



The VMGA Report

The Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners

<https://vmga.net/wordpress/>

May/June 2022

Volume 27, Number 6

From the President

Leslie Paulson, Prince William

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President's Letter

We had a nice size group join in Dillwyn. I want to thank Mary Martinez-Rigo as well as Fern Campbell, Nancy Watkins, and Donna Frede Vinal for a wonderful lunch. The food was delicious. Thank you to all who took the trip to join us and to Frank Riley for making the Zoom connection.

We have our slate of officers for 2023. Congratulations and thank you so much for accepting your positions. We look forward to supporting you as we go forward. This is our new Executive Board.

Slate of Officers

President – Georgianna Hall

Vice President – Nelda Purcell

Secretary – Deb Straw

Treasurer – Stacey Morgen-Smith

We need a Chair for Education as well. If you are interested, please let myself or Georgi Hall know. president@vmga.net or treasurer@vmga.net. Also, if you wish to help with any of our Standing Committees, please feel free to get in touch as well.

I am looking forward to Master Gardener College and hope to see many of you in person this year. It was one of the best things about going to Dillwyn for our Board Meeting. It would be wonderful if we can get a good size crowd this year. We will be saying goodbye to Dave Close, who was chosen for the new Volunteer Engagement Specialist at Virginia Tech. We congratulate him and wish him well. He will be working with all the volunteers from Extension including Master Naturalists. If you attend MG College, you can help us show our appreciation of all he has done since he arrived 18+ years ago.

Also, as my time as President is almost over, I thank you all for supporting me and our Board. You have helped me find answers to questions and get through the last 2 years. I could not have done this job without support from the other Executive Board members and our membership. Please do the same for Georgi Hall as well. Take care and see you in June in Blacksburg.

Thank you,
Leslie Paulson

VMGA President – president@vmga.net

VMGA Officers

President
Leslie Paulson
Prince William

Vice President
Nelda Purcell
Franklin County

Secretary
Betsy Brown
Bedford County

Treasurer
Georgianna Hall
Loudoun County

VMGA Membership has its advantages:

- ◆ Unit Support
- ◆ Scholarships
- ◆ Newsletter
- ◆ Advanced Training
- ◆ Discount Event Fees
- ◆ Membership Directory
- ◆ Statewide Networking

From the Editor

Deadline for July/August issue:

June 26, 2022

We would 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

In with the new....

Georgianna Hall, Loudoun County

Hi, my name is Georgianna (Georgi) Hall, I am President Elect of VMGA. I became a Fairfax County Master Gardener at Green Spring Gardens in 2011 and became a Loudoun County Master Gardener in 2018 when my husband, Barry and I moved to Ashburn, VA. My husband, Barry became a Master Gardener in 2015. We have volunteered with Ready, Set, Grow and other children's education programs and Garden clinics. I became a member of VMGA in 2015 and have served as Treasurer for the past four years.

I am looking forward to attending and seeing many of you at Master Gardeners College in Blacksburg June 22-26.

The past two years we have held virtual events, first with virtual Master Gardener College in 2020 and then with the International Master Gardener Conference in 2021. It will be great to be back in person and on Virginia Tech's campus.

This year, Land Care Steward Training will be offered as the advanced training for those who are interested. There is also a full schedule of speakers, tours, and workshops ready for an exciting and engaging week in Blacksburg. You will hear from some past favorite speakers as well as get to know and hear from several new speakers. Subjects cover emerging gardening issues like conservation paleobiology, drones and old favorites like floral design and irrigation.

Registration is open, so please join me at Master Gardener College. If you need assistance with registration, please contact Continuing Professional Education (CPE) at (540) 231-5182.



2022 VMGA BI-MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

June 25th October 8th
August 13th December 10th

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/>

CALENDAR

June 22-26, 2022—MG College is in Blacksburg this year. All the details are not quite worked out, but we will have great speakers and of course you will be able to see all your friends from across the state. This year the Steward program will be Land Steward. [Click here for link to portal.](#)

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



FUNDRAISING

Merchandise sales are closed until after Master Gardener College and our annual Audit is completed. Look for new information in June. Thank you.

Would you like to be more involved in the VMGA??

We are asking for volunteers for our Nominating Committee for our VMGA Elections in the spring. If you are interested, get in touch with Frank Reilly at communications@vmga.net.

We also are looking for people who would like to join our Executive Board or one of our committees. Please consider joining us as we work hard for all the Master Gardeners around the state. If you are interested, get in touch with Leslie Paulson at president@vmga.net

VMGA Membership

VMGA membership renewals are due by May 31, 2022! Active or Auxiliary is \$12.00 and Continuing is \$120.00 as long as they remain an active or emeritus Master Gardener.



