

## April 2011 Newsletter

### OTHER EVENTS

#### February 1 to May 5, 2011 MG Intern Class

**Monday**, Garden Fest meeting at Belle Grove on April 11th

**Saturday, April 16, 10am-noon, Annual Calmes Neck Bluebell Walk.** The bluffs of the Calmes Neck Virginia Native Plant Society (VNPS) registry site in Clarke County offer a rich mesic forest and ravines with spectacular masses of Bluebells and other spring wildflowers along the Shenandoah River.

Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist with the Natural Heritage Program, will lead the walk. The walk is moderate but expect to climb over downed trees. Bring a bag lunch and a chair and join us by the river after the walk. To RSVP and get directions, call Blanca Vandervoort a

**Sunday, April 17, 9am, U.S. National Arboretum Walk.** Join Carrie Blair for a walk through this living museum. Participants will be carpooling. Meet at 9:00 am at Bloom grocery store in Marshall. Bring your own lunch & beverage. For details and to sign up, contact Carrie

**Saturday, April 30, 10:15am-3pm, Fox Meadow Winery Trillium Celebration.** Fauquier County. VNPS will lead an easy, one-hour hike, starting at the winery at 10:15 and carpooling ½ mile to the trailhead. Upon returning to the winery, there will be time for wine tasting and purchasing. At 1pm VNPS will present a slide show about the Trillium and other wildflowers in the area. \$1 will be donated to VNPS for every bottle purchased this day. There will also be a few artists selling their plant life focused artwork. Contact the winery for more information:

**Sunday, May 1, 1-3pm, G. R. Thompson Wildlife Management Area Trillium Walk.** This VNPS registry site contains an exceptional diversity of native plants. The population of Large-flowered Trillium is the most outstanding in Virginia. For details contact Sally Anderson at or Carrie Blair

**Saturday & Sunday, May 7-8, 9am-4:30pm, Blandy Garden Fair.** State Arboretum at Blandy Farm. Check out our booth. NOT TO BE MISSED! Directions online at [www.virginia.edu/Blandy](http://www.virginia.edu/Blandy)

#### VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Cythia Haley

I think it is Spring--hard to tell some days. As I'm writing this, the weather forecast is rain and/or snow, so even though the calendar says Spring the actual arrival hasn't made it to the Valley yet. But doesn't the actual arrival of warm weather seem even lovelier when we're treated to a never-ending Winter? Well, that's what I'm telling myself. Even though I've had to push back my outside projects, I have had extra time to look at the seed catalogs again and decide if I have space for just one more vegetable. And the endless selections of new plants for the flower borders makes me think of what I can move to make room for another plant. I have also had time to walk around and see what I have too much of and decide if anything will make a good contribution for Garden Fest. Even though it is two months away, as Carolyn Wilson will tell you, this is the time to start digging up and dividing plants for the sale.

Speaking of Garden Fest, Lynn Hoffman has put together an excellent children's program and can use some volunteers for the morning of Garden Fest. If you're interested in helping out in any way at Garden Fest, whether it's with the kids, manning a booth or table, or just general help you can attend the next Garden Fest meeting at Belle Grove on April 11th or email Lynn H.. I'm sure she can find the perfect job for you and will appreciate the help.

Also, if you would like to have a table top display, present a lecture, or set up a workshop at Garden Fest please contact Mary Stickley at [gardener@shenandoahmuseum.org](mailto:gardener@shenandoahmuseum.org) and let her know.

One last word about Spring, don't overdo it. I end up pulling a muscle (or ten) every year because I think I can get too much done in one day and end up taking several days recovering from a very sore back. Enjoy the sunshine but wear sun block, stretch before and after you garden and see if you can get that teenage neighbor kid to dig up and lug that overgrown bush you've been meaning to move for the last two years. Remember what a very good friend told me yesterday, "Think S P R I N G".

### **FREDERICK COUNTY REPORT** by Teri Merrill

We had a very productive county meeting in mid-March and I appreciate the effort made by all who attended. We have several Extension projects that require the immediate assistance of veteran master gardeners:

The correctional facility near the county dog pound wants to start a garden on its property using low-security inmates. They have about an acre to work with and need us to consult with them. One intern, who has experience with large-scale gardening, has already stepped up, but I need a veteran to help as well.

The Extension office is planning a food expo to highlight local food vendors and farmers. They want a few master gardeners to be available and present information on whatever topics we choose--from mulching to pruning to vegetable gardening. I have the name of one master gardener who can help but would like a couple more. The date is July 16 from 9 am until noon, location not yet determined.

The Extension office would also like help with a community garden that is being developed for low-income families in Winchester. We have two master gardeners who have stepped up on this, but I would love for one or more to come forward.

Please, please consider getting more involved to continue your gardening education, meet new folks, and educate the public about best horticultural practices. After all, isn't that why you joined the organization in the first place?

### **CLARKE COUNTY REPORT** by Mary Craig

So far this year most of what we've done is planning. We have lots of people signed up for GardenFair at Blandy, thanks to Suzanne's efforts.

We are starting to fill in slots for the Farmers' Market in Berryville, which starts the week after GardenFair. Remember, you don't have to live in a particular county to help with a project. Anyone is welcome to come join us at the Farmers' Market.

Susan Garrett is heading up our greenline this year. We will be helping Clarke County with the rain barrel sales again this year. And, again, thanks to Suzanne for organizing it, we had a couple of people work two days on getting the xeriscape garden at Chet Hobert Park cleaned out and fresh mulch put down. We need to add a few new plants. Suzanne's daughter, Rachel, made wonderful new signs for the bulletin board telling about the plants in the garden.

We're looking forward to the weather warming up so we can get out there and start gardening.

### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT** by Mary Craig

Our membership list shows 140 members and 37 students. The number of active members based on hours turned in for 2010 is 64. Please remember to turn your hours in to Carolyn Stonesifer We cannot count you as active if we don't have hours recorded.

## EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

I am writing this just having returned from the annual Garlic Mustard Pull in the Thompson Wildlife Management Area north of Linden. The day before I did the same at the Blue Ridge Regional Park, which is on Mt. Weather just north of FEMA. At both places we did not see much Garlic Mustard at first, but we were able to find some.

The Regional Park had lots of other invasive aliens to attack, starting with a field of Bamboo by the parking lot. Walking a circular trail from the parking lot, we hacked at Oriental Bittersweet vines, Wineberry, and Multiflora Rose.

As we came back to the cars, we saw Garlic Mustard growing off into the woods pulled up all we could find. For most of the quarter mile length of the blue-blazed trail from the Thompson Trillium Trail parking lot we saw no Garlic Mustard. But then we encountered some sizeable populations, so four of us filled a few plastic garbage bags.



Pulling Garlic Mustard is very satisfying to a gardener. You know how satisfying getting the whole root of a Dandelion is.

Garlic Mustard has a tap root too, but since it is a biennial instead of a perennial it comes out much easier, so you can get that satisfying feeling over and over again. Notice how long the root is on the plant on top of the bag in the picture.

Also satisfying this time of year is the blast of colors we get. I think the weather has helped this year. We did not get high heat followed by deep freezes, so flowers on bushes like Japanese Quince and Forsythia did not get frozen. Also the cool weather kept the blossoms around for a while, including the Red Maple. I find the flowering Red Maple in spring as beautiful as it is in the fall.

