

April, 2012

## First Quarter timesheets are due April 1

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings will be the third Sunday of the **month**, and we will meet at 4pm. All will be pot luck. Each county coordinator will be responsible for providing the eating utensils, plates, coffee/drinks. (Check with hosts of private homes if you have any questions.)

- **Sunday April 15, 4pm, Clarke County, The Virginia State Arboretum at Blandy Farm.** Angie Hutchinson will do a program on weed identification, "A weed by any other name..."  
**Directions:** On the south side of U.S. 50, one mile east of U.S. 340.
- **Sunday, May 20, 4pm, Frederick County, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.** Speaker, Mary Stickley on Roses
- **Sunday, June 24, 4pm, (Note CHANGE TO 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY), Warren County, Home of Lee Ruddle**
- **Sunday, July 15, 4pm, Shenandoah County Government Offices**
- **Sunday, August 19, 4pm, Clarke County, The Virginia State Arboretum at Blandy Farm.** Carrie Whitacre on Herbs in the Garden
- **Sunday, September 16, 4pm, Frederick County**
- **Sunday, October 21, 4pm, Shenandoah County**
- **Sunday, November 18, 4pm, Warren County Government Center, Front Royal.** Elections
- **December.** No meeting

### OTHER EVENTS

- **Saturday, April 14, Tomorrow's Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies, and Bees for Your Garden** Ferrari Center in the Student Union at Shenandoah University in Winchester, sponsored by the Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticulture Society and the Environmental Sciences Department at Shenandoah University. Experts will provide valuable advice on ways to increase birds and butterflies in our yards with plant choices suited to the Virginia/mid-Atlantic climate and soils. Speakers will be encouraging the reduction of area devoted to lawns and use of pesticides, increased use of native plants, and responsible stewardship of our shared space. Shenandoah University Environmental Sciences professor, **Dr. Woody Bousquet**, will moderate the conference.
- Speakers include
  - **Dr. Douglas Tallamy**, author of *Bringing Nature Home*
  - **Vincent Simeone**, shrub and tree expert and director of Planting Fields (highly recommended by Johan Guss, who heard him in Charlottesville recently)
  - **Dr. Kim Winter**, wildlife expert with the Potomac Environmental Council
  - **Jim McCormac**, birding and wildlife authority
  - **Janet Davis** owner of a native perennials nursery in Rappahanock County
  - **Stephen Orr**, author of *Tomorrow's Garden* & garden editor of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine
- **Sunday, April 15, 10am-Noon, 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Calmes Neck Wildflower Walk, Clarke County.** Gary Fleming, Vegetation Ecologist, Division of Natural Heritage, VA DCR, will lead this VNPS Registry Site walk in rich mesic forest and ravines along the Shenandoah River in Clarke County. Walk is moderate; expect to climb over downed trees. RSVP to Blanca Vandervoort at 540-837-1637 or [cvanderv@nelsoncable.com](mailto:cvanderv@nelsoncable.com)
- **Sunday, April 29, 1pm-3pm, Casey Trees Nursery Walking Tour, Clarke County.** Learn about trees grown for Washington, DC, led by nursery manager Brian Mayell. Learn new tree production methods including Missouri

gravel bed bare-root growth. Springsbury Farm, 2498 Briggs Rd, Berryville. More info at [www.Caseytrees.org](http://www.Caseytrees.org). Contact: Carrie Blair at 540-364-1232 or [horseblanketcb@yahoo.com](mailto:horseblanketcb@yahoo.com).

- **Tuesday, May 1, 10am-noon, Marjorie Arundel Trillium Trail Walk, Warren/Fauquier Counties.** Retired Professor of Biology Marion Lobstein will lead a walk at the VNPS Registry Site in the Thompson WMA to see the Trilliums and other wildflowers. Meet at the Trillium Parking Lot on VA Route 638 north of Linden. To RSVP and for more details, contact Carrie Blair at 540-364-1232 or [horseblanketcb@yahoo.com](mailto:horseblanketcb@yahoo.com).
- **Saturday & Sunday, May 5 & 6, Wildflower Weekend at Shenandoah National Park.** Appreciate the diversity of wildflowers growing in the Blue Ridge. More than 1,300 species of plants thrive in Shenandoah National Park, a haven for native woodland wildflowers. Choose from among 18 activities at [http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/2012\\_WildflowerWeekend\\_Schedule.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/2012_WildflowerWeekend_Schedule.pdf).