2022 Master Gardener College Scholarships
Stacey Morgan Smith, 2022 Scholarship Committee Chair

The Scholarship Committee of the Virginia Master Gardener Association (VMGA) is finalizing the choices for the 2022 Diane Relf Extension Master Gardener College (EMGC) Scholarships. The nomination period is closed, and this year's Scholarships are intended to cover the majority of the costs to attend MGC.

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.

The GraineThumb

Easting into a New Garden Ecosystem

By George Graine, Fairfax Master Gardener

“Odd as it may appear, a gardener does not grow from seed, shoot, bulb, rhizome, or cutting, but from experience, surroundings, and natural conditions” ---Karel Caper in “The Gardener’s Year –Translated by M. and R. Weatherall (1931)

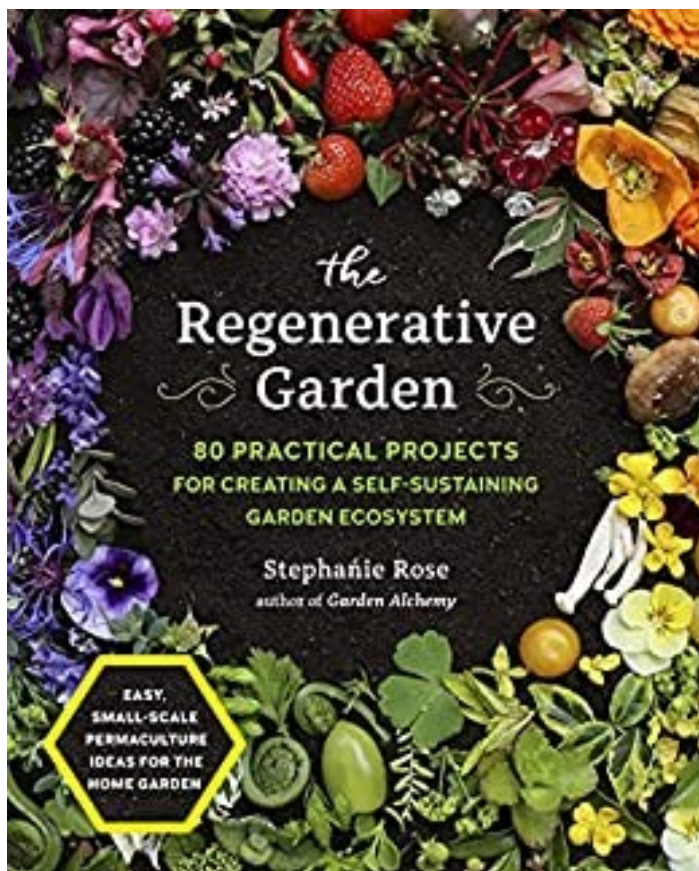
Before you start to read a new book called “The Regenerative Garden: 80 Practical Projects for Creating a Self-Sustaining Garden Ecosystem” by Stephanie Rose (Cool Springs Press, 2022) it is important to understand the horticultural term – permaculture. Perhaps the best explanation of this word is found in “Garden-pedia” St. Lynn’s Press (2015). This is not a fad word and in fact it first appeared 44 years ago as a branch or culture of gardening. It breaks down the barrier between yard, home, woods and fields as it strives to create landscapes. These subjects are intertwined and based on natural environments. Going a step further, a permaculture landscape is one designed so that the relationship of various factors to each other act as it would in nature. This creates the most efficient and self-sustaining ecosystem possible. For example, trees that provide fruits and nuts are selected over ornamental varieties, and native plants are selected over hybrid plants. Furthermore, plants should be grouped into areas much like they would appear naturally. This means large canopy trees, understory trees and ground covers as well as shrubs growing together. As a result of planting in this way, they will share the same soil and water requirements that naturally support each other. Could many of us try to fool plant hardiness zones and soil-water-requirements by supplementing our gardens? A true permaculture landscape does not require such human intervention because the goal of your new landscape is to make your own garden into a functioning ecosystem that is less reliant on external resources. A further goal is to be able to garden as the season changes and to do so in a way that resists insect pests, plant diseases and also, climate extremes that tend to fool Mother Nature that can play havoc with a plant’s biological clock.

“The Regenerative Garden” is replete with numerous do-it-yourself projects that should help you become not only a better gardener but a better steward of your property, that is, one who is a more eco-conscious (eco-savvy) gardener. Now you might ask yourself, am I a candidate to have a regenerative garden? Of course you are, even if the answer is: My garden has been totally neglected for about ten years. And then you might say....OMG! - Now what? To maintain a modicum of order, consider your landscape goal in terms of progress and not perfection. Why? Because permaculture, as noted above, together with the help of Mother Nature, will ultimately yield an easy to maintain, sustainable regenerative garden. Putting this in another context, your job as a gardener is to assist Mother Nature to do her job and at the same time, enjoy whatever benefits you seek.

