



The VMGA Report

THE Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners
<https://vmga.net/wordpress/>

July/August 2021

Volume 27, Number 1

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Leslie Paulson, Prince William

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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 Leslie Paulson, Prince William

I hope all of you are enjoying your summer. The year is half over, and hopefully most of us are now vaccinated. I am truly excited to see people in person again and like you, have really missed that part of being on the VMGA Board. We anticipate having our October Board Meeting in person which means we need a unit to volunteer to host us. New River Valley will be hosting our December meeting. If your unit is interested, please let me know: President@vmga.net

Our newsletter editor, Peggy Fox of Newport News, is stepping down after this issue of The VMGA Report. I thank her for all her hard work in keeping us informed for the last several years. This position is an important part of our organization, and everyone's help is needed to find a new editor. The VMGA Report keeps our membership informed of state and local EMG news and events and provides information to share with your local membership. I hope some of you will consider joining our team. Please consider recruiting one of your volunteers to step up to this challenge.

International Master Gardener Conference 2021, Sept 12-17, is still open for registration. <https://www.internationalmastergardener.com/>. All sessions will be recorded and available for six months, so you can catch a speaker you may have missed and enjoy viewing it later. Attending this conference will provide you with many hours of quality horticulture education. So spread the word and let's see if we can reach the maximum attendance of 2500 Master Gardeners and our gardening friends as well.

During our last Board meeting we voted on changes to wording in our By Laws as it pertains to membership. Thank you to all who signed into the meeting to provide

VMGA

Membership has its advantages:

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

FROM THE EDITOR

Deadline for Sept/Oct issue:
August 29

We'd love to feature your unit's announcements, events or articles in the next issue. Articles can be about a favorite plant, tree, project, book review. This will encourage involvement around the state, getting more involved.

Please send to:
VMGA Newsletter Editor
newsletter@vmga.net

their votes. Now, the former category of Lifetime Membership, those who pay the flat fee of \$125, will be known as Continuing Membership. In August, the Board will vote to make the necessary changes to the Standing Rules. The Membership form will be updated in the same way.

Enjoy all your gardening activities and look out for those nasty things that bite us. I've already had the usual mosquito, spider (those little ones), tick, and chigger bites. Beware. I recommend wearing repellent treated clothing or that "little insect thing" that sucks out the venom. It does help. Take care and I hope you will join us for the August 14 meeting, in person! Notice of the location will be sent to all when the site is confirmed.

Take care,

Leslie

2021 VMGA BI-MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

****July 27** **SPECIAL BOARD MEETING 7 pm via Zoom****

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85084267570?pwd=YkI5SkovczgvQIRCam1iRIJsWXVnQT09>

August 14 Loudoun www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org

October 9 Host unit needed

December 11 New River Valley <http://www.nrvmastergardeners.com/>

NEWS AND NOTES FROM VCE LIAISON

Kathleen Reed, EMG Program State Coordinator

For updates, be sure to check out the Bi-weekly Update at
<https://mastergardener.ext.vt.edu/biweekly-update/>

STATE FAIR OF VIRGINIA RETURNS!

Christy Brennan, Henrico

Last year the State Fair of Virginia was cancelled along with most of our favorite Master Gardener activities due to the pandemic. This year we are very excited to be participating in the 2021 State Fair of Virginia, September 24 - October 3. VMGA would like to encourage all Master Gardener units to be a part of this educational event.

Master Gardener units are allowed ten tickets a day to staff the VCE/Master



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.

Gardener booth. What works best is to have each unit identify a coordinator to receive tickets and share information to their volunteers. It's best if each group schedules 3-4 volunteers at a time to staff the booth for 3 - 4 hours or rotate the hours. Parking in previous years has been free to volunteers and is in a field very close to the booth.

Remember also, you can enter your crops and plants in the fair by visiting the competition info, [Get Involved \(statefairva.org\)](http://statefairva.org)

Time slots will fill quickly. Contact me today to schedule your volunteers!

Thanks. Hope to see you there!

Christy Brennan,
CTB47@comcast.net

EDUCATION

September 21

Preserving your Bounty in the Vegetable Garden by Becky Gartner VCE – Culpeper

You are invited to a Zoom meeting. Advanced registration required.

[https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsc-ugpzliHtHbfV7KmORE0xCrMuaCpLAb](https://virginiatech.zoom.us/join/https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsc-ugpzliHtHbfV7KmORE0xCrMuaCpLAb)

INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 12-17, 2021

Offering more than forty different VIRTUAL sessions, expert panels and fun conference bonuses. Registration is open to EMGs and the general public. Space is limited. Don't delay!

