



The VMGA Report

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

September/October 2021

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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

Here we are in September 2021. I and many of you had hoped to be in Norfolk this month to take part in our first time as hosts for the International Master Gardener College. We are of course hosting a Zoom presentation of IMGC instead. Our State office has worked hard along with many of our Master Gardeners to put together a wonderful and amazing group of speakers and presenters this year. Those who have registered will soon receive a box of materials in the mail to whet our appetites for this special event. We opened this event to non-Master Gardeners as well. We are in the neighborhood of 1,200 participants! It will be exciting to meet some of the many people attending in the chat rooms. Enjoy yourselves and be sure to share your experience with your MG friends who did not attend.

Next year, we will have our normal Master Gardener College on campus at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. I know I will be thrilled to actually see so many of you in person. The dates you want to set aside are June 22-26th. We will be offering the Land Steward training in 2022. This is a great steward program that covers Land Care Management; think the 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Then there is the Living at the Wildlands-Urban Interface. This is happening all over the state. Think also of Forest Fires—Fire Wise is not just for the western United States. And then we come to the wildlife we have in our backyards. You will learn about all of these if you sign up to become a Land Steward.

I'm still looking for a host Unit for the October 9th meeting. It can be in person as our December 11th meeting will be in Christiansburg. Or, if you prefer, it can be a Zoom meeting as well. Let me know if you can help us out. For Zoom we ask that you put together a 10-15 minute presentation on your Unit. This will be done in person as well. Thank you to all for considering doing this for VMGA.

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 Nov/Dec issue:
October 23

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, or other topic of interest. This will encourage involvement around the state, getting more involved.

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

Talking about Land Stewards and Wildlife brings to mind the problem we had in Northern Virginia with backyard birds dying in large numbers. Virginia was one of the first states that received reports of birds displaying eye and neurological signs. Beginning in early June, the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR, formerly DGIF), along with other local collaborating organizations, began documenting dead or sick bird reports and submissions to local wildlife rehabilitation hospitals. From these data, the DWR was able to target its response guidance to the areas of Virginia most likely to be affected by this mortality event, which included Alexandria, Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Manassas, Prince William, Shenandoah, Warren, and Winchester. It is now safe to feed the birds again but there are parameters to follow.

Residents that choose to feed birds or provide water in bird baths should remain vigilant for avian mortalities and consider the following best practice guidelines:

- **Clean feeders and bird baths at least once a week, then disinfect with a 10% bleach solution** to prevent potential infectious disease spread between birds and other wildlife. After cleaning, rinse well with water and allow to air dry.
- **Wear disposable gloves when handling bird feeders and baths and wash your hands when finished.**
- **When feeding birds, follow expert recommendations**, such as those listed in Audubon International's Guide to Bird Feeding.
- **Keep pets away from sick or dead wild birds.**
- **Avoid handling wild birds.** If you must do so, wear disposable gloves or place an inverted plastic bag over your hand to avoid direct contact with the bird. Dispose of dead birds in a closed plastic bag in household trash. Alternatively, you may bury bird carcasses, at least 3 feet deep, to prevent any disease transmission to scavenging animals.
- **If you observe any additional bird mortalities in Virginia, [submit a mortality event to the DWR](#).**

Prince William Master Gardeners, along with Arlington/Alexandria, Fairfax, Loudoun, Fauquier, and Rappahannock Counties, have a program called Audubon@Home. We certify yards and areas as wildlife habitats. This really pairs well with our Land Steward program. Take a look: <https://www.audubonva.org/audubon-at-home>

If you have any questions or thoughts you want to share, your Board is here to help. Please also consider encouraging your MG friends to join VMGA. We have much to offer and would love to have new members.

Thank you,
Leslie Paulson

2021 VMGA BI-MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

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/>

VMGA Education Sponsorships

VMGA is continuing to offer Unit Sponsorships for events that deliver Advanced Continuing Education. We had six units accept our sponsorship during 20/21.

The purpose of our Sponsorship is threefold. We want to:

1. Encourage Advanced Continuing Education for Virginia's EMGs.
2. Demonstrate to units the value of VMGA.
3. Have an opportunity to recruit members.

We will sponsor in-person, virtual, and in-between formats. While our preference is large symposium or workshop events with lots of EMG in attendance, any size event can seek our sponsorship.

If you desire VMGA to defray the costs of your event, submit an application. For more information, please visit <https://vmga.net/wordpress/vmga-educational-sponsorships/>

If you have any questions, please reach out to Kirk Barley at VMGAEdCmte@gmail.com

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/j/9173261228>

VMGA Call for Topics and Instructors

The Education Committee is planning an in-person training event for March 2022.

We are looking for recommendations for both topics and instructors. Self-nominations are welcome.

The theme of this one-day workshop will be *Training the EMG Educator*. We are looking for classes that focus on making the EMG confident and well-equipped to present the topic to the public.

