



REPORT

Vol. 16, No. 6

<http://www.vmga.net>

November/December 2009

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Upcoming Meetings

12 December 2009, 10 AM
 Hampton Roads AREC
 1444 Diamond Springs Road
 Virginia Beach, VA 23455

* * * Hosted by Virginia Beach MGs * * *

President's Message

Betty Villers, VMGA President

The year is winding down for Master Gardener activities and everyone will soon be busy with the holidays. I look forward to 2010 as we celebrate VMGA's 20th Anniversary in February. The number of Master Gardeners has grown from 800 in 1990 when the Association had its first meeting to over 5000 Active Master Gardeners this year.

It all started in January 1989, when a group of twenty-one Extension Agents with Master Gardener Programs and sixteen Master Gardeners representing all regions of VA met with Dr. Diane Relf. It was agreed that the growth in the Master Gardener program had created opportunities that were difficult to take advantage of without some type of a formal statewide organization. Subcommittees were formed to investigate membership, structure and goals. By September, the bylaws had been approved and the Articles of Incorporation had been filed and approved. On February 9, 1990 the first meeting of the Virginia Master Gardener Association, Inc. was held in the Hanover County Courthouse. Read more about the VMGA history at our website, www.vmga.net.

At the October Board meeting I appointed the Nominating Committee to select the leadership to take us through the next two years. They will report at the December Board meeting and voting will take place before the February meeting.

The Education Committee held a most successful program at Tufton Farm in October and had to close registration at 130 attendees. Make sure you put March 27th, 2010 on your calendar for the next educational event at VSU in Petersburg.

A few reminders:

- As your unit makes leadership changes, send those changes to Christy Brennan and me.
- Send 2009 MG College photos to Frank Reilly for the promotional CDs.
- If there is a change in your VMGA unit representative, please let Christy and me know.
- Volunteers are needed to update the VMGA history using newsletters and meeting minutes. Let me know if you are interested.
- Volunteers needed to serve on MG College Silent Auction committee. Let me know if you are interested.

Join us at our next VMGA Board meeting, December 12, at the Hampton Roads AREC in Virginia Beach.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Betty

UPCOMING EVENTS

14 November, "Creative Container Gardens", Norfolk Botanical Gardens, 10 AM,

<http://www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org>

4 December, 5th Annual Continuing Education Seminar, Charlottesville, (434) 872-4580

7-9 December, 2009 Turfgrass Short Course, Donaldson Brown Graduate Life Center on the campus of Virginia Tech, <http://www.vaturf.org>

14-16 December, 2009 Turfgrass Short Course, Hampton Roads AREC at Virginia Beach, <http://www.vaturf.org>

16 December, "Easy Indoor Plants", Hahn Horticultural Garden, 12 PM www.hort.vt.edu/hhg

Holiday Greens Workshops:

- 3 December, Hahn Hort Garden
- 12 December, Lewis Ginter
- 12 December, Norfolk Bot Gdn
- 5, 6 December, Natl Arboretum
- 5, 6, 7 December, Monticello
- 9, 11, 12 December, Monticello
- 4, 5 December, Tudor Place, DC
- 4, 5 December, Hillwood, DC

Holiday Outdoor Light Displays:

- 28 Nov - 11 Jan, Lewis Ginter
- 26 Nov - 3 Jan, Norfolk Bot Gdn
- 25 Nov - 10 Jan, Bull Run Park

Send VMGA calendar inputs to Kathryn Debnar, k2garden@cox.net.

State MG Liaison Report for October

Dave Close

Pest Management Guide (PMG): Joyce Latimer will be the content editor for the Home and Grounds PMG, which means we should see a considerable improvement, and change in this edition to be ready by 2011. A limited number of MG volunteers will be asked to be involved. There will be some 20+ content editors for each section.

State Record Keeping System: We have been granted permission to purchase software from Univ California-Davis that suits our needs. This system should be in place in a few months. The system will also be used by the VA Master Naturalist program and potentially other Ext volunteer programs. Local units will still need to report data.

