



# The VMGA Report

## The Voice for Virginia Master Gardeners

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

March/April 2023

Volume 28, Number 5

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### From the President Georgi Hall, Loudoun County

#### President's Letter

Spring is in the air and we are looking forward to warmer weather and working in our gardens. My daffodils are blooming and the trees are budding. It is great seeing more color in our landscape.

Thank you for supporting the successful VT Giving Day on February 15-16th. Upon receiving 40 donations, VMGA's \$1,000 challenge gift was successfully unlocked and donated to the State Coordinator Endowment fund to support the longevity of the EMG program and the state office.

As we approach April 8th and our next VMGA meeting, I encourage you to attend our April Board meeting in person. We will be remembering our friend and fellow master gardener, George Graine who passed away August 18th, 2022. We will be recognizing George with the "Friend of Master Gardener Award". The meeting will be held at the James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church, Virginia, within easy access from Route 50, Route 66 and I-495. VMGA merchandise will be available for purchase. It will be nice to be together in person, for the first time since October. You will be receiving more information about the meeting and details for ordering lunch soon.

As we start planning unit events, consider taking pictures and writing an article about the event for our VMGA Report. These articles provide other units with ideas for their events.

Since Virginia Extension Master Gardeners are required to complete eight hours of continuing education each year, consider attending our Master Gardener College in Blacksburg, June 8-11. The Extension Master Gardener College Advisory Team is planning some interesting tours and inviting some wonderful speakers. The International Master Gardener Conference will also be held this year in Overland Park, Kansas, June 18-22nd. Numerous other educational opportunities across the state and region are available during the year. So that we can brainstorm and be able to offer additional events, our own VMGA education committee would love to have additional members and ideas from around the state. Please email Tom Baughn [education@vmga.net](mailto:education@vmga.net) to share your ideas or volunteer for the committee.

Hope to see you at our VMGA meeting in April and at Master Gardener College in June. Happy Spring!

Georgi Hall  
VMGA President – [president@vmga.net](mailto:president@vmga.net)

## 2023 VMGA BI-MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

### VMGA Officers

President

Georgianna Hall  
Loudoun County

Vice President

Nelda Purcell  
Franklin County

Secretary

Deb Straw  
Hill City MGA

Treasurer

Stacey Morgan-Smith  
City of Suffolk

Past President

Leslie Paulson  
Prince William County

April 8th  
June 10th  
October 9th

August 12th  
December 9th

### CALENDAR

**March 9**—Piedmont Master Gardeners: Spring lecture Series: Attracting birds and other wildlife to your garden with easy to create water features, Thursday March 9 @ 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm (Zoom)

<https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/spring-lecture-series-bob-schamerhorn-attracting-birds-and-other-wildlife-to-your-garden-with-easy-to-create-water-features/>

**March 11**—Northern Shenandoah Valley MG Symposium, Saturday March 11, 2023 8:00 am to 4:00 pm (in person)

<http://nsvmga.org/events/symposium/>

**March 11**—Bedford Master Gardeners: Grow the good life, Saturday March 11, 2023 9:00 am - 3:00 pm (in person OR Zoom)

<https://www.bedfordareamastergardeners.org/event/grow-the-good-life-2023/>

**March 16**—Piedmont Master Gardeners: Spring lecture Series: Designing a pollinator victory garden for a changing climate, Thursday, March 16 @ 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm (Zoom)

<https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/spring-lecture-series-kim-eierman-designing-a-pollinator-victory-garden-for-a-changing-climate/>

**March 25**—Piedmont Master Gardeners: Piedmont Master Gardeners: Virginia festival of the book: Poet, essayist and gardener, Ross Gay, Saturday, March 25, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm (in person)

<https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/virginia-festival-of-the-book-poet-essayist-and-gardener-ross-gay/>

**March 25**—Piedmont Master Gardeners: Garden Basics: Spring cleanup in the perennial garden, Saturday, March 25, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

<https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/garden-basics-spring-cleanup-in-the-perennial-garden/>

**March 30**—Piedmont Master Gardeners: Spring lecture Series: Attractive functional sustainable solutions to managing stormwater runoff in the home yard and garden, Thursday, March 30, 2023, 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm (Zoom)

<https://piedmontmastergardeners.org/events/spring-lecture-series-elisa-meara-and-alex-thompson-attractive-functional-sustainable-solutions-to-managing-stormwater-runoff-in-the-home-yard-and-garden/>

**June 18—22, 2023**—International Master Gardener Conference 2023— [IMGC2023](#)



### 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 Membership has its advantages:

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

### From the Editor

Deadline for March/April issue:

**April 23rd**

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](mailto:newsletter@vmga.net)