This could be lovely flowers, fruit and berry production, and of course, encourage pollinators. In the final analysis, diversity that benefits the garden and all creatures should be the goal.

There are six chapters in the book. The first chapter is about Soil – Growing from the Ground Up. Here you will learn how to feed and nourish your soil in order to grow better plants, recycle waste and plant soil-building amendments. You will also learn how to “read the weeds” and incorporate soil fixers to regenerate soil. Water – Efficiency in Collection and Use is the next chapter. The important point is to capture and store rainwater for garden irrigation, recycle water and use it as many times as possible. Also, live within your local water budget; and do not use more than your rainfall. Meet all garden needs with captured, cached or recycled water. Chapter 3 is about Plants - Growing Life. The thoughts here include plants in your garden that are right for your mini ecosystem. Test, observe and listen to plants and include native and local plants. The next chapter is also an important key to your successful regenerative garden. It is about Climate – Creating Harmony. You will learn about your unique microclimate and match plant choices for success. You will also learn how to create structures in order to protect plants from climate extremes and also capture, store and use energy produced naturally. In other words, this chapter provides an excellent insight to weather that you may not have seriously considered. The last two chapters are about ethics and your community. Ethics introduces the recent popular subject of Reducing Waste and Encouraging Diversity. The author teaches you how to reduce, recycle and reuse materials, products and energy. She then describes how to maximize the use of each product before disposing of it and to consider how many different uses a material can have in its lifetime. And finally, consider the waste impact before acquiring any new item and seek out materials that can be repurposed. The last chapter is about Community – Building Sharing Spaces for Everyone. This chapter encourages you to create a welcoming garden for your community members, and maybe build gardens in public spaces to enhance community and create sharing spaces that give back to the community.

Within each chapter are many projects that you can readily accomplish at reasonable cost and time. In fact, you might scratch your head and think...why haven't I done that? Do not scold yourself because with this book in hand, you can do it! Follow these permaculture suggestions and you will become a better informed and more eco-conscious garden?



Celebrating Native Trees

By Elaine Mills, Extension Master Gardener NV

This April marks the 150th anniversary of Arbor Day, the national holiday dedicated to planting trees, and is the perfect occasion to discuss the importance of maintaining the health of trees in our natural areas and adding trees to our home landscapes.

The foliage of trees provides the oxygen we breathe as a by-product of photosynthesis, and it plays a critical role in the world's water cycle by releasing water vapor into the atmosphere. Leaf cover also provides cooling shade as a relief from heat in the summer. In urban areas with lots of paved surfaces, trees can reduce the effect of heat islands, and when appropriately sited near our homes, they can help reduce energy use. Trees shading houses can reduce cooling costs by 20 to 30 percent in the summer, and evergreen trees can block the wind from buildings in winter, reducing heating costs. Finally, the leaves of trees filter pollutants from our air, soak up greenhouse gases, and buffer the impact of rainfall on the ground.

The branches, trunks, and roots of trees sequester carbon. Roots also help to build good structure of soil through their relationship with beneficial microorganisms. Additionally, root systems of trees reach well beyond the outside line of their branches, preventing erosion and absorbing and cleaning stormwater to prevent pollutants and sediment in runoff from reaching streams.

Trees release essential oils, called phytoncides, which have been shown to benefit human health by improving immune response, decreasing inflammation, and reducing cortisol levels. Studies have demonstrated that even having views of trees can speed patients' recovery from illness and surgery in hospital settings.

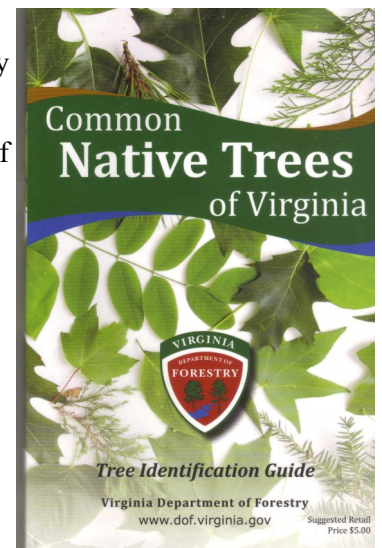
Trees add beauty to our landscapes with their ornamental traits, such as spring flowers, unusual foliage, interesting bark, and fall color. Healthy, mature trees can increase property value by seven to 19 percent by providing privacy and energy savings.