Master Gardener Handbook: The 2009 revision is out and being used. The next revision process is starting and will begin accepting "applications" or at least letters of interest from volunteers who may want to participate as reviewers or more. We are hoping to secure sponsorships like Maryland has done to offset costs so we can improve quality without increasing price.

MGs as authors: We are working with Joyce Latimer and Extension Agents to develop policy and procedure for MG Volunteers to serve as authors of non-numbered publications. We are inviting MGs to submit home horticulture articles for publication on the VCE website. The guidelines have been sent to agents and we are waiting for feedback before finalizing the procedure and sending it out by listserv.

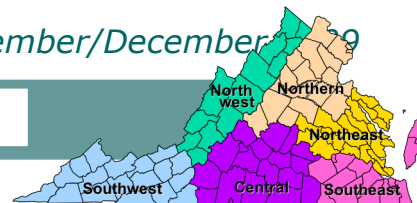
Budget Update: VaTech is scheduled to take a \$68M reduction from the state that will translate to Extension facing annual budget cuts beginning in July 2010 of 5%, 10%, and 15% through 2012. These translate into cuts of \$3.16M, \$6.33M and \$9.49M respectively and are agency-wide.

VCE Stakeholders Dialogues: VCE is going through a strategic planning process by scheduling 45 discussion meetings throughout the state with VCE faculty, staff and stakeholders. Watch for opportunities near you to participate. This will help us pro-actively address the changes that will be inevitable in light of pending budget reductions. Cheri Haggerty is attending one in Richmond representing VMGA.

Electronic Information and Training: We have the ability to transmit a variety of information without leaving campus office by using available technology. Examples include Risk Management Training via Adobe Connect and participating in the MG training class by giving my "What it Means to be a VCE MG" presentation.

In-Season Newsletter and state MG website: Plans are to increase the number of newsletter issues from 4 to 6 per year. Make sure your unit e-mail list is up-to-date in the state record keeping system in order to ensure all your MGs are receiving the newsletter. Remember to send email address changes. See the dramatic changes in the coming weeks to the state MG website at <http://www.hort.vt.edu/mastergardener/>.

October News From Across the State



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

Northeast



Chesterfield, Lynne Foote

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

This fall, six lawn care seminars were presented at the public libraries with 89 participants. After last year's great response to the presentations, winter seminars are again being offered in our public libraries. The advertising for all events is through the county's public relations department.* The Chesterfield MGs are also attempting to reach the part of the population that would benefit from more gentle gardening methods: "Raking Without Aching" – a seminar to help us prevent injury during our garden maintenance activities. A gardening newsletter written by Susan Edwards, MG Coordinator, is updated periodically at: http://offices.ext.vt.edu/chesterfield/programs/anr/Newsletter/newsletter_garden.html

**Editor's note: Using your locality's PR department can be a great way to reach an audience that may not find your announcement in the local newspaper.*

Newport News, Anita Smith

<http://nnmastergardeners.org>

Our **Go Green-\$ave Green** Event, held September 26, 2009, was a huge success. Over 20 Master Gardeners, 75 registered guests and 11 exhibitors participated. Attendees commented that they "learned so much". Our fall plant sale held October 3rd and 4th at the Newport News Fall Festival raised \$1,700. Regular horticulture enrichment lessons continue at the Newport News Juvenile Detention Center where raised beds have been constructed to give the students more hands-on gardening experience. The October unit association meeting included the usual seed exchange and lunch following a memorial service for Yvonne Tung at the Grin and Grow Garden. Yvonne was very active in designing and developing the garden that we use as an educational tool for children.

Northeast



Henrico, Beverly Cochrane

We held our second annual Henrico Harvest Fair in September. The weather was beautiful and everyone attending had a great time. We had record numbers visit our children's area at the Virginia State Fair in October. In October, our unit heard Norie Burnet, a nationally known moss expert, speak. We also toured her moss garden.