#### **JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER SCHEDULE** by Lynn Hoffman

April 10: Teacher: Marianne Pagington- Worms

April 17: Teacher: Martha Mitchell-Insects and Diseases

April 24 Teacher: Lynn Hoffmann-Make plant markers for the garden/Garden planting tips

May 8: Teacher: Marianne Pagington-Trees

May 14 – 18: First work days in the Garden TBA

May 15: Teacher: Helen Lake-Composting

May 22: Teacher: Pat Burslem -Herbs

May 29: Teacher: Larry Haun-Succulents

June 2 Belle Grove Plantation Gardenfest and Jr. MG Display table- Saturday 9 A.M. – - 11 A.M

June 5: Teacher: Angie Hutchinson-Fruits and nuts

Field Trips – Open to all

June 12 Trip to the Shifflett Farm in Shawnee Land -Helen Lake, Marsha Burd, Marianne Pagington, Lynn Hoffmann

June 19: Lynn Hoffmann-Green roof and water quality-Shenandoah University

June 26 Work in the garden

July 3: Garden Class Room- Look for bugs and ID them

July 10 : Class Room /Make garden kids

July 17: Work in the garden

July 24 : Work in the garden

July 31: Garden Class Room /Make bird houses and feeders

August 7: Work in the garden

August 14: Garden Class Room /Make Hypatufa pots

August 21: Work in the garden/ Bring home your Hypatufa

August 28: Work in the garden

Sept 4: Garden Clean Up Day

Sept. 11: Junior Master Gardener Graduation Ceremony-Lunch at Wesley United Methodist Church

#### **FINAL CALL FOR SHIRT ORDERS** by Carolyn Wilson

Cy sent out this information last week and I have received a few orders but in case you missed her email or have been procrastinating now is the time to send me your shirt orders. b They will not be ordered again until the fall. If you are getting close to the deadline please email me so that I can make sure your shirts get included in the order. All shirts prices below are for sizes Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large. For 2x and 3x add \$2

T-shirt	\$8.50
short sleeve polo	\$12.75
long sleeve polo	\$15.50
sweatshirt	\$ 14.00

Please remember that these are unisex sized so they will run large for women. Make your checks payable to NSVMGA and be sure to WRITE ON THE CHECK THE SIZE AND STYLE that you want and mail to C M Wilson at POB 70, Mt Jackson, VA 22842. Carolyn must have your check by April 6. If you have any questions please contact her at [cmwilson22842@gmail.com](mailto:cmwilson22842@gmail.com).

**JANUARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES** by Suzanne Boag, Secretary

See [Board Meeting Minutes on NSVMGA Website](#)

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See [Meeting Minutes on NSVMGA Website](#)

**TIME SHEETS** by Susan Garrett

First Quarter timesheets are due April 1<sup>st</sup>. Send them to Susan Garret. Forms are available on the website in three formats: **Excel**, which will add it all up for you and has a sheet for each quarter in the one file; **Word**, which has a single sheet but can be filled out and sent online; and a **PDF**, which you can print out and make as many copies as you want to fill in by hand. Please download the one you chose to your computer. If you need any help filling it out, or you have any questions about your hours, please check with Susan at a meeting. She will bring a few Timesheets to the next meeting, in case anyone has trouble down loading. Please destroy any old timesheets with anyone else's name on them!

Please fill them out to make sure you get all the hours you earn credited to you and to provide the Extension Service with good data. Our numbers of hours and contacts reached are a good argument to the General Assembly for keeping the Master Gardener Program and the Extension Service itself going across the state. Please send them to susan as soon after the deadline as you can—**and please try to send them in quarterly**. That will help us both to keep everything straight.

**FREDERICK COUNTY COORDINATOR'S REPORT** by Teri Merrill

We are in the planning phase now for some of our upcoming summer Extension projects. You should have received an email with the schedule for the two Greenlines that we are supporting this summer. Remember, our traditional Greenline is "virtual", and if you are volunteering for a week with, you will be sent emails with the names and contact number of residents who have gardening questions for you to answer. You answer all the questions that come your way that particular week. You can answer questions at work, at home, in your business suit or in your pajamas. When you answer is entirely up to you, but you do need to answer the questions that come your way during your week within a reasonable amount of time.

