



The VMGA Report

A Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners
vmga.net

May/June 2020

Volume 25, Number 6

VMGA Officers

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Prince William County

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In This Issue

- Message from the President
- Leslie Paulson
- VT Giving Day 2020
- Facebook Live
- Meeting dates
- Endowment News
- MG College
- Speakers Bureau
- Did you know?
- The Grainethumb
- Calendar
- From the Kitchen

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With assistance from-
Lynn Hamm,
Western Tidewater

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Virginia Master Gardener Association is to foster communication, education and fellowship among Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener volunteers.

From the President

Hello from Suffolk,

This is the last article I will write as your President. Where have the last two years gone? I think the answer to that is simple – our lives regarding Master Gardener things have been different. I became VMGA President at the 2018 MG College in Blacksburg. From then on, having MG College off campus was a topic of discussion wherever we went because in 2019 we held our annual MG College in Norfolk, and not in June! I think we were all looking forward to returning to VT next month for the 2020 MG College except that this little thing called COVID-19 came a-calling and now our conversations are about using Zoom to hear great speakers. So, in between June 2018 and now, we have marched on doing our volunteering things, looking forward to changes and challenges in meetings, dates and even more recently in a virtual realm. The common things we looked forward to as Master Gardeners were moved to the shelf as we practiced social distancing, no traveling, and sharing time with friends from across the state. I hope that during these two years you have challenged yourself to learn more about one or more different gardening topics or perhaps you have convinced your unit to try something new, such as new projects, new classes, etc. I have learned that we are not getting younger and that my gardening tasks should not wear me out each and every time I work in the garden! Right place, right plant is more important than ever, and I have found myself giving away plants and shrubs because they just do not 'fit' like I thought they would. Please take the time to enjoy the serenity of your gardens during these trying days. Whether it is colorful flowers, the texture of leaves, the magic of multi-season plants and of course, the harvest. Breathe deep, enjoy the scents around you and take it all in. While you are there, look for the signs of nature that should be there – birds, butterflies, bees, other insects, toads, and that other thing I tolerate but do not enjoy seeing in my garden. Thank you for allowing

Got an upcoming event to publicize?

Submit your unit announcements to the State MG Coordinator for inclusion in the Bi-Weekly EMG Update
<https://www.mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/biweekly-submission/>

AND

also to our **VMGA Calendar of Events** in care of:
Calendar@vmga.net

Submissions via email should include:

- The title of your event
- The date of your event
- A sentence describing your event
- The location of your event
- A link or attachment providing additional information

In the news:

Has your unit or have the members of your unit been featured in your local newspaper? Let us know! Send links to:
peggyfox@hotmail.com

this Pennsylvania girl the opportunity to serve as your president for that last two years. I had a great team of officers and committee chairs (and their members) to help make these two years fly by. I have tried to put a little fun into meetings, traveled and met/talked with several units, and helped VMGA celebrate our 30th anniversary at our February meeting. Please stay safe and support the new officers like you have supported me and my current officers. I look forward to 'seeing' all of you again when our paths cross. If you are planning a trip to this part of the state and want to visit the Great Dismal Swamp, I'm not far away, you can come by for a cup of tea or coffee (and maybe something yummy, if time allows.)

Wanda

In with the new....

Leslie Paulson, Prince William County

I'm looking forward to experiencing College this year though I regret I won't see you all in person. We have time to get to know each other in the next two years. I'll be your new President. Let's hope we will soon be able to have meetings in person.

This year we all have a chance to try a new type of Master Gardener College. No car ride or stay in a college dorm is required. Plus, the price is so very reasonable that we could have more people than ever before join us to hear so many wonderful speakers. You also do not have to choose between speakers for break-out sessions. You may listen to a speaker live and then later, at your leisure, go back to hear the others who are going to be recorded for your pleasure. That is many hours of education in a field we all love.

Please consider joining us this year if you have not already registered. If you have any problems, call Traci at 1-540-231-3131. She will be happy to help you. Do be advised that any password you have from previous years **will not** work. You must create a new account. Once you are registered, you will receive a confirmation email within an hour's time. If you do not, look in your junk mail. Then later, you will receive 4 more emails. Yes, a bit tedious but a MG has to do what she/he has to do.

