



VMGA Executive Board

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December VMGA Bi-Monthly Board Meeting

10 AM - 2 PM, 11 December 2010
 Lake Monticello Club House
 41 Ashlawn Boulevard
 Palmyra, VA 22963

-- Hosted by Fluvanna MGs --

President's Message

Bill Scott, VMGA President

As we quickly move through autumn toward the holidays, don't forget the December Board of Directors' meeting. The meeting will be in Fluvanna on December 11th. The Board encourages the membership to attend their meetings and participate in them.

I am very pleased to announce that Cheri Haggerty, Hanover, has volunteered to be the Membership Committee Chair. We still need a Coordinator of Fundraising Item Sales. This is a position that 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 maintaining VMGA a strong link between Virginia Tech and all Virginia Master Gardeners.

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 Fluvanna!

-- Bill

Volunteers in Action



Photo Credit: David Mims, Rockbridge

**Thanks for Volunteering
 and for
 Another Fabulous Year!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

20 November - 1 January, *100 Miles of Lights*,

www.virginia.org

24 November - 9 January, *Bull Run Festival of Lights*, Bull Run Regional Park, Centreville, 5:30 PM,

www.nvrpa.org/park/bull_run

26 November - 2 January, *Virginia Holiday Lightfest*, Fredericksburg, VA

27 November - 8 January, *Dominion GardenFest of Lights 2010*, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 5 PM,

www.lewisginter.org

2 - 10 December, *Holiday Wreath Workshops*, Monticello, 10 AM,

www.monticello.org

4 December, *Great Holiday Greens Sale*, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, 12 PM

www.lewisginter.org

4 December, *Fabulous Wreath Workshops*, Hillwood Museum, DC, 10 AM, 2 PM,

www.hillwoodmuseum.org

4-5 December, *Holiday Workshops*, Blandy, 9:30 AM, 1:30PM,

www.virginia.edu/blandy

5 December, *Holiday Wreath Making*, National Arboretum, 1 PM,

www.usna.usda.gov

13 December, *Holiday Centerpiece Workshop*, Hahn Horticulture Garden, VT, 6 PM,

www.hort.vt.edu/hhg

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

Virginia Master Gardener Week

By David Mims, Rockbridge Master Gardeners



The third week in October is Master Gardener Week in Virginia, and on October 16 Master Gardeners from across the Commonwealth gathered in Natural Bridge to learn about School Gardens from members of Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners Association (RAMGA), and from horticulture experts of the Virginia Master Gardener Association (VMGA). Following a welcoming address by Del. Ben Cline, the 50+ attendees heard "How To" Presentations and toured *Norington's Nook*, the first of several Rockbridge Area school gardens established and/or supported by Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners.

Elementary School Gardens at Natural Bridge, Waddell and Fairfield are valuable teaching tools for area educators who welcome the opportunity to have Master Gardeners participate in classroom and outdoor gardening and horticulture activities aimed at imparting horticultural skills and healthy eating habits to our children.

Master Gardener School Garden Projects are part of a national USDA gardening initiative administered by the Virginia Cooperative Extension at Virginia Tech. As Agricultural Secretary Ton Vilsack recently stated, "Master Gardeners are a valuable resource for people of all ages who wish to learn about gardening from local experts and to begin to grow their own flowers, plants and food. 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."

Mark Your Calendars!!!

By Barbara Greer & Betty Jo Hendrix, Education Comm

The Second VSU Continuing Education program, "Expanding Horizons in Horticulture" will be held at Virginia State on Saturday, February 26, 2011 and will follow the format of the 2010 program. Registration opens 1 January 2011 and is limited to 200.

By your request, two general sessions and 3 choices of breakout sessions or workshops will be featured.

We are also working on a spring program, focusing on "Fruits for the Home Garden".

Watch the vmga website for information: vmga.net

Virginia State Fair Activities

Master Gardener wins Red Ribbon!!

By Cheri Haggerty, Hanover Master Gardeners



Mrs. Potato Head, Hanover MG, entered the aptly named "Mr. Potato Head" Contest at the State Fair of Virginia. Although she was beat out of first place by a dapper spud on a John Deere, she had a great first time at the State Fair. The days prior to the fair she was whipped into a frenzy deciding on what to wear. "Entering as a Master Gardener was not a half baked idea at all" quoted Mrs. PH. "It's what I do and I am proud of my volunteer efforts". You can see in the picture she is proudly sporting her 250-hour pin. Some of the events at the fair as seen through her eyes included :

MG Booth staffed by 148 Master Gardeners representing 9 units from across Virginia. Their stream table activity (on loan from Hanover-Caroline Soil and Water Conservation) was a huge success. The State Fair Bug Box was wildly successful! Also on display was the Good Bugs/Bad Bugs, a joint display from Hanover and Henrico, true to life operating rain barrel from Louisa MGs and a display from Land Care Stewards featuring all their toys ... mini compost bins, the spilling latex paint can, the Firewise house and of course the Vermiculture worms. (She did mention that she steered clear of the Compost bin as long as she could). In the 11 days at the Fair, the MGs made over 9600 contacts. Only 1047 less than 2009. There were 3-4 rainy days this year.