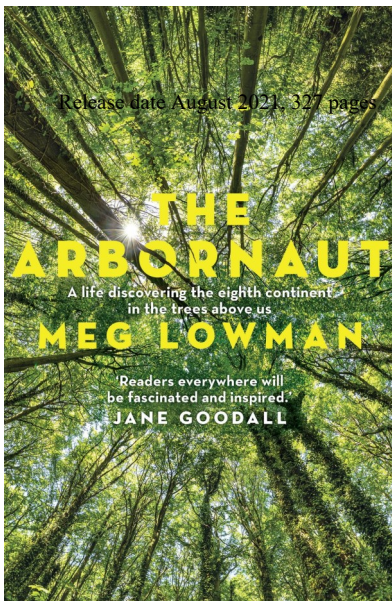
## NEWSWORTHY NOTES FROM NOTABLE NEWSLETTERS

The VMGA Report is always looking for submissions from EMGs, Unit Representatives, VMGA Committee Chairs, VCE Agents, and VCE Program Associates. The next deadline for the VMGA Newsletter is **April 23**. 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](mailto:newsletter@vmga.net).

### Book Review *The Arbornaut* by Meg Lowman



Meg Lowman loved being outdoors as a child. There she collected flowers, pine cones, and bird eggs. In 1964, at the age of 10, she won second prize in the New York State Science Fair for her collection of pressed and dried wildflowers. She continued her explorations of the environment and found a wonderful summer camp in Capon Bridge, West Virginia, where she met other kids who shared her passion for the outdoors. She attended that camp for six summers as a camper and then as a counselor. She then chose to attend Williams College because it had a forest on its campus, and she decided to make the study of trees her lifelong passion. After a year at Duke University's forestry school, she transferred to the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, where she studied ecology in the cloudy Scottish Highlands. Meg then relocated to Australia to get her Ph.D. because the University of Sydney offered her a scholarship. Looking at trees from the ground was like studying a body by looking at a big toe. She realized that to really understand trees you had to get up in their crowns. Using a strong slingshot to shoot a rope around a high tree branch and mountain climbing equipment, she was able to go up in the crowns of trees and study the plants and animals living there. She found thousands of species of beetles and epiphytes (plants that grow on other plants but are not parasites) that had never been found before.

After getting her Ph.D., Meg married an Australian sheep farmer and moved to his 5,000-acre "station" where he and his father raised sheep. Meg investigated why so many eucalypt trees, a common tree in Australia, were dying. It was believed that it was due to koalas eating their leaves, but she found it was due to insect predation--some trees had their leaves completely eaten three times in a season. Meg wanted to continue her research activities while running her home and raising two boys, but pressures from her in-laws made it just too difficult. When she got an offer from Williams College to be a visiting professor, she moved with her sons back to Massachusetts. Her career has included teaching, setting up new programs at North Carolina Museum of Science and Marie Selby Botanical Garden in Sarasota, Florida, and working all over the world to preserve forests and educate people on the importance of forests. She has worked on projects to build canopy walkways in Asia, the United States, and Australia so that people can experience what is going on there. Meg has mentored many young women and men in the fields of botany and ecology.

This book is written very clearly without being technical and dry, and it goes into detail about how a botanist conducts field research. At the end of each chapter is a section describing an important tree species; the trees of Australia, Africa, and Asia are very different from our native trees. There is a very helpful glossary of botanical

terms. Meg concludes her book describing how trees are necessary for our planet for oxygen, erosion control, fresh water, wildlife, storage of carbon, and many other benefits. While the statistics on forest loss are alarming, we can still do many things to educate people on the importance of forests, how to prevent their destruction, and how to establish new forests.

Betty Hedges, Loudoun County Extension Master Gardener

## Gardening in the Valley Tour 2023

By Elaine, Northern Shenandoah Master Gardener

Mark your calendars now for 2023 Gardening in the Valley Tour to be held on June 24, 2023, from 9am–4pm, rain or shine. The tour is hosted by Virginia Cooperative Extension with support from the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association.

This year's tour features four inspirational gardens that showcase practices gardening enthusiasts, from novice to expert, can adopt or simply admire. Each of the gardens has close ties to the Extension Master Gardener program, starting with the Warren Heritage Society Gardens (101 Chester St., Front Royal) where EMG volunteers coordinate closely to develop and maintain the demonstration gardens. Two gardens—Tall Oaks in Warren County and Montevento in Clarke County—belong to current EMGs. The fourth garden on the tour—the Blue House in Front Royal—contains many plants that the owner purchased at the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener's annual GardenFest.

The gardens on this year's tour include formal garden spaces, herb gardens, native plant areas, pollinator gardens, water features, art, and more. Extension Master Gardeners will be on hand to point out educational aspects at each garden and also help answer questions about challenges members of the public face in their own gardens.

