

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

VMGA's fiscal year ends on June 30, 2011; what a quick and eventful year it's been! The VCE funding/reorganization issues have presented many significant questions for all of us. Our Education program continued to grow and improve. Also membership increased as compared to last year. These positive results require the continued support of our members.

As of the April Board Meeting, Barbara Geer and Betty Jo Hendrix have stepped down as Co-Chairs of the Education Committee. Their leadership and efforts, together with others such as Ira Wallace and Mildred McDuffie and the other committee members, have raised our Education program to a new level over the last two years. The good news is that both Barbara and Betty Jo plan to remain on the Education Committee and we can still benefit from their knowledge and experience.

Yes the rumors are true, we are losing Cheri Haggerty. She and her husband are moving to the Midwest to be closer to family. We thank her for her many years of service at the state level for VMGA and the Virginia Green Industry and at the local level in Hanover. We will miss her knowledge, experience and willingness to serve.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Paul Kulp of Fairfax. Paul was President of VMGA from 1994 to 1996. He was a Fairfax Master Gardener from 1988 to 2000.

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.

The next Board of Directors' meeting will be on Friday, June 24th at MG College and the Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 25th. The Board encourages the membership to attend and participate in their meetings. Finally, don't forget the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference (IMGC) in Charleston, West Virginia in October.

Hope to see you at MG College!

Bill Scott
President

STATE MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR LIAISON REPORT DAVID CLOSE APRIL 9, 2011 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

1. Dr. Edwin Jones arrived on April 1 to begin as our new VCE Director and Associate Dean. Dave will be meeting with him later in April to discuss the Extension MG program
2. 2011 version of Home, Grounds, & Animals PMG is available. Individuals may order them online. If you wish to place a bulk order, your local Extension office should work through Sarah McCoy on campus to process these. Copies for Extension MG Hort Help Desks have been sent out. If your unit has not received theirs yet, they should be in the queue for shipment.
3. Dave met with the Director for the Institute for Distance and Distributive Learning to discuss making a portion of the MG training class available online. We will be moving forward with this as an option and hope to have something available by 2012. This will not be designed to replace current models of face-to-face training, but an added option for those who wish to complete at least a portion of their training online.
4. Sarah Kelly from the Ag, Human, & Natural Resources Information Technology group (AHNR-IT) from CALS and Dave conducted a one-day training in Charlottesville on Thursday, March 31st, on the new Volunteer Management System (VMS). Representatives from 8 units who offered to be pilot locations for testing the system and rolling it out to their volunteers attended. There is still much work to do in

developing training resources, but these 8 units have been given permission to start playing with the system and finding things that need to be modified before it rolls out statewide. It is hoped to the new system will be fully implemented and rolled out by the end of calendar year 2012.

5. Please encourage your colleagues to block off the week of June 21-26 on their calendar and join us for Master Gardener College.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE COMPETITION (SFE)-CHRISTY BRENNAN, HANOVER

VMGA would like to encourage all units to participate in the VA Search for Excellence Competition. The contest showcases Master Gardeners in action by displaying and reporting on specific projects throughout the state. Presentations will be 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.

Dave Close carefully selects very enthusiastic judges and representatives from VCE are delighted to see the emphasis on program development and reporting.

Please let Christy Brennan know if your unit is going to participate and if your display needs an electrical hookup (bring your own extension power cords).

Display set up will be on Thursday. June 23rd 4:00 – 6:30 pm. Please note: Judging will start at 6:30 pm.

The display must have a completed application as part of the display and this includes a letter from your Extension Agent verifying that all Master Gardeners are active volunteers.