Hanover, Christy Brennan

Hanover wrapped up the Homeowner's Gardening Series with presentations on Landscape Design and Water Wise Gardening Practices. The series received very positive reviews. Hanover Landcare Stewards presented a Composting Workshop to the public at the new demonstration garden. The garden has yielded over 290 pounds of food for needy families in Hanover. The Fall Plant sale was a very successful event and county residents enjoyed the various demonstrations and educational displays. Hanover Master Gardeners are resting after a very successful VA State Fair at The Meadow Event Park. We hope to see you there next year.

Northern Neck, Ted Munns

<http://nmg.org>

This fall wrapped up the first year of a vegetable garden at the Northern Neck Farmers Museum. Our MGs teamed with the Farm Bureau's 4H children volunteers and produced hundreds of pounds of vegetables that were donated to the local food bank. The children learned the importance of planting, weeding, watering, IPM control, harvesting, and feeding the poor, which contributed to their SOL knowledge.

Our rain barrel workshops and lawn seminar were successful events last quarter. Planning is now underway for next spring's "Gardening in the Northern Neck" Seminar.

October News From Across the State

Northern

**Northern Virginia, Joe Kelly**

Activities continue in our demonstration gardens, but we are getting ready to shut down for the cold weather. A weeknight clinic is still running at the Arlington Library. A number of MGs volunteered at the Arlington County Fair by staffing the VCE information booth and helping with the management and judging of vegetable and flower shows. Two small vegetable gardens, tended by members of the Arlington Mills multicultural seniors program, have been established on the grounds of Fairlington Community Center. Approximately 30 pounds of fresh produce was harvested from the gardens for cooking classes conducted by the DC Central Kitchens at the community center. In collaboration with the National Museum of the American Indian, our unit provided an educational program titled, "Beyond the Three Sisters: Native American Horticultural Lore and Lessons for Urban Gardeners". Educational programming on Fall Lawn Care and Composting were also held.

Fluvanna, JoAnne Henry

<http://www.fluvannamg.org>

Master Gardener leaders and the Community Garden members had a summer festival in August. Gardeners brought samples of their vegetables and a covered dish that featured a vegetable grown in their garden. To no one's surprise, tomatoes were very popular. The Demonstration Garden at Pleasant Grove has been moved to make room for renovation of the historic house. Work for winter and early next year is to create a new garden closer to the outside kitchen building. The focus of this garden will be historical accuracy for a mid 1850s kitchen garden. Fluvanna Master Gardener, Irene Burke continues to write her weekly column for the *Rural Virginian*. Her columns have been well received and give publicity to our Master Gardener unit.



Northern

**Fairfax County, George Graine**

<http://www.fairfaxmastergardeners.org>

The outcome of a recent NoVa MG Caucus (NoVaMGC) led to the commencement of a MG retention project. This longitudinal study, currently in a preliminary stage, is led by George Graine, in conjunction with Dr. Nancy Franz, Extension Specialist Program Development and David Close, State MG Coordinator. It is anticipated the study will be helpful to those Extension Agents with a MG program. The end result will be an anonymous exit survey to help determine why MGs left the program. The survey should be tailored by Extension Agents in order to show where specific program improvements can be initiated.

Green Spring, Joan Richard

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

During our Fall Festival at Green Spring Gardens, held October 3, Master Gardeners gave tours of the gardens and provided information to festival visitors. Garden tours continue to be popular with garden clubs and other groups. Through the winter months, Nov-Mar, Green Spring MGs will hold responsibility for assisting clients through the Help Desk at the Fairfax County Extension Office. A series of six basic gardening classes, taught by MGs, concluded at the end of October.

Louisa

Our vermi-composting demonstration was presented at the Senior Center in Louisa, the Louisa Agricultural Fair and the 3rd Annual Heritage Harvest Festival held at Monticello. Worms and instructions for making worm bins were shared with interested attendees. At the Fair, an information table was available; several MGs volunteered as judges for entries in Horticulture and Canned Goods; a rain barrel set up was demonstrated with running water; and vermi-composting was displayed in the kid's activity section.

