

# VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

# R E P O R T



Vol. 16, No. 5

<http://www.vmga.net>

September/October 2009

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## Upcoming Meetings

10 October 2009, 10 AM  
Virginia Horse Center  
Anderson Coliseum  
487 Maury Road  
Lexington, VA 24450

\* \* Hosted by Rockbridge Area MGs \* \*

## President's Message

Betty Villers, VMGA President

At the August meeting we tried something new and it brought very positive comments. We included an educational training session as part of the meeting. The focus for this session was the Brag Board/Search for Excellence (SFE) competition that is held at MG College each year. Nancy Franz, one of the judges for the last couple of years and a Professor and Extension Specialist in Program Development, led the training. As a result of the training, we now have "Tips for Presenting a Winning Brag Board" which is available online and to units submitting Brag Boards for the competition at MG College.

At the October 10 Board meeting we will have someone from VT speak to the group about Risk Management. This is a concern as we include more projects working with our youth.

Thanks to Dawn Meyerriecks who has volunteered as the new webmaster. After many years as the VMGA webmaster, Frank Reilly stepped down because of work commitments and has been working with Dawn as she learns the ropes. Our thanks to Frank for his many years as our webmaster.

We have several volunteer opportunities available to you. The Silent Auction is in need of a chairman for next year's MG College. Volunteer now and you have plenty of time to plan for next year. We are open to new ideas and a new plan. The Diane Relf Educational Endowment Fund for Master Gardener College Scholarships Committee is looking for a new chairman. The chairman must be a previous recipient of a scholarship. Let me know if you are interested in either of these opportunities.

Please put October 13<sup>th</sup> on your calendar and join us at Tufton Farm (near Monticello) for our fall continuing educational program, "Moving Toward Sustainability": *Nature, Wildlife Habitat, and Year-Round Vegetables*. Visit the VMGA website for details.

Check out the VMGA website for all the fall festivals and activities going on around the state. This is a busy time for Master Gardeners.

Betty

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**12 September, Virginia Go Green Garden Festival, VA Science Museum, Richmond, 9 AM**

[www.vmganet.net](http://www.vmganet.net)

**12 September, "Spring into Fall", Hampton Roads AREC, 10 AM**

[www.vmganet.net](http://www.vmganet.net)

**12 September, "Cool Season Grasses", Grafton, VA, 10 AM**

[www.vmganet.net](http://www.vmganet.net)

**18-19 September, Fall Plant Sale, Lewis Ginter, Richmond, VA, 9 AM**

<http://www.lewisginter.org>

**18-19 September, "Exploring History & Conifers", American Conifer Society SE Regional Conference, Richmond**

<http://www.conifersociety.org>

**24 September - 5 October, Virginia State Fair, Doswell, VA**

<http://www.statefair.com>

**26 September, "Go Green - \$ave Green", Newport News, VA, 9 AM**

[www.nnmastergardeners.org](http://www.nnmastergardeners.org)

**26 September, Seed Saving Workshop, Tufton Farm, Monticello, 9:30 AM**

[www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)

**3 October, "Fall is for Planting", Grafton, VA, 9AM**

[www.vmganet.net](http://www.vmganet.net)

**10-11 October, Farm Arbor Fest, Blandy, 10AM**

[www.virginia.edu/blandy](http://www.virginia.edu/blandy)

**13 October, VMGA Continuing Education, "Moving Toward Sustainability", Tufton Farm, Monticello, 9:30 AM**

<http://www.vmganet.net>

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

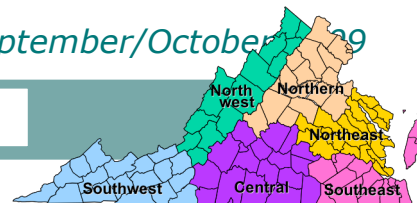
**State MG Liaison Report for August**

Dave Close

- Dr. Alan Grant was named the new Dean for the College of Ag and Life Sciences. He will begin on October 1. He comes from Purdue with a background in animal science.
- VCE was asked to create permanent budget reduction plans at 5%, 10%, and 15% through FY 2012. Implications are huge for Extension if we see this level of cuts. Legislators are home now, so voice your opinion.
- Funding was received from the US Forest Service to complete a project on Emerald Ash Borer. An online training module will be constructed targeting both green industry workers and MG volunteers to help inform the general public about EAB and how to watch for this pest in their community. Training should be ready by the beginning of next year.
- Dave will be meeting with VT's IT Director and folks from California for a demo of their state record keeping system to see if VT wants to consider purchasing it in place of building our own, which is proving to be cost prohibitive.
- The MG Handbook has been updated and is available now for use with this year's training class. Dave plans to create a training handbook advisory group and begin planning for the next revision to include more elective chapters on things such as wildlife, invasive species, and native plants.
- Dave is working with VT Foundation to find some sponsors to help offset some of the MG Handbook production costs to keep the price comparable to current charges.
- The MG College advisory team will meet in early September to begin planning for MG College 2010. The dates are June 22-27, 2010. Evaluations are being tabulated and will be shared to improve the experience.
- Dave conducted a scaled-down (3 hour) version of leadership training in Richmond the end of June for non-Ag and Natural Resource agents for the Northeast District. MG volunteers were also invited to attend. He would like to duplicate this in other districts to support agents who have MG responsibilities, but do not have Ag positions.
- Dave presented at the American Society for Horticultural Scientists in St. Louis in late July. He spoke to a group of about 30 colleagues on "Buddy Can You Spare a Dime?: Putting University Foundations to Work for Master Gardener Programs." He shared our experiences in establishing an endowment to support the MG program.
- 501(c)(3) information is available from Loudoun County MGs. An information packet includes their application, the supporting information, and the FAQ. Let Dave know if you are interested in receiving this information by email.