Previous Winners:

The 2010 VA Search for Excellence Competition

Demonstration Gardens

1st Place - VA Beach MGs - The New Kitchen Garden

2nd Place - Henrico MGs - MGs Help Families

Honorable Mention - York County MGs - MGs at the Market

General Master Gardener Accomplishments

1st Place - Hanover County MG Cheri Haggerty - The History of VMGA: A Work in Progress

Innovative Projects

1st Place - Prince William County MG - BEST Lawn Projects

Community Service

1st Place - MGs of Arlington & Alexandria - I Can Shine Gardens

The 2009 VA Search for Excellence Competition

Community Gardening and Service

Central VA- Louisa MG Overall Top Score - 1st Place

Workshops and Presentations Northern VA MG- 1st Place

Youth Programs -Hill City MG – 1st Place

Hanover MG – 2nd Place

Several Master Gardener units have elected to enter the SFE Competition at International Master Gardener College in Charleston, WVA, October 11 -14, 2011. Let's show that VA has the best Master Gardener Program by showing our support.

The Categories are:

Youth

Demonstration Garden

Workshop or Presentation

Community Service

Innovative Project

Special Needs Audiences (Senior, Disabled Audiences or Horticultural Therapy)

Research (applied scientific methodology)

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SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE-VA (FORMERLY BRAG BOARD COMPETITION) APPLICATION AND RULES

Purpose:

The Virginia Master Gardeners have elected to change the requirements of the former Brag Board competition modeling the program after the International Search for Excellence program. It is the hope of the VMGA-Search for Excellence committee that every VA Master Gardener unit will participate at Master Gardener College and the winners of our VA competition will be entered into the International competition to represent Virginia Master Gardeners.

International Program: The Search for Excellence is the recognition program for Master Gardener Volunteer work throughout the United States and Canada. There are seven categories in which Master Gardeners can demonstrate outstanding contributions to their communities.

The seven categories are:

Youth Programs

Demonstration Gardens

Workshop or Presentation (hands on workshops)

Community Service

Innovative Projects

Special Audiences, Senior /Disabled Audiences or Hort therapy

Other General MG Accomplishments

Rules:

1. The projects may cover more than one category, but the group must choose one main category to be considered. The project must have completed one cycle and be worked on over the past two years.

2. This is designed to recognize a Master Gardener group project – not an individual's project.

3. The goal is for the ideas to be simple as to inform and educate other units, to share excellent ideas and programs so they can be replicated by other groups. Step-by-Step "how to do this" is a great way to share your project.

4. The program should be easy to use and fit well into the community; show that your group has found the best way to fit the needs of the community.

5. Demonstrate the creativity and originality in your project, what has made your group's project your own, show the different personalities of the Master Gardeners in the group.

6. These items must be included in the presentation:

A: Title of the project

B: The mission statement of the MG Group, a mission statement of the project team may also be included

C: The SLM, which was the focus of the project

D: **A verification letter from the extension Agent / Advisor or Coordination. This letter should indicate that all MG's working on the project were of good standing with their local program.**

E: An impact statement. This is a statement and facts about how a person's life or habits were changed as they attended or participated in the event. Surveys can be useful in obtaining information on what the participants have learned. If possible, follow-up post tests are good ways to show the initial level of education and what participants learned and use.

7. The display may contain posters, power point or a computer presentation, back drops with photos. **The Form below must be completed and attached to the presentation.**

Scoring:

All entries will be judged during Master Gardener College. Winners will be announced during the annual VMGA meeting. We would like to encourage everyone to prepare a short, 3 minute maximum presentation of their project. Winners will be asked to present their project to the college. Scoring is on a 100-point scale.

A	Simplicity of the project- Ease of replication	10 points max
B	Practicality: usefulness / significance of the project for the situation	10 points max
C	Originality / Creativity	10 points max
D	Consistent with the mission of Extension and Master Gardeners	10 points max
E	Clarity and completeness of the project application	20 points max
F	Did significant learning occur?	20 points max
G	Number of people impacted by the project	20 points max
		100 total points

**Search for MG Excellence
VA Cooperative Extension
Virginia Master Gardeners
2011 Master Gardener College**

Group Name: _____

Mission Statement: _____

Project Start Date: _____

Title of Project: _____

Category: (choose one) Youth Programs

Demonstration Gardens

Workshop or Presentation (hands on workshops)