October News From Across the State

Southeast



Prince George, Cheryl Sebera
<http://www.pgmga.org>

We had our Fall Plant Sale/Clinic on October 17th. In spite of the cold and drizzle it was our most successful fall sale ever!! Our Fall Garden Basics program, held every other Saturday in September and October covered Water Gardens; What's Eating My Plants?; Planting To Create A Backyard Habitat; and Does It Come Back?. Vegetables harvested from the test garden were: 1) used by the 4-H agent to teach students how to cook a nutritious meal and 2) donated to the local food bank. Our Ag agent has effectively used the lawn test plot as a teaching tool.

Virginia Beach, Fran Shelton

The Virginia Beach Master Gardener Assoc. has just completed its 10th annual Community Gardening Festival and reached approximately 500 members of the community. Virginia Beach looks forward to hosting the next VMGA meeting in Virginia Beach on December 12. We look forward to all VMGA members planning to attend.

Southeast



Chesapeake, Pinky Derieux

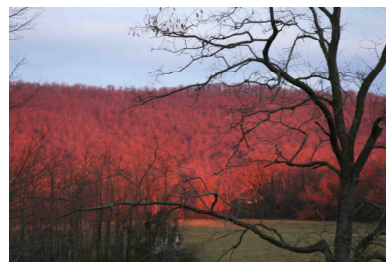
October heralded the end of summer and a very productive Plant-A-Row (PAR) for the Hungry growing season. Chesapeake is proud of its PAR dedicated team and its attention to striving to surpass each preceding year in assisting to feed the hungry. This year we again topped the previous year with a donation of 9,486 pounds of fruits and vegetables to the House of Blessings Church, which helped feed 235 families and 723 individuals. This total of needy people has increased from 2008 and we are elated to have played a significant part in this important event. Many kudos to our super PAR team for a job well done.

Southwest



Blue Ridge, Charlie Whittle

"Twilight Orchard Walk" and "Fall Harvest Festival" were conducted at Matthews State Forest Orchard/ Living History Farm Museum in September.



The 2009 Virginia State Fair



Master Gardener Booth THANKS!

Christy Brennan, Hanover

A big Thank You to all 155 Master Gardeners who participated in the very first State Fair of VA event held at The Meadow Event Park. The VCE Master Gardener area has grown to over half of the entire Plant and Fish Center. Keeping it simple this year and performing the DNA extraction of strawberries impressed the Fair and participants in the school tour, as well as families that were visiting. Several times MGs could hear families still talking about the experiment while eating dinner or walking on the other side of the Fair. We were able to report 10,736 contacts with the help of Master Gardeners from eleven units volunteering more than 637 hours. This was a great learning experience and well worth the trip to Doswell. We hope to see more units out there next year.

The 2009 Virginia State Fair

Horticultural Demonstration Contest

Cheri Haggerty, VMGA Past President

On October 1, five Hanover MGs were invited to be judges for the FFA Horticulture Demonstration Contest at the State Fair, under the guidance of Dr. Alan McDaniel, Associate Professor, Virginia Tech.

In Dr. McDaniel's own words –

"A brief history of this event -- Nearly 20 years ago the State Fair was looking for ways to showcase high school horticulture student talents as they prepared for their careers. The Student Gardens and the FFA Horticulture Demonstration Contest resulted. Demonstrations have long been part of 4-H programs but not the FFA, so we turned to the National Junior Horticulture Association. This organization is a specialty youth program for horticultural interests that started from 4-H but now includes FFA students as well. What makes this special is that our students now have an opportunity with their winning demonstrations to compete at the NJHA national contest, which neither 4-H nor FFA offer. Many of our prior students have had great success at the national level, and we take pride in helping pave the way to that opportunity and success."

Dr. McDaniel supplied the judging forms and criteria prior to judging so we were aware of the process. There were 18 demonstrations and 31 presenters. Of the entries, the majority were artistic arrangements, but there was one on using planting plugs and one on using turkey "poo" versus cow "poo". The participants represented high schools, art and technology centers, and technical centers.



L to R: Dr. Alan McDaniels, Cheri Haggerty, Bonnie Morales, Elizabeth McDade, Pam Ward and Ron Pettit

The demonstration guidelines were very basic:

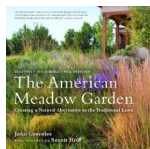
- Presented by an individual or a team of two.
- Presentations had to demonstrate doing something, not just an illustrated talk.
- Topics could be chosen from crop production, crop marketing, food crop preparation, artistic arrangement of live or dried products, and landscaping, installation and plant maintenance.
- Limited to 12 minutes.