## August News From Across the State

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



## Northeast



### Chesterfield, Lynne Foote

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

Chesterfield County Master Gardeners have completed the training of 195 clients in the Grass Roots program and 52 clients for the Gardening for Chesterfield Residents. These numbers are down from last year and we suspect the economy has been the main factor.

The demo garden in front of the Extension Office has been a great education tool and fall crops will be planted for further education. Home gardening has been the big topic for our free seminars, as well as regular seminars on lawns. A very popular topic is "Sharing Your Yard: Living With Wildlife". Another new area of our free seminars covers gardening topics for older citizens, such as, "Raking without Aching".

### Hanover, Christy Brennan

<http://www.hanovermastergardeners.org>

Hanover MG's hosted a Homeowners Gardening Series Saturday, August 29th - Turf and Sustainable Landcare were the topics. Twenty Homeowners registered.

Over 115 pounds of produce from our new demo plot have been harvested and donated to Hanover Human Services for distribution.

### Henrico, Beverly Cochran

<http://www.henricomga.org>

On Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> the second annual Henrico Harvest Fair will be held at the Armour House and Gardens at Meadowview. Doors open at 8:30 a.m., rain or shine. Brent Heath of Brent & Becky's Bulbs will be a featured speaker. This is presented by the Henrico County Master Gardener Association in cooperation with Virginia Cooperative Extension and Henrico Recreation and Parks.

Our Junior MG program has been expanded and we now have classes in the summertime.

We are also hard at work on our Gardens Growing Families project.

## Northern



### Fairfax, George Graine

<http://www.fairfaxmastergardeners.org>

The Home Turf Team of Fairfax joined with Loudoun Turf Busters at a field day for our respective turf nutrient management programs. Dr. Mike Goatley, Jr. (Turfgrass Specialist, VaTech) discussed turf grass selection and maintenance. Adria Bordas (Ext Agt, Fairfax) discussed weeds as indicators of turf problems and Debbie Dillion (Ext Agt, Loudoun) discussed the all important topic of soil testing and understanding the results.

A debriefing on MG College 2009 and suggestions for the college in 2010 was provided by those who attended the college.

### Green Spring, Joan Richards, Cyndi Bishop

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

The hi-tech committee has completed updating the power point presentations, adding new ones and making the list available to our MGs. Display boards have also been updated this summer.

Our first brochure was just printed, entitled, "Connecting the Community with Environmental Horticulture Education." It contains information on what we do as MGs as well as information on how to become a Green Spring Master Gardener.

### You KNOW You Want One!

We have new t-shirts available for only \$12 in cool colors.

Check them out online at [www.vmganet.net](http://www.vmganet.net)

Order them through your unit rep or through Susan at [NeverEnoughPlants@gmail.com](mailto:NeverEnoughPlants@gmail.com)



## News From Across the State (continued)

## Southeast

**Prince George, Cheryl Sebera**

<http://www.pgmga.org>

We're getting ready for our Fall Plant Sale/Clinic on Oct 17<sup>th</sup>. The fall does not bring in as many clients. Has anyone else had the same experience?

Starting August 31 the Help Desk will be on hiatus. It has been really slow this year.

The Greater Tomato Contest ended on August 31. This contest has been extremely successful. Winners will be announced very soon!

## Central

**Amherst, Campbell, and Lynchburg (Hill City MGA), Deborah Straw**

<http://www.hcmga.org>

Our School Programs in five of Lynchburg's City's Schools consist of watering and weeding through the summer, but they will pick up again in late September.

The Master Gardeners continue to staff the phone in the office to assist Agent Don Davis with horticulture questions. We also staff a booth at the Community Center every Wednesday and Saturday morning.

## Tips for a Winning Brag Board

Nancy Franz spoke to the VMGA members at the August 8 bimonthly meeting concerning the MG College Brag Boards and Search for Excellence (SFE) competition. Nancy has been a judge for the Brag Boards at MG College for several years and is a Professor and Extension Specialist in Program Development.

She discussed the guidelines for judging and critiqued three of this year's entries. From this discussion and critique these are some of the things to be considered when developing a winning brag board.