MGs from Hanover judged the **FFA Horticulture Demonstration Contest**. These FFA members were high school kids from all over the state.

(Mrs. PH was thankful they were not judging her cousins in the Crop entries. It's hard not to vote favorably for kin.)

Mrs. PH toured the **Commonwealth Building** where she found out from DGIF that you can't sell a mounted animal on Ebay. Even if you did shoot it and paid the taxidermist and it's yours, you can't sell it in Virginia on Ebay! She also toured the **Arts and Crafts** and **Farm Bureau** buildings.

The last place she toured was **Heritage Village**. What a great place! She said the snakes at the DGIF display were really giving her the eyeball! It was great experiencing how folks lived in the past and see some of the tools they had to deal with. (She did note that she steered clear of the potato mashers.)

Sad to say that Mrs. Potato Head was gently laid to rest in the Worm Bin on day 8 of the State Fair. The Hort superintendent said she was "decomposing and had an awful aroma about her". Her spirit will live on to return next year.

State MG Coordinator Liaison Report

-- By David Close, Virginia MG State Coordinator

- On Thursday (October 7), Dean Grant announced the VCE restructuring plan to the agency. He has another meeting scheduled for 10/19 to meet specifically with Specialists. The plan won't be fully implemented until FY 2013 (July 1, 2012). More details will be available in December.
- The search committee for a new VCE Director has conducted video interviews with their prospective candidates. There is a dividing line within the search committee: academic vs. extension bents of the candidate and which would be best for our agency.
- PMG: beefed up chapter on animal pests, basic intro added to each chapter, and full index by chapter and for the entire book; Sandy Mullins, MG from Fauquier County has been the primary contributor for the index.
- MGCAT met in Sept and meets again this month to continue working on 2011 MG College; June 21-26, 2011.
- Gave a presentation at the 2010 Mid-Atlantic Firewise Conference in Gettysburg, PA with Barb Stewart of the National Park Service and Frank Reilly; conference attendees were provided a complimentary copy of our Smart Yard Care book; they were provided on behalf of the VA DOF.

(Continued on page 6)

October: VCE Volunteer Month

Proclamation

OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Virginia Cooperative Extension Volunteer Month

October 2010

WHEREAS, Virginia Cooperative Extension provides every Virginia citizen access to researched-base resources of our Commonwealth's two land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension receives the benefit of over 30,000 volunteers representing over 1,000,000 hours of volunteer time annually; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension partners with local citizen-led Extension Leadership Councils to identify local issues and needs that our Specialists, Agents, Support Staff, and Volunteers can address; and

Where AS, Cooperative Extension's Community Viability program provides educational programming that enable farmers, local small business owners, and local leaders and officials to create business-friendly places that support healthy people and sustainable environments; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension's Agriculture and Natural Resources program helps sustain the profitability of agricultural and forestry production, while enhancing and protecting the quality of our land and water resources; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener volunteers support the Agriculture and Natural Resources program by providing horticultural and residential water quality protection information to citizens through a variety of educational programs; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences pillar programs in Human Development, Food, Nutrition and Health, and Family Financial Management provide educational opportunities for families to become healthier, more productive citizens who contribute to social and economic stability; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension's Family Nutrition program helps individuals of all ages adopt positive lifestyle patterns that reduce the risk of chronic disease and improve health literacy as a means to ensure a healthier and more productive society; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development program invests in the future by creating opportunities for youth to develop their personal leadership skills, contribute to their communities, and strengthen other important life skills through a strong science based curriculum; and

WHEREAS, Cooperative Extension will be focusing each week of October on a specific aspect of Virginia Cooperative Extension;

1st week- 4-H Volunteers,

2nd week- Extension Leadership Council and Community Viability Volunteers,

3rd week- Agriculture and Natural Resource Volunteers,

4th week- Family and Consumer Science Volunteers, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Commonwealth of Virginia hereby recognizes October 2010 as Virginia Cooperative Extension Volunteer Month; acknowledges the value of Cooperative Extension volunteers programs to Virginia citizens, and salutes the Extension Leadership Councils of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Graine Thumb

Careful Thought and Creativity: How to Garden **BIG** in a small Space

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

"...a tiny garden does not have to be short on ideas." -- Martyn Cox

Many books have been written about gardening in small spaces and they tend to place emphasis on design and often do so at the expense of plants. Martyn Cox's book *Big Gardens in Small Spaces: Out-of-the-Box Advice for Boxed-in Gardeners* (Timber Press, 2009) takes a divergent approach. Cox, an Englishman, gardens in London in a "big-little" garden with about 250 different plants growing in 600 square feet. This postage-stamp-yard is similar to some backyards in Georgetown (Washington, DC) and historic homes in Old Town, Alexandria, VA.

