG Programs. I will talk primarily about the Endowment efforts.
- Opportunity for training and volunteer hours in partnership with FCS agents. There will be four trainings in October, one in each District, on Project Learning Tree (PLT) and how to use it to train early childhood development workers to promote outdoor environmental learning experiences for children in daycare settings. Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists can be trained as trainers but there will be an expectation to provide some volunteer service in return for the training. More details soon to come.

Please join us in sending condolences to the family of Peter Giandomenico, husband of Susan, JCC/Wmsbg MG. He passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on September 1, 2010, in Norfolk, Virginia.

The Graine Thumb

Potscaping

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

"Indeed, one of the most attractive aspects of container gardening is its malleability."

-- Ray Rogers in Pots in the Garden

It is a good idea to consider space-saving and time-efficient ways to enjoy gardening. One way to achieve these aims is to plant in pots. This is not about the ubiquitous container gardens so prevalent at garden centers that feature thriller, filler and spiller plants. Pots in the Garden: Expert Design and Planting Techniques by Ray Rogers (Timber Press, 2007) takes you on a wonderful gardening journey featuring many types of pots and how to fill them with plants. Color photos by Richard Hartlage help to make "potscaping" points and in a very readable way, the various elements of design are made crystal clear. Now you can add "right plant, right pot" to the gardener's code.

A distinctive pot plays a crucial part in relationship to the plant. Consider both the uniqueness of the plant together with the pot because the idea is to maximize the potential of the potted plant. Design is about color (be adventuresome), line and repetition (and lines can be round too) and form and mass. Also consider the design elements of space and placement. How will you see the plant in various settings? The importance of a vantage point is to show off the most dramatic details of the planted container. Does the plant make a statement? Further identification is to think about a potted plant as a focal point in the landscape.

Have you ever considered how an empty pot can be a highlight in your landscape? The mere fact of emptiness can enhance an area if positioned in the right spot. Think about color, texture, dimension and even defects such as cracks or a broken-off piece. For the merchant, imperfect pots go into the sale pile or the dumpster. For the gardener, it can be exactly the image you want to convey and at a great bargain too.

The second part of this book shows how to bring all of the various design aspects together. This includes designs that work, sensory elements (motion, sound, fragrance, taste, touch and tactile qualities) and the importance of container techniques (potting mix, fertilizer, water, light, temperature, etc.). The third section is all about choosing a pot. Since your choices are numerous and the costs can be anywhere from zero to whatever, it is important to consider movement and temperature when choosing a pot for the plant. This is a critical aspect of why this particular pot "works" and not some other one. Lastly, the author discusses many kinds of plant groups for containers although not as a recipe for prescribed arrangements. The end product is up to you to determine. After reading this book, you too can become an expert on why pots in the garden. If having lots of pots is not your thing, then stay tuned, because the next newsletter will tell you how to really garden in a small space and have a "big-little" garden.

What's a Hokie?

-- By Clara B. Cox, VT Grad '84, Excerpted from *About Virginia Tech*,
<http://www.vt.edu/about/hokie.html>

What is a Hokie? The origin of the word "Hokie" has nothing to do with a turkey. It was coined by O. M. Stull (class of 1896), who used it in a spirit yell he wrote for a competition.

Here's how that competition came to be held. Virginia Tech was founded in 1872 as a land-grant institution and was named Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College. In 1896, the Virginia General Assembly officially changed the college's name to Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, a name so long that citizens shortened it in popular usage to VPI. The original college cheer, which made reference to the original name of the institution, was no longer suitable.

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God Finds Out About Lawn Care

-- Submitted by Fran Shelton, VA Beach

"Winterize your lawn," the big sign outside the garden store commanded. I've fed it, watered it, mowed it, raked it and watched a lot of it die anyway. Now I'm supposed to winterize it? I hope it's too late. Grass lawns have to be the stupidest thing we've come up with outside of thong swimsuits! We constantly battle dandelions, Queen Anne's lace, thistle, violets, chicory and clover that thrive naturally, so we can grow grass that must be nursed through an annual four-step chemical dependency. Imagine the conversation The Creator might have with St. Francis about this:

GOD: Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistle and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honeybees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles.

St. FRANCIS: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers "weeds" and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD: Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, bird and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

St. FRANCIS: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

GOD: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

St. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it-sometimes twice a week.

GOD: They cut it? Do they then ball it like hay?

St. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

St. FRANCIS: No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

St. FRANCIS: Yes, Sir.

GOD: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

St. FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. IN the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

St. FRANCIS: You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

(Continued on page 5)

What's a Hokie? (continued)

Thus, a contest was held to select a new spirit yell, and Stull won the \$5 top prize for his cheer, now known as Old Hokie:

Hoki, Hoki, Hoki, Hy.
 Techs, Techs, V.P.I.
 Sola-Rex, Sola-Rah.
 Polytechs - Vir-gin-ia.
 Rae, Ri, V.P.I.

Later, the phrase "Team! Team! Team!" was added at the end, and an "e" was added to "Hoki." Stull later said that he made up the word as an attention-grabber. Though he may not have known it, "Hokie" (in its various forms) has been around at least since 1842. According to Johann Norstedt, now a retired Virginia Tech English professor, "[Hokie was] a word that people used to express feeling, approval, excitement, surprise. Hokie, then, is a word like 'hooray,' or 'yeah,' or 'rah.'" Whatever its original meaning, the word in the popular cheer did, as Stull wanted, grab attention and has been a part of Virginia Tech tradition ever since.

From Gobbler to HokieBird

The origin of the term "Gobblers" is disputed, with one story claiming it was coined in the early 1900s as a description of how student athletes would "gobble" up their more than ample servings of food.

Thus, the name was already popular when Fred Meade, a local resident chosen by the student body to serve as the school's mascot, had a large turkey pull him in a cart at a football game in 1913. The school's president halted the cart pulling after one game because he thought it was cruel to the turkey. Meade continued to parade his mascot, which he had trained to gobble on command, up and down the sidelines--and did so until another "turkey trainer" took over in 1924 to continue the tradition. Enthusiastic fans and sports writers adopted the "Gobbler" nickname and began to use it regularly. In 1936, a costumed Gobbler joined the live gobbler for at least one game. The use of a live gobbler mascot continued into the 1950s, and the first permanent costumed Gobbler took the field in the fall of 1962.

But the "Gobbler" was not to last, at least in name. In the late 1970s, the university hired a football coach who heard the theory that the Gobbler mascot was based on athletes gobbling down their food. The coach didn't like the image, so he began promoting the "Hokie" nickname and even removed the gobble from the scoreboard--current football coach Frank Beamer had it reinstalled. In 1982, the appearance of the Gobbler mascot costume was changed to one that looked like a maroon cardinal with a snood, and references first appeared to it as "the Hokie mascot," "the Hokie," and "the Hokie bird." The costume worn by today's HokieBird made its first appearance in 1987. HokieBird has won national mascot competitions and has been so popular that the mascot landed an appearance on Animal Planet's "Turkey Secrets."

God Finds Out About Lawn Care (continued)

GOD: No. What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

St. FRANCIS: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

St. FRANCIS: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

St. CATHERINE: "Dumb and Dumber", Lord. It's a story about...

GOD: Never mind. I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

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:

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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.

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