Community Service

Innovative Projects

Special Audiences, Senior / Disabled Audiences or Hort therapy

Other General MG Accomplishments

Target Audience: _____

Purpose of Project: _____

Type and scope of project: _____

Tools or Instruments needed: (May include computer, projectors, handouts, booklets, VCE brochures, garden equipment) _____

Significant Learning Impacts: describe how results were obtained, including methods used (surveys, evaluations etc.) _____

Number of people impacted and how verified: _____

Steps to consider for replication or lessons learned by the group:

Participants and roles:

Master Gardeners _____

Please attach the verification letter from the Extension Advisor / Coordinator that all Master Gardeners involved are in good standing with the local program.

IN SYMPATHY.....

James David Scharf, 71, of Louisa, died Wednesday, May 4, 2011 at his home. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on Feb. 12,1940.

James was an Elder of Missions at Louisa Presbyterian, in addition to serving as Outreach Chair for Pilgrimage. He was also a member of the Ruritan Club, the Louisa Master Gardeners, where he served as President for four years, and a member of the Louisa County Planning Commission.

The complete obituary can be viewed at:

http://obit.woodwardfuneral.com/obit_display.cgi?id=927479&listing=Current&clientid=woodwardfuneral

Paul R. Kulp, 81, who was head of administration and finance at Washington’s National Airport for the U.S. Department of Transportation, died March 10 at Renaissance Gardens at Greenspring Village, a nursing facility in Springfield. He had metastatic cancer.

Paul Richard Kulp, a native of Pottstown, Pa., was a 1951 agriculture graduate of Pennsylvania State University. In 1960, he received a master’s degree in economics from American University. He served in the Army from 1952 to 1955.

Mr. Kulp was an Annandale resident from 1963 until 2010 and was a founding member of Providence Presbyterian Church in Fairfax County, where he served as an elder. He earned a master gardener certification from the Virginia Cooperative Extension at Virginia Tech, served as VMGA president from 1994 to 1996 and was a volunteer at the National Arboretum.

The complete obituary notice can be viewed at:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/2011/03/30/AFZiEnDE_story.html

VIRGINIA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION
George Graine, Fairfax

Yes, Virginia, we do have a state Master Gardener Association! This is the state-wide association for Master Gardener volunteers and Virginia Cooperative Extension employees. The Virginia Master Gardener Association (VMGA) is a non-profit organization and it is guided by officials elected by VMGA members. You are not required to belong to VMGA to be an active Master Gardener; however, membership in the state association is an important way to give direct input to VCE on issues of concern to Master Gardener volunteers in Virginia.

VMGA *communicates and networks* with you via their bi-monthly newsletter, The VMGA Report, through its website, www.vmga.net, and the membership directory. More than 600 Master Gardeners across the state have joined VMGA. Our state association conducts bi-monthly meetings, held at various locations around the state, and all active Master Gardeners are invited and encouraged to attend.

VMGA also sponsors *continuing education programs*. The topics are timely and varied, the presentations are superb and the cost is reasonable. Each June, VCE sponsors Master Gardener College at VA Tech. This conference includes prominent speakers, workshops, labs, field work, garden tours, and even time for more leisurely pursuits. This is a worthwhile experience and once you attend you will look forward to “matriculating” at MG College the following year.

In summary, VMGA is a voice for all Virginia Master Gardeners. We interface with Virginia Tech (our land grant university and the home of VCE) and the state legislature on matters of importance to our client population, the residents of Virginia. We know that citizens of all ages need unbiased help and our expertise to make decisions necessary for a successful gardening experience and to be concerned with the environment.

I encourage you to join VMGA. Annual dues are only \$12. Membership applications can be downloaded from www.vmga.net. A secure payment option is also available on-line.