We would love to have a few veterans who can serve as mentors for volunteers on the virtual Greenline. One veteran, Paula Brownlee, has stepped up to serve as a mentor--thank you--but are there others who could do this? The biggest obstacle that I've heard from people who don't volunteer on the Greenline is that they don't have gardening confidence. So, if a veteran could be "on call" in case a volunteer doesn't know how to answer a question, that might reduce the fear factor. Let Teri Merrill know if you can serve in this role. We need to have a robust list of veterans to do this.

Our new "real" Greenline will be a table at Lowe's on Pleasant Valley in Winchester for four Saturdays in June: June 9, 16, 23, and 30 from 10 am until noon. We are putting together a portable reference box with material to help answer questions. If you enjoy getting out and meeting people and can't volunteer during the week, this Greenline is for you! It's really an experiment to see how we like it and if we have the support needed from our membership, so please help out if you can.

I would love to hear from county members about our organization, project ideas, and/or any concerns or questions. I like getting out and meeting people, so send me an email and we can meet for a cup of coffee or lunch.

More information to come on upcoming projects as the gardening season commences!

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

We have already held a cleanup session for our xeriscape demonstration garden at Chet Hobert Park. Marianne Pagington, Suzanne Boag, Mary Flagg and Mary Craig worked on weeding, mulching and labeling the plants and finished in about an hour. Thanks to Mary Flagg, who brought a labeler and plant tags, we got all the plants labeled, a great addition to the educational value of the garden.

Siobhan O'Brien and Mary Craig got the storage bin re-organized, in preparation for a new year. Siobhan brought a pallet and Mary had an old scrap of carpet that we put down to keep the things off the dirt floor. We hung a white board in the storage unit so that when anyone takes any of the items, they can sign them out. This way we'll know who had things and how long they will be gone.

### **Garden Fair**

Garden Fair will be here before we know it. Suzanne has already passed around the signup sheet, and we have a lot of people signed up. We still need veterans on some of the shifts. This is a great way for the interns to get their feet wet. This group of interns is already showing their enthusiasm. Suzanne will have the list at the April meeting, so take a look when it comes around and see if you can take a shift.

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

Susan Garrett, myself and all of the County Coordinators are working hard to contact every person on the list to find out if they would like to be active. Slowly, but surely, we will get an accurate count of how many are actually active.

Susan continues to gather hours from people and we ask that you please get any and all hours turned in to her.

If you missed the March meeting, you missed a good talk, a good meal and good fellowship. Lynn Hoffmann gave a great talk on grasses and lawn care.

There was a great turnout and the food was, as usual, wonderful. I



encourage you to try to make it to a meeting, they are a great way to get to know your fellow Master Gardeners and they are always fun.

### **HISTORIAN REPORT** by Mary Craig

The Class of 1996 had 19 students, six still active: Ruth Garretson, Fran Gregory, Ron Guss, Tom and Lesley Mack, and Liz Valiulis. Johan Guss was the class coordinator and the class was held in Woodstock. For their graduation they held a potluck at the Woodstock Rescue Squad.

If any of you have information to add about any of the past classes, feel free to send it to me. I would especially like to have class pictures, if any of you happen to have a picture of your class send it to [mcorneliac@centurylink.net](mailto:mcorneliac@centurylink.net).



### **"T'WAS THE WEEK BEFORE PLANTING"** by Dave Schmidt a Mecklenburg Master Gardener

T'was the week before planting and all through the country  
All gardeners were bursting with thoughts of their bounty  
The hoes and the rakes, they were hung in the barn  
Hoping that St. Adam would come, gosh darn  
The seeds were nestled so tightly in their packs  
With visions of growing to fill the gardener's sacks  
And I with my catalogs and wife by my side  
Had just settled down to plan my garden with pride