To learn more, click here: [International Master Gardener Conference 2021](#)

NEWSWORTHY NOTES FROM NOTABLE NEWSLETTERS

The VMGA Report is always looking for submissions from EMGs, Unit Representatives, VMGA Committee Chairs, VCE Agents and VCE Program Associates. What can you submit? All the news that's fit to print! Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Training recaps. Tell us your takeaways!
- Highlights of your successes in programming, lessons learned, photos of volunteers in action
- Upcoming events offered by your unit
- Book reviews
- Plant or garden spotlights.

Resources

Find out more here:

VMGA.NET

**VCE MG Program--
Facebook**

**VCE MG Program--
YouTube**

**VCE MG Program--
Blog**

**VA Cooperative
Extension—Facebook**

**Online Learning
Opportunities**

**VA EMG Bi-weekly
Update**

**VCE Pubs and
Resources:**

<https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/>

<https://resources.ext.vt.edu/>

Links to other events
around the state:

**Virginia Is For
Lovers**

**Blandy Experimental
Farm**

Hahn Hort Garden

South of our border:

JC Raulston

Arboretum

<https://jcra.ncsu.edu/>

- Photos of your plants
- Recipes using produce from your garden or a farmer's market
- Garden-related poems and other creative writing

Be sure to include your name and unit name. Submit your content by email to newsletter@vmga.net.

MASTER GARDENERS OF NORTHERN VA

*Excerpted from The Latest Dirt, newsletter of Master Gardeners of Northern VA

Compostables: Hurrah!

Beginning 6 September 2021, Arlington County will be the first jurisdiction in Virginia to provide food scraps collection to all residential customers. "If it grows, it goes" into a County-provided collection caddy lined with a compostable bag. More information will become available at recycling.arlingtonva.us

NORTHERN NECK MASTER GARDENERS

www.nnmg.org



Reedville Fishermen's Museum
Living Shoreline Garden
504 Main Street, Reedville, VA

Located on Cockrell's Creek next to the [Reedville Fishermen's Museum](#), this garden is maintained by the Northern Neck Master Gardeners. It demonstrates a [living shoreline](#), which is a natural system for shoreline stabilization. The garden covers a 50 by 100 foot slope between the creek and an asphalt parking lot. Through the planting of native wetland plants, perennials, ornamental grasses, and shrubs, the garden acts to protect the creek from the parking lot's rainfall runoff. New labels have been added for plant identification as you tour the garden, which is also listed as a native plant demonstration garden in the [Northern Neck Native Plant Trail](#).

Loudoun County MGs trumpetvine-g@vt.edu

[2021 Pest Management Guide - Home Grounds and Animals \(vt.edu\)](#)

Three apps to explore that may help in plant identification:

[PlantNet](#), [PlantSnap](#), and [LeafSnap](#).

NEWPORT NEWS

Does your unit “adopt” its newest members through Mentorship? This year we are going to do things a little differently with regard to our Mentoring of EMG Interns, creating “cohort” groups of three Interns with each Mentor. They will be grouped by where they live, allowing the opportunity for them to easily ride together with their Mentor and each other, to attend meetings and participate in activities. Cohorts will get to know each other quickly, offering encouragement to each other.

Other changes have been made that will make mentoring easier this year. Mentors no longer must monitor attendance at class or the results of chapter quizzes, as our Facilitators are assuming these jobs. Mentoring will begin at the end of the training classes. Imagine the fun of getting together for the first time with three new Interns - the conversation about becoming an Extension Master Gardener will be lively and interesting.
Peggy Fox

DIANE RELF VMGA SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations to our recipients!

Tonya Harper, VMGA Scholarship Chair

This year there were nine applications submitted. The majority consensus of the committee members was to award \$150 scholarships to all of our applicants.

1. Jessica Miller – Roanoke
2. Kathy Cornell – Halifax
3. Ellen Duque – Halifax
4. Normalee Martin – Loudon
5. Sharon Moser – Stafford
6. Yolán Williams – Lynchburg
7. Jose Fortuny – Charlotte
8. Joyce Skidmore – Lee
9. Kimberly Silver-Perry – Williamsburg/James City

Congratulations to all!

Thanks to committee members Marilyn Riddle, Ted Munns, Jim Revell, Ellen Paquette and Erica Jones for a job well done!