Don't let any of these new procedures deter you. Really, it is easy and remember you always have help just a phone call away.

Thank you and stay safe.

Leslie Paulson—President Elect
Prince William County

**ABOUT VIRGINIA
MASTER GARDENERS
AND VIRGINIA
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION (VCE)**

Virginia Master Gardeners are volunteer educators who work within their communities to encourage and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management education and training. As an educational program of VCE, Virginia Master Gardeners bring the resources of Virginia's land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, to the people of the Commonwealth. Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments. VCE programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

VT Giving Day

Originally scheduled to take place on March 18-19, VT Giving Day has been postponed until September 8-9. Generous donations from supporters can be directed to specific areas of support statewide and/or to local VCE programs (such as VMGA or the Newport News VCE Service). Information will be sent out as the date grows closer. For more details about this annual fundraising event hosted by VT, go to: <https://givingday.vt.edu/giving-day/19789>

FACEBOOK LIVE!



Above graphic copied from Facebook VCEMG Program page

Live videos covering a variety of horticulture topics. No Facebook account required!

Facebook Live series Thursdays at 2:00pm

<https://www.facebook.com/VCEMasterGardenerProgram/>

2020 VMGA BI-MONTHLY MEETINGS

June 25-28	Annual Meeting 33rd Annual MG College-Virtual
August 8	Loudoun County
October 10	Charlottesville
December 12	Danville

VMGA Website

Leslie Paulson,
Prince William

Please submit additions, corrections or report broken links to:
Leslie Paulson at:
ljp6651@comcast.net

Dave Banks
webmaster@vmga.net

VMGA

Membership has its advantages:

- Online modules
- Unit Support
- Scholarships
- Newsletter
- Advanced Training
- Discount event fees
- Membership Directory
- Statewide Networking

ENDOWMENT NEWS

Jody Purches, Fundraising Committee Chair

Your purchase of VMGA **tees, sweatshirts, tote bags and other printed items** will help us reach our goal and support the VCE Master Gardener program which in turn helps each of us at the local unit level. Proceeds from merchandise purchases go to the **VCE State MG Coordinator Endowment**.



MG Gear sales will be suspended through the end of May in order for us to complete our annual inventory count. Any orders received during this time will be processed in the beginning of June.

<http://www.vmga.net/mg-gear.php>

MG COLLEGE 2020 GOES VIRTUAL!

Don't wait! Register now!



Above graphic copied from VCEMG College Program

Access to quality, advanced horticulture training online via **Canvas**. Never has this much quality programming been offered for such a low price. Paid registrants will have live and archived access to every presentation scheduled. Registration is now open for Virtual Master Gardener College, scheduled for June 25 - 28.

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/2020MGCollege>

You can find more details about College, including a full program, on the State Master Gardener website: <https://mastgardener.ext.vt.edu/college/registration/>

Resources

Find out more here

[Extension Master Gardener website](#)

[VMGA.NET](#)

[VCE MG YouTube](#)

[State Office Blog](#)

[VCE—Facebook](#)

[Volunteer Management System](#)

[Online Learning Opportunities](#)

[VA EMG Bi-weekly Update](#)

[Marketing and Branding Resources](#)

Please note, Advanced Steward Training-Land Care will resume at MG College 2022 when we return to the campus of Virginia Tech for our annual conference.

VMGA SPEAKER'S BUREAU

Erica Jones, New River Valley

Are you comfortable speaking before large groups? Are you looking for an excuse to see more of Virginia? Join the VMGA Speaker's Bureau. We're working on compiling a comprehensive list of EMGs who can bring their speaking talent and horticulture expertise to other EMGs across the state at unit and regional education events.

