

NORTHERN SHENANDOAH VALLEY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

December, 2011



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.)

- **No meeting in December**
- **Sunday, January 15, 4pm, Fort Valley Nursery**, in Woodstock. Mark Sutphin, new Frederick County Extension agent, will be introduced. Carolyn Wilson is getting a speaker.

Directions: From I-81, take exit #283 Woodstock. Go west on Rt. 42 and take left on Hisey Ave. (just past Tractor Supply Company). Fort Valley Nursery will be located on your left 1/4 mile.

OTHER EVENTS

- **Tuesday, December 6, 9:30am, Belle Grove Plantation**, decorate Sally's Room. Contact Lynn Hoffmann at gwendydog@gmail.com for more information.
- **Sunday, December 11, 1pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Second Sunday Walk, Fauquier County.** Master Naturalist Chris Lewis will lead a walk on the winding trails through meadows and woodlands while enjoying spectacular views of the Piedmont. The focus of the walk will be winter tree identification. We'll meet at the horse stables in the park, which are located in the section east of Rt. 17. We'll walk the Shearman's Mill Trail, which is one mile long and relatively easy. Sky Meadows has a \$4 entrance fee per vehicle. For more details, please contact Chris at cplewis2@comcast.net.
- **Sunday, January 8, 9am-4pm, Virginia Native Plant Society Second Sunday Walk, National Mall, Washington, DC.** Visit the US Botanic Garden's "National Garden" of indigenous Mid-Atlantic plants labeled for self-discovery, between Maryland Avenue and Independence Avenue. Then cross 3rd Street. to explore green planted areas around the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Carpool from the Marshall Bloom grocery parking lot (left side). Museums open at 10am. Dress warmly and prepare to walk with Carrie Blair through garden areas and lawns with big oaks surrounding the Capitol Reflecting Pool. Spend time in the Botanic Garden and lunch on your own in Mitsitam Native Foods Café and shop in the Roanoke Museum store in the Museum. Contact Carrie Blair 540 364-1232 for carpool planning. Poor driving conditions will cancel this event.

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING MINUTES by Suzanne Boag, Secretary

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

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FREDERICK COUNTY COORDINATOR'S REPORT by Teri Merrill

It's hard to believe another year is coming to a close, but let's face it: if you're over 40, time seems to move at warp speed, but our bodies are moving at snails' pace! So instead of lamenting the end of 2011, let me extend a sincere "thank you" to all of you who put so much effort into master gardening activities in our county these past 12 months. And let's look forward to an energetic and active 2012.

Master Gardeners are welcome to decorate Sally's Room at Belle Grove Plantation on Tuesday, Dec. 6, starting at 9:30 am. Feel free to bring a friend and any greens, berries, cones, and pods that you can share. The theme is "Winter Wonderland," and the highlighted colors are red, green and white, with an emphasis on natural materials. Volunteers are asked to bring an ornament for the large tree upstairs. For questions, contact Lynn Hoffmann at gwendydog@gmail.com.

The junior master gardeners recently graduated from their program after months of hard work by the students and teachers. Kudos to Lynn Hoffmann and Tammy Epperson with the Extension office for a remarkable program, vegetable garden and graduation ceremony. Good news for this program: The Rotary of Winchester sent the NSVMGA a check for \$750 to be used to purchase a lockable shed for the Kent Street garden. The Rotary was impressed with the good work that the junior Master Gardeners are doing to provide food for less-fortunate members of the Winchester community. This is a fabulous program and if you are looking for a project to join next year, contact Lynn Hoffman.



We had a nice turnout of John Handley students to mulch, weed and plant in the rain garden at the Frederick Douglass Learning Center (shown in the pictures). Our first date was cancelled due to the early snow, but the wait was worth it, because the weather was fabulous. We have assurances from the Boys and Girls Club of



Winchester that they will regularly water the redbud tree that was planted in the rain garden that day. This is a great, fun and easy project, so if anyone is interested in heading it up next year, let me know at moved2va@comcast.net

Finally, keep in mind that we have some new projects and plans for next year. Take a moment to think about how you can be an active and eager member of the Frederick County Master Gardeners. We need your enthusiasm and participation next year. Don't wait for me to come calling-- instead, get involved and the dividends you earn, including good health, friendship and a sense of accomplishment, will grow faster than any plant in your garden

KUDZU BUG by Richard Stromberg

The Wall Street Journal reported in November that a non-native insect has been eating Kudzu in Georgia. However, it also eats soybeans, so more study is being done to see how that can be controlled.

EDITORS CORNER by Richard Stromberg

It leapt at me from the new book shelf at the library: Weeds: In Defense of Nature's Most Unloved Plants, by Richard Mabey. Even though the author is British, much is relevant, after you unravel some of the names. For instance, I had never heard of "fat-hen", but from the glossary of plant names at the back of the book, I could get the scientific name, *Chenopodium album*. I looked that up and found an American name I recognized, Lambsquarters. I've pulled up enough of them in my time.



I agree with his definition of weed, "a plant in the wrong place". I also like the quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson, "a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." Mabey uses fat-hen as an example of how the view of plants can change over time. It first was a wild seashore plant that became a weed in Neolithic gardens. Later it was cultivated for its oily seeds, but then became a crop weed. Now people forage for it as a nutritious green.

The overall theme of the book is a chronology linking of weeds to man. Man and weeds are ecological partners. Weeds came to be when agriculture began. They love what we do to the soil. And we transport them all over the place, on purpose or accidentally.

Typical of Mabey's stories is *Senecio squalidus*, which became known as Oxford Ragwort because it was first spotted in the Oxford University Botanic Garden in the 18th century. It was brought there from Mount Etna, where it grows naturally on the rocks. It escaped, growing along Oxford's ancient walls until it reached the railroad "the portal to a nationwide, interlinked network of Etna-like stone chips and clinker."