The five of us enjoyed this opportunity tremendously. The only difficulty I had was deciding if this should be entered on my time sheet as Youth Programming or Continuing Education, as I learned a little something from each of these high school kid's presentations. The slice of Apple Pizza and a jar of Corn Salsa were two perks I hadn't counted on.

The Graine Thumb

Uncontrolling Nature: The Meadow

George Graine, Fairfax County Master Gardeners



"A lawn is nature under totalitarian rule." -- Michael Polan in **Second Nature** (1991)

If a meadow is more or less uncontrolled nature, then surely turf grass in a homeowner's landscape is the ultimate quest for control. This is especially true when one applies a potpourri of chemicals to keep up the green in order to avoid omnipresent weeds, disease, and destructive insects. The question asked by *The American Meadow Garden: Creating a Natural Alternative to the Traditional Lawn* by John Greenlee (Timber Press, 2009) is "Do you really need a lawn?" It is true that grasses usually dominate meadows but these are ornamental varieties. There is no scientific definition of a meadow; therefore, a meadow can be anything of your own choosing.

Meadows are really a mini-ecosystem and they often incorporate a wide range of other plants besides grasses that are used in water-wise gardening. The book index proves this point and indeed the wonderful color photos by Saxon Holt bear witness to the many types of meadows. In contrast to mown grass, consider plant diversity. That is essentially the message of Douglas Tallamy as he explains how and why it is important for native plants to sustain wildlife in our gardens. (See VMGA Report, May/June 2009.) Of course this is a slightly different approach than Greenlee, although one should recognize that both authors are preaching from a similar horticultural hymnal.

Do not think of a meadow as some huge open space as portrayed by a Hollywood western. In fact, a meadow landscape could be a small or secretive oasis on your property. A meadow could be a transition area from an orderly, maintained part of the landscape. Think about a small space for rest and zen-like thoughts. You probably have some meadow-like plants growing and thriving in your garden beds and borders other than ornamental grasses. Some that come to mind include wild flowers, iris, coneflower, daisies, monarda, daylilies, heuchera, and asters. A carefully designed meadow can also include bulbs, especially those that tend to naturalize and have seasonal beauty.

Greenlee writes, "Why keep a bad lawn when you could plant a good meadow?" A caption under one photo puts the meadow concept into perspective. "A designed meadow can be exquisitely layered with plants, just as nature is, and horticulturally sophisticated as any fussy perennial border. [Ornamental] Grass is the glue that holds it all together." Meadows do not have to be limited to plant material only. Incorporate trees, shrubs, boulders, and uneven contours of land such as pre-existing berms and swales. Together this adds to the naturalistic appearance of a meadow. Work with what you have, but never forget the "right plant, right place" gardener's mantra. Consider garden art and sculpture that will blend, yet not compete, with your meadow design. Why not include some containers as well? Are you bold enough to try your hand at a meadow garden? The time for bringing back nature is now!

Mark Your Calendars!

- **Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course**, <http://www.mahsc.org>, Jan 24-29, 2010, Founder's Inn, Virginia Beach. Home Gardener Day will be Jan 28. Registration rates: \$65 early bird (by Jan. 15, 2010), \$75 regular or \$85 at the door. If you are interested in being a moderator at the conference, please contact Mike Andruczyk at mikeand@vt.edu.
- **2010 Mid-Atlantic Home & Flower Show**, February 5 - 7, 2010, Virginia Beach Convention Center.
- **VMGA Board meetings for 2010:**
 - ◆ Feb 13 Suffolk
 - ◆ Apr 10 Gloucester
 - ◆ June MG College
 - ◆ Aug 14 Newport News
 - ◆ Oct 9 Galax
 - ◆ Dec 11 Fluvanna

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

Dawn Meyerriecks, dmyrix@hotmail.com

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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.

VMGA Report
1549 Beechwood Cove
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