Please consider becoming a volunteer who is excited to share their talent and knowledge in topics of great interest and advanced training to fellow MGs across the state. The Education Committee is compiling a list of the names of MGs who are willing to give presentations to units around the state or at VMGA Education Events.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fern Campbell, Piedmont Master Gardeners

April 19-25, 2020 was National Volunteer Week in the United States and has been celebrated annually since 1974. For Extension Master Gardeners this is an opportunity to celebrate the impact of our volunteer service. **Ever wonder why the Extension Master Gardener program was created? Do you know where it all began?** Let's review the history of our volunteer program.

In 2017, at Virginia's 30th Annual Master Gardener College, I was fortunate to hear the keynote talk "The History of the EMG Program" by Dr. David Gibby, known as the Father of Extension Master Gardeners. Here is his story.

Dr. Gibby had just finished obtaining his doctorate in botany from Utah State University and had been hired to stay on to teach. He had just gotten married and bought his first home, when he was told that Utah State had budget cuts and that his job was being eliminated. He hustled to find a job and took an Area Extension Agent position in the Tacoma, Washington, metro area. He had another agent, Bill Scheer, focused respectively on urban and commercial horticulture. When he first sat at his desk, Dr. Gibby discovered stacks of phone messages that had accumulated from the public and they kept coming. The community's demand for information about plant problems was so intense that it was virtually impossible for Dr. Gibby and his colleague to provide the educational programming that was clearly needed.



Links to places of interest around the state:

Virginia Is For Lovers

Blandy Experimental Farm

Hahn Hort Garden

Norfolk Botanical Garden

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Maymont

Williamsburg Botanical Garden

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens

Edith J. Carrier Arboretum at JMU

I Love Gardens.com

Virginia Gardening

Greenspring Gardens

Southern Virginia Botanical Gardens, South Boston, VA

US National Arboretum

The Quarry Gardens at Schuyler

Initially administrators suggested they get information out via the mass media and that would solve the problem. Dr. Gibby worked hard to develop FAQ sheets, publish articles on timely topics and produce radio spots and TV gardening shows. These efforts served only to make the public more aware that the Extension office was THE place to get help, further overwhelming the two agents. Dr Gibby was so discouraged he thought about quitting. There just were not enough hours in the day to do his job well.

Dr. Gibby approached his fellow agent and his administrators with the concept of recruiting and training volunteers to serve the urban audience. Brainstorming occurred. Recruitment would require a careful selection process. An appropriate and distinguished title would also be necessary. As it happens, both Gibby and Scheer had worked in Germany and they knew that Germans bestow titles for hard-earned proficiency levels...such as, "Gartenmeistr" for the top proficiency level in horticulture. Anglicized as "Master Gardener," this title would be appropriate for volunteers who had received extensive training.

The volunteer concept was widely discussed and taken to various levels of administration, but it initially met resistance from specialists. In 1972, Dr. Gibby decided to test the viability of the concept with a trial clinic at the Tacoma Mall designed to gauge public interest. He arranged for Sunset magazine to cover the trial clinic, resulting in an article under the headline "Wanted: Expert Gardeners to Become Master Gardeners". There were about 600 initial inquiries. Dr. Gibby interviewed all applicants and accepted 300. He then developed the training curriculum to include culture of ornamental plants, lawns, vegetables and fruits; Also included was the safe use of pesticides and control of plant diseases, insects, and weeds. Eight-hour sessions were held one day a week, for five weeks. Upon completion, the volunteers were required to pass an exam. Graduates were then committed to serving a specified number of hours working with the gardening public.

This program took off, and within the year, training classes were being given in several other areas. Dr. Gibby had to apply for funding several times before it was approved and at the end of the following year, he resigned from his position. Sharon Collman, who had worked as a program assistant with Dr. Gibby, became the Extension Agent and is credited with building a solid foundation for the program as well as promoting and expanding it. She held the program together under the hardship of long hours during budgetary constraints and helped other Extension offices establish the program in Washington and other states.



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Tech
Virginia State University
www.ext.vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.

Many folks contributed to growing this volunteer program to better manage the urban horticulture educational efforts. The horticulture “Master” volunteer concept became so effective that it has spread throughout the United States and has become internationally recognized and duplicated as a model for other volunteer programs.