When considering adding trees to our properties, there are excellent reasons for considering native tree species. These plants have evolved within a particular ecosystem, meaning they have adapted to our local soil and water patterns and, when properly sited for sun and moisture preferences, they are likely to do well without our resorting to fertilizers and pesticides. Most importantly, they have long-standing relationships with local wildlife, providing food, cover, and nesting sites for a wide range of animals from insects to birds and mammals. Planting one oak tree, for example, can offer critical support to our dwindling populations of butterflies and moths whose caterpillars are, in turn, the required food for raising young birds.

For information on the wide variety of native trees for our region, see helpful fact sheets on the [website of Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia](#).

The [Plant NOVA Trees website](#) has additional information on planting trees and where to buy them.

The website for [Tree Stewards](#) provides tips on caring for older trees, and the safe removal of ivy, as well as contact information for arborists.



Quarry Gardens Trip

By Erica Jones, NRVMDGA

OK folks; you missed a fun & educational tour of what an extremely inspired pair of home owners can do with a majorly abused/disturbed piece of land. There were some wildflowers out too; although early spring stuff requires bending over to see it this time of year. And, seems there are more than a few folks who can now check off a notch on their bucket lists having gotten there.



The property had been a soapstone mine in the mid 1900's; the Nelson/Albemarle area first had soapstone mines starting in 1919. The property has also been a local dump and logged. Soapstone was removed from the area via the Schulyer railroad which was originally run by electrified trolley. The logging, in a sense, helps the wildflowers as she has (in places a scattered tree cover allowing light in; and making for a wider variety of plants (and animals!). The native American Monacan tribes employed the soapstone with gusto. The dump (in one of the quarries) was cleaned up with help by boat.

Owner said they had some 600 species of plants on the property. The property also has interesting soil types given the soapstone dust mixed in the soil, seriously raising the pH; very thin layers (this area covered with lichens in fruticose form), and wet spots ("wet areas are hard for humans to replicate"). She counts 35 'galleries' of native plant communities. New to me was the 'shrub' Devil's Walking Stick (*Aralia spinosa*) which this time of year are very straight, prickly stems about the diameter of a walking stick. They were busy making a thicket.



Devil's Walking Stick (*Aralia spinosa*)

(My knowledge of native shrubs is pretty marginal. If you want a good book on them try VDOF's "Common Native Shrubs and Woody Vines". For you invasive-obsessed types there is even a small section on them.)

She hopes the deer fence around the 40 acres around the quarries will be completed soon. Although one tour guest wanted to know why she did not bring in wolves to help with deer control! I flummoxed one other tour guest clutching a big camera when I confessed to pulling up pussy toes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*) with vengeance at home. (Weed = wildflower misplaced????!). Me, I still need more education on rocks and minerals.

See <https://quarrygardensatschuyler.com/> for tour schedules. She has 'listening devices' for people on the tours. The paths are very narrow so these really help with a group of 20 people.

She has (indoor!) restrooms; a meeting area, a train exhibit (O scale), a set of blue bird houses made out of local wood (have you ever seen dogwood wood??) and a covered lunch pavilion.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24522526?seq=1>

<https://www.pbs.org/video/quarry-gardens-schuyler-oalgos/>

<http://www.virginiaplaces.org/geology/soapstone.html>

<https://www.farmvilleherald.com/2017/08/the-schuyler-quarry-gardens/>

<https://www.tclf.org/quarry-gardens-schuyler>

Sudoku is easy to play and the rules are simple. Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

Sudoku #1051 (Easy)

5			7			3		
		8			2		4	6
	2		3					
	1		2				6	
		5			8			4
7	3				6			8
	4				7			
				5				
			1					

Sudoku #1052 (Easy)

				8	9		6	
			1			7		
			5					4
			2					
				9	6	8		
9						1	2	5
							1	
			7	5		2		9
8	2					5		

SUDOKU ANSWERS

Sudoku #1051 (Easy)

5	9	1	7	6	4	3	8	2
3	7	8	5	9	2	1	4	6
4	2	6	3	8	1	5	7	9
8	1	4	2	7	5	9	6	3
2	6	5	9	3	8	7	1	4
7	3	9	4	1	6	2	5	8
1	4	3	8	2	7	6	9	5
9	8	7	6	5	3	4	2	1
6	5	2	1	4	9	8	3	7

Sudoku #1052 (Easy)

2	7	5	4	8	9	3	6	1
4	8	9	1	6	3	7	5	2
3	6	1	5	2	7	9	8	4
7	4	8	2	1	5	6	9	3
1	5	2	3	9	6	8	4	7
9	3	6	8	7	4	1	2	5
5	9	7	6	3	2	4	1	8
6	1	4	7	5	8	2	3	9
8	2	3	9	4	1	5	7	6