A Note of Thanks

I would like to thank the VMGA and the Scholarship Committee for selecting me as one of the recipients of this scholarship. I am looking forward to the conference and learning new things that I can bring back to my Master Gardener unit.

Sincerely,

Kathy Conner Cornell

PLANT FOR THE FUTURE

Cathy Anderson, Loudoun

Driving on Route 7 in to work on a misty March morning in 2016, I was going by the budding OneLoudoun complex and did a double take. I saw a brand-new colonnade of trees planted along what is now called Atwater Drive, but back then was the unfinished north edge of the development. It was a matching group of 15 maple trees, each with a height of around 30 feet and a diameter of 14 inches. These were huge trees planted to give the effect of a beautiful welcoming forested edge into the new OneLoudoun complex. I was not present when these were planted, but they would each have come held in large tree spade trucks used for transplanting such size plants. The cost would have been enormous. The spring of 2016 turned out to be very wet. This would have helped in the beginning and would have encouraged new root growth after the transplant. The circumference of the disturbed area around each tree was approximately three feet from the trunk. That was where the remains of the original root system ended. All of the trees leafed out by summer. Two were leaning off center about 10 degrees. Eventually, water bags and guy wires were installed. In the fall, two trees were already in distress, dropping their leaves early.

In the spring of 2017, one tree was dead, and more were struggling to leaf out their canopies. The leaves were small and some looked spotted with disease. Guy wires were still in use, but the water bags had been taken off through the fall and winter months. By June, four trees were removed. Water bags appeared again in July. At that time another of the trees was dead and three others had sparse growth. In October, what little foliage that was left on the trees had changed to a sickly yellow. On many of the trees, bark had started to peel off the upper branches. Two of them had produced a massive number of samaras. By the end of the year, seven trees were left out of the 15 planted.

When 2018 came, the seven trees limped back into leaf production with only a few branches still alive. Only four survived to the next year. Then only three remained by the end of 2019, and all were taken down due to disease in 2020.

The reason I followed the lives of these trees was because I could not wrap my head around the fact that the OneLoudoun complex wanted instant gratification over healthy long-lived trees for the future. If they had planted 15 4-inch-diameter trees, by the year 2020, they might have pulled through 11 and they would have been nearly as tall and healthy as the original maples prior to their transplanting.

Tree roots usually grow down within the top 18 inches of the soil. Root systems on large trees can easily spread out double the width of their canopies. When these trees were transplanted and only about three feet around the trunk of their original surrounding soil was present, it meant a substantial amount of their root system was cut off. The small feeder roots at the very ends of the root system are the ones that bring in the most nutrients and water. All of these were gone. In order to feed themselves, the large trees had to develop new feeder roots and shut down some of their branches that could no longer be fed. The wet spring would have encouraged this growth. Unfortunately, the watering was inconsistent. The trees were instantly put under stress to rebuild large root systems to accommodate their crown branches. If a smaller tree had been planted properly with an intact root system, the tree would have only had to deal with transplant shock and not root pruning also. If watering had been consistent and over several years, the smaller tree would have had the better chance of survival. Even if there might have been a soil-

borne disease in the area, the tree might not have had an issue with it since its roots would have been intact and under less stress.

The second year into planting, the trees started to show the strain. Few maple tree diseases exist, and most of them do not kill a healthy tree. They show up as spots on the leaves. When spots started to develop on the leaves, nothing was done.

When landscaping like this occurs, after the initial planting and possibly through the first year's care, the original company is done with the project. They do not troubleshoot any problems. The landscape company that takes over only mulches and possibly waters. No one was there to say, "Hey, look at these leaves, there's something wrong."

And there was something wrong. Under stress, the maples contracted verticillium wilt. This soil-borne fungus is transmitted through infected soil or pruners. The fungi block the transport of water and nutrients through the tree's vascular system. In spring, buds fail to open, leaves look scorched, and entire branches turn brown and die back. Dark streaks show beneath the bark and dark stains flow in the grain creating bark separation from the limb. There is no known chemical control.

Maybe the OneLoudoun company was misinformed, or maybe they didn't want to wait. The trees they transplanted had an exceptionally low chance of surviving, but boy did they turn my head when they appeared. Is that all they were looking for? The money spent on the whole landscaping project could have probably bought three times the number of trees and labor if they had looked at smaller transplants. It is hard to wait for a tree to grow.