When out in the pasture, I heard a great noise  
I ran to the door to see if it was the boys  
I threw open the door and stepped into the night  
And what I saw seemed like a man, all right  
The rain had just stopped and the grass was glistening  
I stood in the shadows and just kept listening  
I saw a little old farmer all dressed in jeans  
Driving a tractor where I was going to plant beans  
With a big straw hat that protected his head  
St. Adam is here, I was sure I said  
More rapid than normal, his tires did spin  
And he called them by name, including Michelin  
On Goodyear, on Firestone, on Goodrich and Kelly  
Keep going he shouted, as I watched his fat belly  
He came to the top of the field with a stop  
As he saw a bunny doing a great big hop  
He looked in his tractor with his great big eyes  
And then what did he do to my great surprise  
Why, in a twinkling of an eye, at my back door stood  
He was dressed in jeans and a red flannel shirt  
His shoes were muddy and streaked with dirt  
Packets of new seeds he carried with him  
And he looked like a nurseryman I once knew as Jim  
His face was so dark because of the sun  
But his smile showed that he was full of fun  
His beard was gray and streaked with white  
And out of the mouth hung a corn cob pipe  
I mentioned before about his fat belly  
and now up close, I know he ate lots of jelly  
He was chubby and small and when he gave me a wink  
I said this man is a Master Gardener, I think  
He didn't speak a word but new seed packets came out  
and he placed them on the table from a berry to a sprout  
Through the door he backed, for us to see  
Him climbing on his John Deere and turning the key  
and away he sped down the pasture toward the south 40  
and as he was leaving I heard him say  
Happy Gardening to all and to all a good crop of hay.



Virginia gardeners know about drought. I am always glad to see “drought tolerant” on a plant label. Though we suffer from lack of rain in our gardens, the driest places in the state are shale barrens.

Shale barrens are hot, dry areas, usually on steep slopes. The surface is an accumulation of thin, flat, coarse stone fragments. The Virginia Native Plant Society has led excursions to shale barrens southwest of our area in Virginia and West Virginia to see the unusual plants growing there. Last year VNPS committed its annual fundraising drive to raise \$10,000 to protect Shale Barren Rock Cress (*Arabis serotina*) through the Center for Plant Conservation. Shale Barren Rock Cress is a plant of the mustard family (*Brassicaceae*). It is found only in shale barren habitats along Virginia’s western border and in West Virginia.

I missed the VNPS trips, but have been thinking about shale barrens recently because I have come across areas that fit the description. First I did some scrambling off the trails on Signal Knob last month. Signal Knob is the northwest end of the Massanutten Mountains, looming above Strasburg. We came across relatively bare areas, the surface covered with stones fitting the shale barren description. You can see bare spots on the mountain-side from the town and route 55 as you drive around it. Like most desert-like places, they are not bare of plants. Among other plants, I saw our native Prickly Pear cactus (*Opuntia humifusa*), certainly an indicator of dryness, and some Pussytoes (*Antennaria*). I looked for the large bottom leaves of the most common *Antennaria* species around here, Plantain-leaved Pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*). The leaves I saw were not as big as I usually expect on *A. plantaginifolia*. Studying my pictures back home, I decided it was Shale Barren Pussytoes (*Antennaria virginica*).

As I was putting this article together, I recognized a second thread here—how plants are named: often after where they grow (“shale barren”; “virginica”) or what they resemble, an animal (pussytoes because of the fuzzy flowers; *Antennaria* because hairs of the male flowers resemble butterfly antennas) or another plant (“Plantain-leaved” and “*plantaginifolia*” because the leaves look like those of our garden weed Plantain (*Plantago*)).

Next instance was along the road to my house. On a steep, stony hill beside the road were many yellow daisies. Yellow daisies at this time of year around here are Ragworts (*Packera*). I identified them as Pussytoes Ragwort (*P. antennariifolia*), so named because the grayish, fuzzy leaves look like the leaves of a Pussytoes. It is also known as Shale Barren Ragwort.

Then I went to Shenandoah River State Park, at Bentonville between Front Royal and Luray. The trail at the southwest end of the Park is called Shale Barrens Trail, and it goes straight up a crumbly rock strewn hill. At the northeast edge of the Park Wildcat Ledge Trail goes up a similar hill, and there I found Shale Barren Ragwort again.

So maybe we don’t live so far from shale barrens. Maybe that explains why the Prickly Pear thrives above the retaining wall by my driveway as does the Shale Barren Aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*) next to it.