Advance tickets are \$10 and will be available beginning in mid-April through our website at [nsvmga.org](http://nsvmga.org). Tickets can be purchased on the day of the tour for \$12 at the Warren Heritage Society and a Clarke County location yet to be determined. Historic buildings at the Warren Heritage Society will be open for self-guided tours at no additional cost.



Photo provided by the owner of the Blue House

Proceeds from the tour will support Virginia Cooperative Extension 4-H programs in Warren and Clarke counties to fund scholarships for youth summer camp.

## Extension Master Gardener College: What to Bring for the Residence Hall

- Stacey Morgan Smith is the VMGA Treasurer and a Suffolk EMG

Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener College (EMGC) is in early June on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg. After you register and pick your breakout sessions and workshops, you get to decide where to stay. While hotels in the area offer the same conveniences you'd expect on most vacations, staying in a residence hall on campus has its own set of bonuses. You're in the middle of activity, with only short walks to the planned lecture spaces at Litton-Reaves Hall and the food options you'll find in D2 at Dietrick Hall. (A prepaid meal card is part of the on-campus room-and-board package.) It also saves a little gas! There is walking involved with attending EMGC, whether staying on campus or off, but shuttles or vans can take you and your luggage from your car to the residence hall and to workshops/tours.

It takes a little more planning to get set up in a residence hall room. If you're a minimalist, you may be good with just a sleeping bag, toiletries, and a towel. If you're more glamer than tent camper, you may want your fluffy slippers and coffee maker. (Keep an eye out for official information from the State Office on items like pillows; depending on the year, bed linens have been available.)

A big improvement in 2022 was the addition of microwave/refrigerator/usb outlet combo units to the rooms in New Hall West! You can see one and other photos of the general room arrangement here, including a sink, private bathroom, bed, and clothes shelving/rods.

Below are some items to consider bringing with you. Many are either/or suggestions and some may not apply to you. Thank you to EMGs from Fairfax, Loudoun, Norfolk, Northern Shenandoah Valley, Prince William, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and some anonymous EMGs.

### Bed & Bedside Table

- Sleeping bag
- Twin XL mattress pad (helps sheets stay on firm vinyl-covered mattress)
- Egg crate, foam pad, or blowup mattress
- Twin XL sheet set
- Pillow(s) and pillowcase(s)
- Blanket or throw
- Desk lamp
- Earplugs or white noise app
- Alarm clock if you use one
- Power strip and power cords for electronic devices



### Sink & Bathroom

- Toiletries, including soap and shampoo
- Sunscreen and insect repellent for outside workshops or tours
- Cup for sink
- Bath towels / hand towels / washcloths



- Bath mat or extra towel for floor
- Suction-cup hooks
- Hair dryer
- Medications
- Bag to hold trash (dispose in bins outside, where recycling is also available)



### **Clothes**

- Clothes hangers
- EMG name badge
- Unit EMG shirt
- Dress for weather (shorts and lightweight clothes, etc.)
- Shawl or light jacket (lecture hall temperature fluctuates)
- Raincoat and umbrella
- Walking shoes and waterproof or extra shoes if attending outside workshops or tours
- Hats for outside workshops or tours
- Shoes / slippers for the room



### **Food**

- Snacks & Drinks
- Water Bottle / Coffee Mug - can refill in D2 and during breaks
- Light snacks are often provided between sessions

### **Odds & Ends**

- Copy of schedule (should also receive one at check-in)
- Notebook / pen for sessions
- Saucers or lined boxes to put under plants from workshops, registration gifts, or farmers market
- Cash for VMGA silent auction and gear/clothing sales
- Camera



If you get into your residence hall room and have any issues at all, go down to the first floor, where there's a desk staffed by students. They will even make sure your bed is the right height if it wasn't lowered quite enough or help

with lost keycards. The building has an elevator and stairs and is secure. The floors are accessible only with keycards. You can lodge with a friend or by yourself. You will have opportunities throughout the day to visit your residence hall room. It's a 5-minute detour on the way from "learning" to "eating."

**PLEASE TAKE PICTURES!!!** This event is a wonderful experience with old and new friends. Bring a camera or use your phone and take photos of you and your fellow volunteers. Share them with your unit to encourage others to join you in the future. Send up to 5 favorite EMGC photos to [VMGATreasurer@VMGA.net](mailto:VMGATreasurer@VMGA.net), and we can use them in future articles.

**Still to come:**

- Getting Around Campus & What to See in the Area (May/June Newsletter)
- Photos and Stories from EMGC 2023 (July/August Newsletter)

Please send me your tips now or in the future to improve this information! If you've stayed on campus and have tips and advice to share, including the things you **MUST** bring with you, please share them at <https://bit.ly/EMGCtips>. If you have any questions about attending EMGC, send me an email at [VMGATreasurer@vmga.net](mailto:VMGATreasurer@vmga.net), and I can get the answers for you and add them to future articles.