To be clear, the typical class would orient the EMG students to the classroom, discuss enabling points like how to create or source props or handouts, then offer the EMG the chance to present the topic in whole or part. Each class will be different, as long as the student can present the topic, the details are up to the instructor.

So please share your ideas, recommendations or nominations with Kirk Barley VMGAEdCmte@gmail.com

**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.

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.
- 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.

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/>

MASTER GARDENERS OF NORTHERN VA

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

Article and photo by Mary Free, Extension Master Gardener

Gardens are such a joy in which to pass the time as each visit brings some revelation. On July 31, I spent the afternoon at the Glencarlyn Library Community Garden taking some close-ups for the Word of the Week (WoW) narratives on which Christa Watters and I are working. As I was photographing *Salvia guaranitica* 'Black and Blue' (look for future WoW's verticillaster and bilabiate), some movement caught my eye: a ruby-throated hummingbird.

I remained fairly still and watched it feed on flowers just a couple feet away. It was aware of my proximity, but instead of taking flight, it perched on a nearby stem for about ten seconds, staring at me long enough for the portrait, and then turning its head for some profile shots. I did not realize it was a male juvenile until I viewed the pictures on my laptop, which revealed the dark markings and a few red feathers on his throat.

I wondered if my red shirt had attracted his attention, although I rather think he was just curious--hummers are remarkable and quite inquisitive. One buzzed me once in the Quarry Shade Garden on its way to the *Monarda didyma*, but then abruptly turned and hovered, looking me square in the eyes. I came face-to-face with another hummer on my patio. She was late for her evening meal on my *Lonicera sempervirens* and when I went to check if she had stopped instead at the nearby *Abelia*, we met each other at the gate. I'm not sure who was more surprised.

Whether it be at Glencarlyn, Bon Air, or in my backyard, these creatures do not fail to fascinate. I look forward to future encounters, with my camera (hopefully) at the ready.



Demo Garden at Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital By Laura Fraser (Lsfraser48@gmail.com)

The Demo Garden team has been working hard to clear the weeds, manage the edges, and clear some of the non-native plants. Deb Watson (pictured below) maneuvered, cut, and dug a large spirea japonica. We will not remove all the nonnatives. Our goal is 30 percent non-native to 70 percent native, as stated by Doug Tallamy. We have been clearing the Solidago canadensis or Canada goldenrod because it is quite the native thug. We will keep it in the garden, but will need to monitor its boundaries. It grows ferociously!

The native plants from Hummingbird Hill that were planted in May have mostly survived. We've been going in between maintenance visits to water if there has been no rain. The wild petunias have really bloomed and bloomed! The sundrops are also a good plant to increase. The deer ate the nodding onions, but they should come back next year. The spiderwort goes dormant in the heat and dry of the summer, but it should come back in the spring. The honeysuckle has not grown much, but it's a wait and see situation. The only plant that seems to need more moisture is the blue lobelia.



One of the maple trees in the garden closer to the hospital has died. The PMG gardeners wanted to replace it with a small native tree or shrub: witch hazel or red bud. That decision is to J.W. Townsend Landscapers, but we may be able to influence the decision based on previous discussions with volunteers.

The new sign has been ordered for the garden. It was a little expensive, so it may be the last sign unless the budget can accommodate another. The concept involves what to do with a garden in the fall. Hopefully, it will be ready by August 28th! A sign acts as passive education.

There is an event coming up called Sunset at Sentara. It's a musical event that is held at the amphitheater, which is located between the two gardens that we maintain. It is free, but the proceeds from the

venders will go to staff resilience programs. In the past, the coordinator of the MJ garden has put on a Help Desk at these events. We're asking for three volunteers who can handle being face-to-face with the public to sign up.

Contact Laura at Lsfraser48@gmail.com. There will be a table for two people with information, and two people will be located at each garden. The event is Saturday, August 28th. It goes from 5:30 - 8:30 PM. Volunteers should come from 5 to 7. Hopefully, we can find parking and set up the table before it starts. Check for details online: <https://www.visitchar-lottesville.org/event/sunsets-with-sentara/30907/>

A big thank you to the volunteers who helped maintain the garden: Ruth Iwano, Jane Stinely, Lisa Rittenhouse, Deb Watson, Lynn Valentine, Susan Kay Hall, Helen Ida Moyer, Karen Burnette, and Judy Kirby. Thank you, thank you for all your hard work and time! Keep up the good work!

CALENDAR 2021

- 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://viriniatech.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 \(communitygarden.org\)](#)
- November 10 Dolley Madison Garden Club Presents: Big Dreams, Small Garden, by
Marianne Willburn. Brunch, illustrated lecture, book signing and shopping.
\$50 per person, space is limited. www.dmgcvirginia.org
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