It takes years and a tree can die of many things before it gets large. Planting trees is the best way to have faith in the future. Looking ahead in anticipation of a beautiful white oak or a graceful Norway spruce is a great way to measure time. Plant for everyone's future; patience is rewarded.

*Reprinted with permission.

PMG's THERAPEUTIC HORTICULTURE PROGRAM EARNS APPLAUSE

Bill Sublette, Piedmont MGs (Charlottesville/Albemarle Counties)

The Piedmont Master Gardeners' Therapeutic Horticulture team won a recent shout-out from the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA), which praised the volunteers' work at JABA's Adult Care Center in Charlottesville. The center provides daycare for older adults and for adults of all ages with disabilities, while at the same time offering respite and support for family caregivers.

In its latest newsletter, JABA recognized Piedmont Master Gardeners who have been working since April to develop a "sensory garden" at the facility. In raised beds that allow easy access for individuals with mobility issues, PMGs have helped Center members establish plants that stimulate all the senses.

For sight, the garden offers visual interest from season to season with hostas, hellebores, foamflower, coreopsis, pentstemon, Virginia sweetspire, New England aster and much more.

For touch, there are velvety lamb's ears, feathery fennel and smooth Autumn Joy sedum, for example. For scent, native vines such as coral honeysuckle and clematis virginiana are complemented by fragrant herbs, from chocolate mint to pineapple sage to anise hyssop. These herbs appeal to taste as well as do red-veined sorrel, parsley and chives.

And for sound, a stroll through the garden offers the rustle of little bluestem grasses. The splash of a water feature will be added this summer.

The sensory garden is one of the first major projects of PMG's new Therapeutic Horticulture program, which uses hands-on work with plants to improve the lives of people with a wide range of mental and physical challenges. Among other goals, PMG's aim is to help participants learn new skills and achieve a greater appreciation for the natural world, while also fostering their creativity, social interaction, and sense of self-worth in their community.

The committee that spearheads this work, including the sensory garden at JABA's Charlottesville Adult Care Center, includes Christine Appert, Sheila Balian, Marie Callahan, Fern Campbell, Ellen Mayoue, Jane McCarty, Liz Stoner, Kathy Thomas, Nancy Watkins, Donna Vinal and Susan Seidler. Ruth Iwano also has supported the JABA project with donations of Green Elephant items, and Nancy Watkins' spouse, Kevin, installed trellising to support climbing plants at the JABA center.

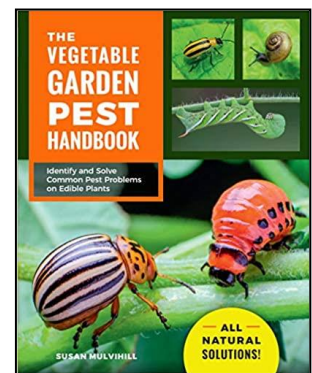
*Reprinted with permission.

THE GRAINETHUMB

Garden Pests: Identify – Prevent – Control
George Graine, Fairfax County

“Earth is here so kind, that just tickle her with a hoe, and she laughs with a harvest.”
---Douglas Jerrold in A Land of Plenty (1859)

According to homegardenandhomestead.com, there is a trend toward biological, natural and organic formulations for pest control. This trend is likely to continue as the industry produces more effective products. In the meantime, a new book, “The Vegetable Garden Pest Handbook: Identify and Solve Common Pest Problems on Edible Plants” by Susan Mulvihill (Cool Springs Press, 2021) will be of significant assistance to help you as a vegetable gardener. Assuming you desire to garden without the use of chemical pesticides, this book will make perfectly good sense. We know there are a multitude of pests that tend to frustrate our ability to garden successfully; therefore, you need to know and understand what is happening in your vegetable garden. This book will go a long way toward enabling you to cope with real and potential problems. The foundation for “fighting” pest problems is to secure the survival and ability of plants to thrive. Your problem, really your challenge, is to know how to keep pests from sharing your bounty. The focus of this book “...is on natural, low-impact (to the environment, not the



pests) controls for pests that become problematic.” This book will help, although not guarantee, a decent vegetable harvest for your efforts.

Starting with the basics, why garden organically? At its simplest, this means gardening without the use of chemicals which includes pesticides, other killing -cides and even quick fix synthetic fertilizers. The reason for gardening without these products is really quite simple. In addition to your personal safety, there is also the possibility of killing non-target plants and insects. This can happen due to over-spray of a chemical that could volatilize when the temperature exceeds 80 degrees F or when it is a windy day. Unfortunately, this can happen without your knowledge. Then days later you may find some damage to your plants. In other words, you do not need chemicals to produce healthy plants. This applies to plants in other parts in your landscape as well.