**Still to come:**

- What to Bring for the Residence Hall (March/April Newsletter)
- Getting Around Campus & What to See in the Area (May/June Newsletter)

Please send me your tips! If you've stayed on campus and have tips and advice to share, including the things you **MUST** bring with you, please email me at [Treasurer@vmga.net](mailto:Treasurer@vmga.net), and I can add your advice to one of the future articles. If you have any questions about attending EMGC, send me an email, and I can get the answers for you and add them to future articles.



Photo by: Jason Alexander

# Goochland Powhatan Master Gardeners Association – Gardening 101



Participants considering the quality of soil



Don Smith talking about growing fruit

Last summer the confluence of several issues and ideas prompted GPMGA volunteers to start thinking about finding some alternative solutions. Coincidentally, as we were mulling over these considerations, someone reminded us of our wonderfully simple EMG Mission statement: “Sharing Knowledge. Empowering Communities.” Sometimes the intersection of concerns and ideas can just be a mess, and sometimes it can blossom into something wonderful. Here is a description of our concerns and what we believe to be a pretty good solution.

The first issue is one that probably annoys volunteers of every EMG unit - that of a few trainees bailing at the end of the class. What do we do about the folks who come and take the class, and then we never see them again? On one hand, we’ve met our goal of public education, and on the other hand they have not lived up to their end of our bargain.

Second, we had a trainee quit after about 3 weeks announcing that she was not interested in all that recording hours and risk training stuff. She just wanted a gardening class.

Third, one of our interns who had joined the training-class planning committee advised us that we needed to be more accommodating for the trainees who were rank beginners, those who come into the EMG program with no gardening experience at all. Whoa, that perspective set our heads spinning. How do we align “beginning” and “master” in the same class?

Clearly, a beginning gardening class with no volunteer obligations merited some consideration. We looked around – especially at our speakers’ bureau and at other areas of our own volunteers’ expertise - to see how many of the normal training class subjects we could cover with our own volunteers. We found that the only thing we could not cover was the toxic chemicals part of IPM. But, before we had a chance to fret too much, our agents volunteered to cover that for us. So, a small committee set to work to plan a course – a sort of “training class light” - with no strings attached.

At first, not everyone on the GPMGA Board was supportive of the Gardening 101 idea, but persistence paid off. By the time we opened registration, folks had heard about the course, and it filled up within a short time. With a waiting list already in place, we needed no additional advertising. And, as a side note, two of the folks who



had applied for the training class decided during the interview that Gardening 101 would be a better fit for them.

We are proud of our GPMGA volunteers who are delivering the instruction for this course. One of the benefits of the Extension Master Gardener program is the opportunity for each volunteer to develop specialties or “pockets of expertise” in certain areas of horticulture, and this course has provided a perfect occasion for some of our volunteers to test their mettle. It’s been my privilege to sit in on most of the classes, and I can confirm that my fellow volunteers are delivering a first-rate educational experience. And, as a bonus, our speakers’ bureau will be enriched by a few new entries that will result from agreements made with folks to prepare new presentations specifically for Gardening 101.

For perspective, the GPMGA unit consists of about 65 volunteers and 16 current trainees. As of this writing, our Gardening 101 course is not yet completed, but it is getting great reviews from the participants, and we will probably do another edition of it next year.



Photo by: Jason Alexander

## VMGA Board Meeting April 8, 2023

The meeting will be held at the James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church, Virginia beginning at 10:00am. The room, coffee, tea and assorted breakfast finger foods will be available at 9 am. There are Starbucks in the area in case you arrive before 9 am.

### Falls Church Lodging

Hampton Inn & Suites 6430 Arlington Blvd, Falls Church \$169

(703) 538-1000

Clarion Inn Falls Church-Arlington 6633 Arlington Blvd, Falls Church \$71

(703) 532-9000

Comfort Inn Arlington Blvd Falls Church 6111 Arlington Blvd, Falls Church \$137

(571) 545-7811

Sonesta Simply Suites Falls Church 205 Hillwood Ave Falls Church \$137

(703) 237-6172

Ask about discounts for AAA, Military, Seniors, AARP, etc.

Things to see: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring>. The Green Spring Gardens are very close by.

We are ordering from Wegmans. There will be a selection of sandwiches and two kinds of salads plus assorted drinks. Iced Tea (sweetened and unsweetened) and water. Coffee and tea should be available too.

I need all to make a reservation and send a check made out VMGA to me at: Leslie Paulson at 10753 Tullamore Ct Manassas VA 20111. Your check needs to reach me by March 22nd please. The cost is \$13 per person. If you are coming but not buying lunch, I still need a rsvp to me at [ljp6651@comcast.net](mailto:ljp6651@comcast.net). For late registration, text me at 703-627-8079 by March 30th please. We expect a group over 50 and we need to be prepared early.

Thank you,

Leslie Paulson