Extension Master Gardener training was first offered in Virginia in 1978, and in Albemarle County in 1986. There are now 62 EMG units throughout the state, comprising 4,800 EMG Volunteers. In 2019 alone, we made 611,485 contacts and provided 397,018+ hours of service, with an economic value of more than \$10.9 million.

Wow, I am glad that Dr. Gibby did not walk off the job in frustration and instead problem-solved and developed this unique volunteer program, allowing thousands of people like me to turn our passion for gardening and the environment into meaningful educational experiences. Today, helping folks answer their horticulture questions through our education programs is what Extension Master Gardener volunteers are all about. We *can* make a difference. Think about the positive impact that Dr. Gibby’s program decision has had on thousands of EMG Volunteers and the trickle-down effect on the folks we teach and engage. The 2018 Extension National Report noted 86,076 EMG’s contributed 5.6 million volunteer hours.

Let’s celebrate our service and the inspiration we work to provide for gardeners throughout our communities.

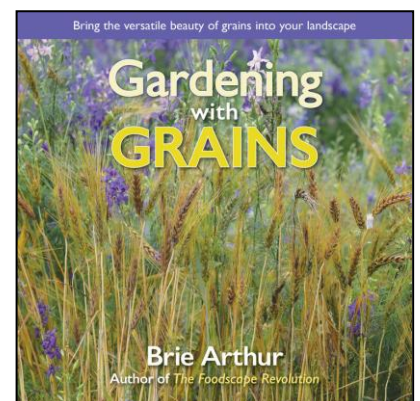
THE GRAINETHUMB

George Graine, Fairfax

GRAINE ON GRAINS

“For amber waves of grain.” --- from America the Beautiful (1893)

If you are familiar with the name Brie Arthur, then you probably know that she is the author of “The Foodscape Revolution” published in 2017. This book explains how and why vegetables should be incorporated into your flower and shrub gardens. Brie is back with a new book called “**Gardening with Grains: Bring the versatile beauty of grains into your landscape**” (St. Lynn’s Press, 2019). She has taken on an



additional and heretofore barely noticed plant family that is rarely considered as garden worthy by the home gardener. Pause for a moment when you realize how amazing it is that landscape designers have completely missed the point of incorporating grains into the landscape. Is it time?

Growing grains in your landscape is another game changer in the same manner as using vegetables outside of the typical rows and raised beds that are usually isolated from a “pretty” landscape. In other words, like the artistic expression where form follows function, so too can gardening with grains be both decorative and edible. Do you think that the subject of gardening with grains is of little consequence? Are you put off by thinking grains are limited to cooking and cereal products? (By the way, there is a cereal called Great Grains.) If so, you need to think more broadly. Wait until the last chapter in Brie’s book because it does include many recipes. The first eleven other chapters definitely measure up to the book title as she answers the question of why and how to garden with grains.

If you are in a hurry to learn how to garden with grains, then perhaps you should start your search half-way through the book with chapter 7, “Designing with Grains.” But to really get a feel for what grains are all about, then read chapters 5 and 6. These two chapters provide ample reason for the understanding of grains. Here you will find just six (out of hundreds) different types of cool season grains including barley, oats and wheat. Then you will read about three warm season grains that have a lot of visual appeal and may even surprise you. These are corn, rice and sorghum. Rice! Surely you have seen pictures of rice farmers planting rice in paddies. How is a home gardener going to maintain this plant? In a shallow pond! The fact is that growing rice in water is a weed suppressor. Therefore, the water acts as a natural herbicide. For gardeners, growing rice out of water will “work.” As an experiment, grow rice in a container. Water daily and make sure you locate the plant in a sunny location. Rice plants will also make a fine plant in the oft used expression for container gardening – filler, spiller and thriller. Rice can be the thriller.