**1. Follow one of the SLM objectives:**

- Protection of the environment
- Youth education
- Value of the landscape (literal economic value)
- Community food resources and nutrition
- Health and quality of life

**2. Tell the story with:**

- Color. Use color but not too much and stay away from red and green because some folks are color blind.
- Single focus. Cover only one project.
- Clearly. Make sure it's easy to read and people know what the theme or topic is.
- Sound. Use all the sounds. If there is background noise, use head phones.
- Interaction. Use of a quiz or touch.

**3. Judges look for:**

- Did you follow the rules?
- How many entries are there in a category? (In the past there were lots of youth entries, so look for something different.)
- Are you able to read my mind? (Know the judges' expertise.)
- What are the results of your project? (Tell how you used the results.)
- How well does the project meet the Mission of VCE?
- Impact on the Community. Was it economic change, saving the environment, social change or other? There are five ways to collect your data (interviews, focus groups, secondary data, case studies, and observation).
- What learning took place? What change in attitudes, knowledge, aspirations, etc.?
- Ease of replication. Can someone else go home and do the same thing?



## The Graine Thumb

### A Very Different Approach to Garden Design

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

*"The greatest service which can be rendered to any country is to add a useful plant to its culture."*

--- Thomas Jefferson

Every landscape design book takes one on a different journey. Sometimes it is reasonably straight forward and sometimes a book has a unique approach or message. The journey usually ends up with landscape ideas that appeal to you entirely, somewhat, or perhaps not at all. Scott and Lauren Springer Ogden wrote *Plant-Driven Design: Creating Gardens that Honor Plants, Place, and Spirit* (Timber Press, 2008) with a revolutionary message that sets out a bold challenge for the reader who is considering a landscape makeover.

The preface of this compelling book includes the clue and glue on how to personalize your own landscape with the premise that "gardens exist because of gardeners, not designers." This is surely a refreshing, albeit unconventional thought. In the final analysis one needs to "unite the often disparate roles of designer and gardener, and the work of creating and planting." To be sure, beware the designer or landscape architect (who often has limited knowledge about plants) as they develop what can best be referred to as an exercise in exterior décor. The results are often narrow monocultures because plant massing is the rule along with limited choices of plants. In other words, beware the design where plants play a subordinate role.

The thrill of this book is the emphasis on you as the gardener and lover of plants for plants sake. Put plants first and not a somewhat static and arbitrary architecture principle last. This is the opposite approach of how designers usually draw up a plant design.

To garden is to continually rethink what is happening in your landscape. The once and done does not work. Over time you will be changing the look of your garden because of varied circumstances that you may not be able to control. Why? Because plants grow, weather can play havoc, a desire to include the plant du jour, and of course, maintenance. Additionally, consider how the garden will appear during all four seasons. Thus you can relate to the oft used phrase "my garden is a work in progress."

If you desire to incorporate garden art, that can be a good thing as this is all about expressing one's self. In some ways, gardeners are really both designer and plant collector whether we realize this or not. We know enough about a plant's cultural requirements and also understand how a plant will appear after some period of time regarding physical attributes. The more than 300 color photos and captions clearly illustrate points made in the text. Another helpful feature is the extensive plant lists that are liberally populated within each of the six chapters.

To sum up, plant-driven design is really a series of relationships between plant and region, plant and site, plant and plant, and plant and person. How these varied relationships work with one another is important to your landscape. Sadly, but too often true, you will not achieve such a personal relationship working with professional designers and landscape architects. The reason is that they tend to operate in a formula-driven mode that does not have a soul. Your garden is a reflection of your personality and not necessarily your wallet or some pre-conceived home improvement product.

## Celebrations & Congratulations!

Williamsburg Farmers Market won First Place in the Medium Size Market category in the "America's Favorite Farmers Markets" contest sponsored by American Farmland Trust. "We could not have won without your support! We are so pleased to be in the company of five other Virginia farmers markets who placed in this contest, as well as among all of the wonderful markets who placed nationwide. We will strive to uphold our commitment to support our local farms and ranches by providing fresh, healthy, regionally-produced food and farm products at our market."

For more information, check the story and link online at <http://www.vmganet.net>!

## VMGA Report

The VMGA Report is the bimonthly newsletter of the Virginia Master Gardener Association. Submissions should be received by the 25th of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Send inquiries and submissions to:

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

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

## VMGA Membership

There is a new and improved VMGA membership form and it is available online at <http://www.vmga.net>.

## Endowment Fund Donations

All donations should be sent directly to the Virginia Tech Foundation. Checks should be made out to VT Foundation with Account #886119 in the memo line. Checks should be mailed to CALS Development Office, 216 Hutcheson Hall (0402), Blacksburg VA 24061.

## Virginia State Fair Time!

Remember the State Fair from 24 September through 4 October at our new location at The Meadow, Doswell, VA. Check <http://www.vmga.net/calendar/calendar> for your unit assignments.

## And don't forget our CE Event!

Join our VMGA Continuing Education event on Tuesday, 13 October, when we will convene at the Thomas Jefferson Center for Heritage Plants, Tufton Farms, to address "Moving Toward Sustainability". Registration information is available via our web site: <http://www.vmga.net>.

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