Plantaholics will be pleased to read about practical solutions on how to take advantage of limited space. Employing a simple garden philosophy, the point is to squeeze as many plants as you can into the garden by any means and wherever possible. Obviously grass is out. Fruit, vegetables and herbs are in (to save money and because they taste good). Bulbs, flowers, ferns, small ornamental grasses, alpines, succulents, interesting ivy, climbers and even bonsai can fit albeit in a confined space. Consider using pots including hypertufa to grow some of these plants. You need to think big in order to think small. That means avoiding plants with huge leaves or really tall perennials because they will be out of scale and also shade out other plants. Use a vertical surface such as a fence, trellis, metal railing, dry stacked stone wall and even the side of a shed as suitable places to grow plants. A window sill that is wide enough to accommodate some pots should also work. Try your hand at growing a green roof over your shed too. Some full service garden centers have many selections of groundcover plants that will grow in a snug environment. Plant them between pavers or even remove a few pavers. If you have a spot where mortar has worked itself loose, this is another opportunity for planting.

The big gardens in small spaces book is an entertaining read and the color photos support the advice and effect that can be achieved. Perhaps more importantly you will come away with some ideas on how to improve your own landscape. That shady nook or retaining wall that stares back at you could be a candidate for a garden makeover. Remember, size is not everything.

Musings

-- By Jackie Hull, Bedford Area Master Gardener (Reprinted with permission from [The Bedford Gardener](#), September 2010, Volume XV, Issue 9)

This past week after lunch at Liberty Station we had a good hour to make evaporate before an appointment in Lynchburg. So we decided to wander further into the Piedmont region on a winding and twisting country road. As we neared a Baptist church, I noticed a car coming towards us. As it passed by, a beautiful Zebra Swallowtail Butterfly glanced off the side of the car. I don't see many Zebra Swallowtails so I quickly asked Peter to turn the car around. We went back to where this gorgeous creature lay on the frying hot pavement. I jumped from the car after hitting the hazard blinker. The butterfly wasn't moving, but seemed to be more stunned than mortally wounded. Scooping him up I scurried back to the car where I laid him inside my empty sneaker. There he began to recover slowly but surely. I knew if we had left him on the road, he would have suffered and died from the heat. It made me wonder how many butterflies are only stunned but die on the pavement. Gradually he stirred from the stinky sneaker...maybe that's what revived him...and he began to climb on my pants and onto my hands. What an absolutely gorgeous creature he was. Black and white vertical stripes up and down his wings. At the base of his second set of wings were two vibrant red dots. The wing tips formed black swallowtails. As he continued to climb on my arms, I noticed when he folded his wings together that underneath were a series of red dots flowing upward along the wing curves. Then he tested his wings as he attempted to fly about the car. So we found a thicket of vines and bushes to let him loose. Off he flew into the vines. I can only hope this beautiful creature survived to discover a paw paw tree and further the generations of his species. Creatures great and small...totally awesome!

State MG Coordinator Report (cont)

**International Search for Excellence
Deadline: 1 February 2011**

The International Master Gardener Conference will be in West Virginia. With seven prestigious categories, SFE applications must show that significant learning took place. Start planning now and check the website at:

http://www.extension.org/pages/International_Master_Gardener_Search_for_Excellence.

- Gave a presentation at UC, Davis, for the 2010 National MG Coordinator Conference. I was asked to serve on a panel to discuss funding mechanisms for state MG programs.
- Working on a grant proposal with 3 other Mid-Atlantic States and DC. People’s Garden Initiative through USDA FNS; \$1million over two years to install new veggie gardens at schools with student populations where 50% or more are on free or reduced lunch.
- Due to personnel changes in some Extension units, MG volunteers are being asked to fill out VA-114. It is a volunteer form necessary for anyone who volunteers with 4-H/youth projects on an ongoing basis. Even if you haven’t had to fill this out in the past, if you are asked, please comply with the request. I have worked with 4-H agents and the state’s 4-H Associate Director to come to an agreement on how this is to be handled locally. It boils down to a risk management issue.
- Update on funding for my position
- Mention issue that interest from endowment principal will be rolled back into the corpus (contacted by someone from Strange’s nursery; recently spoke with someone who intends to sign over life insurance policies & wants to challenge all MGs to give consideration to something similar (not just VMGA members, but all MG volunteers))

VMGA Report
1549 Beechwood Cove
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