The concept of Integrated Pest Management, IPM for short, is a “systematic approach to choosing the most environmentally friendly method of handling pest problems.” execute Executing your own IPM program requires a variety of steps and/or considerations. None of these are difficult! First, you need to identify the insect pest. Is it a harmful insect or is it one of the good guys? A good guy is defined as a bug that feeds on another bug because it is a source of food. As an example, lady bugs and especially their larvae (good bugs) gorge themselves on aphids (bad bugs). Before proceeding with additional benefits of gardening the organic way, there may still be a need for a synthetic product (chemical) in some situations. The reason for this is due to the fact that some organic products may not be effective. This may happen because some organic products are more UV sensitive. Note that regardless of whatever type product you apply, the label on the bottle, bag or spray is the law. It is important that you read and heed the application rate and instructions regardless of the degree of infestation. As noted above, it is important to be aware of the temperature and wind conditions before you take action to control a pest problem. Good cultural practices will go a long way toward achieving healthy thriving plants. Often this means choosing the appropriate location for sun or shade-tolerant varieties. It is also necessary to understand other environmental growing conditions such as your area’s average frost dates, meaning when you can expect an early or late frost. Assuming you are not growing vegetables hydroponically (in water), then it is also critical to understand your soil in terms of pH and available nutrients. For a greater understanding of soil, have it tested by a soils laboratory such as our very own soil lab at VA Tech. Free soil sampling kits are available at most public libraries or your VCE Office and the cost of the test is \$10. Note that growing vegetables is often not the same as growing a lawn, shrub or tree. In order to know your soil for these plants, a separate test is necessary. The reason for a soil test is to determine the adequacy or need for supplemental nutrients, i.e., is the soil OK or does it have a deficiency for any chemical element.

Other considerations include “proper” watering. Just a spritz when the spirit moves you will not help to produce a vigorous vegetable garden. Also, consider selecting disease and/or pest resistant vegetable varieties. To know this in advance of planting could be based on your prior experience or what you may have heard from others who grow vegetables. Practicing crop rotation will help to prevent or reduce vegetable pest problems. Since you will probably have open space in order for plants to have room to grow, know that in advance weeds are very opportunistic. That is another problem outside the scope of this article. Surely there has been a lot of positive publicity on how to attract pollinators to your garden and attracting birds with a feeder is also beneficial because they will devour pests.

The “Meet the Bugs” section is the heart of the book. Here you will find many charts that include plant name, plant family, problems/damage, and possible culprit. After you determine the vegetable you plan to grow, next check the plant profile. At this point you will find the details on each pest including life cycle, signs of activity, controls and more. In addition, a color photo and general information about each pest is clearly indicated. In summary, “The Vegetable Garden Pest Handbook” is a valuable and comprehensive resource. Refer to it often because you will learn not only how to identify pests, but also how to control and even prevent them in the first place.

CALENDAR 2021

July 27 Special VMGA Board Meeting, 7pm via Zoom

Sept 13-17 International Master Gardener Conference--Virtual
“Cultivate Our Legacy”
<https://www.internationalmastergardener.com/>

Sept 21 Preserving your Bounty in the Vegetable Garden
by Becky Gartner, VCE – Culpeper
<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsc-ugpzliHtHbfV7KmORE0xCrMuaCpLAb>

Sept 24-Oct 3 State Fair of Virginia

Sept 23-26 American Community Garden Association conference, Hampton
[Events | ACGA \(communitygarden.org\)](https://www.communitygarden.org/events)

VMGA COMMUNICATIONS POSITION AVAILABLE

Help Wanted: VMGA Newsletter Editor

From your editor, Peggy Fox, Newport News

The position of newsletter editor is now available to an individual or team of volunteers. After serving as newsletter editor for a cumulative period of about nine years, I have decided to step down and pass the proverbial baton to a willing and talented volunteer with the very next issue of The VMGA Report. It could be one of you reading this note right now. The newsletter is published electronically six times per year. Time required will vary but has in the past required approximately ten hours per issue. Content for it is gathered from several sources to include unit newsletters, direct input from committees, unit reps and board members, and a variety of websites, etc. More details and a brief job description can be requested from newsletter@vmga.net or VMGA President Leslie Paulson president@vmga.net