All of the plants noted above are garden worthy in many respects. Grains are considered to be the easiest and lowest maintenance edible product to grow and they are also attractive looking plants. Of course, to learn more, the internet will provide you with additional details but without any sort of passionate experience. In a relatively simple way, Brie glides you through an historical perspective, provides environmental benefits and along the way discusses some interesting personal stories about grains she has grown. Note that like familiar plants, grains too can make your garden interesting and aesthetically pleasing. They show off their colors, texture, and structure. This is especially welcome when you consider planting grains

in an interesting decorative pattern as a group, used as a screen or an eye-catching garden accent. When designing with grains, it is important to note that there is a significant difference between these plants and popular ornamental grass families such as pennisetum (fountain grass), miscanthus, calamagrostis (reed grass), and panicum (switch grass) just to name a few. The key difference is that grains are annuals whereas ornamental grasses are perennials. Grains will also supply food for humans, domesticated animals, and wildlife. This is like a horticultural win-win in many respects.

The first four chapters introduce you to the concept of why it is an excellent idea to grow grains. After this explanation is a brief introduction about how humans and cereal grains have a history together. This leads to a short discussion about ancient grains (think heirloom varieties) and modern-day cultivation. As an aside, you may have heard about the politically charged subjects of GMO - genetically modified organism and GE - genetically engineered. Both are technical terms that are caught up in scientific and political squabbles. Brie only briefly mentions them in layman's terms. Her explanations are understandable and without taking sides one way or the other.

Not to be overlooked is a chapter on companion plants such as annuals, perennials and shrubs that work well with grains. Having this type of balance in your garden will provide biological diversity that is the mainstay for having a living ecosystem. Lest we forget, a short chapter on deer strategies is also included in the book. And finally, for the piece de resistance for those who like to cook as noted earlier, Brie included a mini cookbook filled with 25 mouth-watering recipes that use the grasses included in her book. You can dine on breakfast, lunch, and supper delights. Make a salad, soup, pudding, cookies and more. Dine on!

In summary, Brie dedicated her book to all gardeners. In her own words she wrote: "Those from the past who left us a legacy of wisdom and eternal hope... Those in the present who serve and nurture the earth's gifts... And those in the future, whose influence will shape generations to come: My gratitude."

From the Editor: Tips for sending articles

When you are ready to send your next article for inclusion in The Report, here are a few things to remember:

Include photographs. The source of your photo must be provided.

Include a caption. Identify the people, subject and/or location of your photos.

Please only send final versions which have been proofread for grammar and spelling. Sending a draft of unorganized thoughts means the editor must recreate your thoughts into a pleasing and easy to read article.

Deadline for submitting articles for the July/August issue: July 11, 2020

Please send to:

Peggy Fox, VMGA Newsletter Editor, Newport News

peggyfox@hotmail.com

Calendar 2020

June

25-28 [33rd Annual MG College, Virtual Conference](#)

August

9-12 [GardenComm Conference, Williamsburg, VA](#)

2021

Sept 13-17 International Master Gardener Conference, Norfolk

From the Kitchen

Wanda Gerard, Suffolk

These recipes come from Snyder County, PA in a church cookbook with my mother and sister's names on them. They definitely came from my grandmother! I am pretty sure any one of my 22 cousins on this side of the family would name the Sticky Buns as one of their all-time favorite foods. Grandma loved to bake them for us.

SHOO FLY PIE

Pie ingredients

1 cup molasses
1 Tbsp baking soda
1 egg
2 cups brown sugar
2 cups water
3 unbaked pie shells

Crumb topping ingredients

1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup shortening
3 cups flour
1/4 tsp salt

Combine pie ingredients and divide into 3 unbaked pie shells. Mix crumb ingredients together and put on top of the pies. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

STICKY BUNS

1 loaf frozen bread dough

1 1/2 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup warm water

4 Tbsp vanilla pudding mix

Thaw the frozen bread dough.

Spread sugar evenly into a 9x13x2 baking dish. Add nuts or raisins if desired.

Tear the thawed bread dough into small pieces and place around the pan. Let rise until doubled in size.

Add water to the pudding mix. Pour over the bread dough.

Bake at 325 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

(I'm sure grandma made this with her own bread dough in her younger years, but somehow, she adapted the recipe to using the frozen bread dough -- and the results were just as good!)