ANNUAL VMGA SILENT AUCTION Betty Villers, VA Beach

VMGA is asking for Master Gardeners statewide to donate items to the Annual VMGA Silent Auction. The Auction will be held at VA Tech during Master Gardener College in Blacksburg, June 23-26. All proceeds from this auction will be donated to the State Master Gardener Coordinator Endowment Fund.

The auction last year brought in over \$4000 and we would like to top that this year. 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	

Contact your unit VMGA representative, MG unit coordinator or Betty Villers for the official form used to record your donations.

Virginia Beach and James City County/Williamsburg MGs are responsible for the auction this year and we could use your help when we get to MG College. All are welcome to come see how we catalog items and setup for this event held on Thursday and Friday evenings of College week. Next year it will be the responsibility of another unit or units.

If you have any questions, please contact Betty Villers at bettyv@cox.net or 757-481-6398.

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VMGA AUCTION DONATION 2011

Donor: _____

Contact Name (if different from donor): _____

Donor/Contact Street Address: _____

City : _____ Zip Code: _____

MG unit: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Donated Item(s): _____

Value : _____

Minimum bid recommendation: _____

THIS FORM NEEDS TO BE SENT TO BETTY BEFORE YOU LEAVE FOR MG COLLEGE.

Return form to bettyv@cox.net
or:
Betty Villers
3133 Inlet Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

Thank you.

THE GRAINETHUMB

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES: MISUNDERSTANDING, PARANOIA OR GOOD SENSE

By George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners

Politics of the environment has become increasingly polarized.

--Jeff Gillman and Eric Heberling

Horticulturalist Jeff Gillman (U. Minn) has done it again! He has written another “truth” book this time co-authored with political science professor Eric Heberling (UNC-Charlotte) called *How the Government Got In Your Backyard: Superweeds, Frankenfoods, Lawn Wars, and the (Nonpartisan) Truth About Environmental Policies*, (Timber Press, 2011). The many, many points of the book concern whether government policies are helpful or harmful to our society and the environment. There is no simple answer although the authors give it their best shot. Backed up by a 17 page bibliography, each chapter concludes with a five-star right and left-wing rating system indicating an ideal policy (5 stars) to a policy you dislike (2 stars) and even a 1 star that indicates NO for each side of the aisle as we like to say in Washington. The book is wordy but not in a pejorative sense. The authors do not use photos nor do they dazzle you with charts or graphs. None are needed as the policy explanations and evaluations are clearly stated and without hype.

The book quantifies the differences between liberals and conservatives in ten independent chapters about government policies. Aside from these chapters, the stage is set at the beginning of the book with a discussion of the science, political science and the science of politics. The concluding chapter clearly and succinctly notes how balancing nature and politics is important to the discussion. You will not go away with a feeling of paralysis by analysis but rather you will have a greater understanding of how the government got in your backyard. Then, if you are so inclined, you will be able to confront your elected officials concerning policies based on facts rather than the self interest of an individual, corporation or an environmental group.

It is difficult to get around the fact that the greening of America has become the topic du jour and dare I say a contentious one. Politics of our environment have become increasingly polarized. It is apparent from this well researched text that those who are left-wing environmentally-oriented tend to favor strict government regulation of business. Conversely, right-wingers tend to favor inaction, especially when it is not clear that a particular activity causes damage. Of course this is an over simplification as the Gillman-Heberling book goes into much greater detail concerning the psyche (my word) of left vs. right and “proves” the position of each side by explaining the facts and the science regarding each issue. The authors often provide several choices of policy options and offer possible solutions to each problem presented. Grainethumb has no dog in this fight and believes this book is fair and balanced and without the ever present spin that one can expect from overzealous media. In other words, the authors are not pushing an agenda. They correctly state “With some laws it’s immediately obvious that they will have a positive impact, but with others it takes years to discover what the impact will be.” “Government policies that deal with our environment almost invariably fall into the latter category.” You will be very surprised when you read this book. It may change your mind or you may stick to your guns. Either way, you will become informed, more knowledgeable and be able to separate fiction from fact.